Name _____ Class _____ Date _____

SKILLS TEST 1 & 2

READING

1 Read the article quickly. Mark [✓] the seven things the writer mentions.

A new year, and the same old life
by Alina Kandinsky

Every year, I do the same thing. January arrives and I decide to change my ways and make resolutions. Usually, they're the same ones. I promise that I will give something up (usually chocolate), take up a new hobby, or do better at school.

The thing is that New Year's resolutions are not new. About 4,000 years ago, the Babylonians were making promises at the beginning of each year to pay back any money they owed. The Romans used to make promises to the god Janus (that's who the month January is named after), and thought of each January as a new beginning.

These days, millions of people are still doing the same. Typical things they promise to do are settle down (or travel the world), start a new career (or retire), or become healthier. The problem is that they struggle with their resolutions for a few weeks, and then give up. Like me, they go back to their usual routine until the next December.

According to some scientists, 88% of all resolutions fail. It seems that most of us just can't break our bad habits! Maybe it's because we don't really want to give something up. (If I'm honest, I love chocolate too much to stop eating it!) Or, perhaps it's because we often decide how we want our lives to be different without making any real plans for how to do it.

My own personal theory is that it's because of the climate! For many people, January is the coldest and darkest month of the year. It's difficult to find a nice, fresh salad or go for a healthy run when the weather is freezing and horrible, and you have no energy. It's the worst time of the year to make plans.

Perhaps we shouldn't try to change our ways at the beginning of the year.

According to one article I read, many people make big life plans when they go on vacation. That's when they're away from their usual habits of home, work, and school, and can think more clearly about their lives. It's not difficult to form good habits in the summer, when you have more energy and feel more positive. So, instead of New Year's resolutions, maybe we should have "summer vacation" resolutions!

She talks about …

1 something she wants to stop doing ☐
2 a new hobby she'd like to start ☐
3 where the word "January" comes from ☐
4 common resolutions people make ☐
5 why people make resolutions in December ☐
6 how many resolutions aren't successful ☐
7 why some resolutions fail ☐
8 why January is a bad time for resolutions ☐
9 why she can't take up running ☐
10 a time when it's easier to break habits ☐

☐ 7

2 Read the article again. Mark these sentences T (true), F (false), or DS (doesn't say).

1 Alina makes similar life plans at the start of each year. ☐
2 People started making New Year's resolutions not so long ago. ☐
3 The Romans made the same resolutions that people do nowadays. ☐
4 Many people find it difficult to form new habits. ☐
5 Alina thinks people don't prepare properly for changing their lives. ☐
6 She disagrees that January is a bad time for resolutions. ☐
7 Alina has often made life plan while on a vacation. ☐
8 She says that people should start the New Year in the summer. ☐

☐ 8

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Name _____ Class _____ Date _____

SKILLS TEST 1 & 2

LISTENING

3 **Listen to a talk about the *Titanic* disaster and a dog. Match the information you hear (1–8) to the words and numbers (a–j). There are two extra words and numbers.**

1 The time when the *Titanic* hit an iceberg. ☐
2 The name of the ship that arrived after the *Titanic* sank. ☐
3 The year that the *Titanic* sank. ☐
4 The name of the ship's cat. ☐
5 The number of people on board the *Titanic*. ☐
6 The number of the lifeboat that the dog was near. ☐
7 The number of people who didn't lose their lives. ☐
8 The name of a dog. ☐

a 1912
b 3 a.m.
c 2,224
d 11:40 p.m.
e 700
f Carpathia
g Jenny
h Rigel
i four
j 1920

☐ 8

4 **Listen again. Choose the correct answers.**

1 On April 14, 1912, the *Titanic* was
A in Southampton. B on the way to New York. C four days from New York.

2 The *Titanic* sank … on April 15.
A before 3 a.m. B at 3 a.m. C after 3 a.m.

3 There were
A 20 people on four lifeboats. B 1,500 people on 700 lifeboats. C 700 people on 20 lifeboats.

4 The story of Rigel is
A definitely false. B possibly true. C definitely true.

5 The person who owned Rigel
A stayed close to his dog. B was on board a lifeboat. C lost his life.

6 After the *Titanic* sank, Rigel was
A swimming near a lifeboat. B on a lifeboat. C far from other people.

7 The *Carpathia* saved lifeboat 4 because
A the people had called for help. B they had seen Rigel. C Rigel had made a noise.

☐ 7

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Name _____ Class _____ Date _____

SKILLS TEST 1 & 2

WRITING

5 You have been asked to write an article for an international website about a habit you used to have, but don't have now. Write your article (150–180 words) using the questions below to help you.

- What was the habit?
- What did you use to do?
- Was it a good or a bad habit?
- Did you struggle to change it?
- Why did you change your ways?

_____

_____

_____

_____

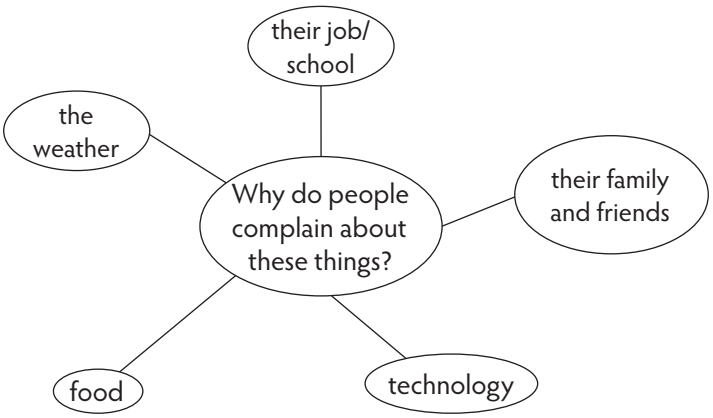
_____

_____

20

SPEAKING

6 Work in pairs. Look at the ideas below of things people often complain about. First, talk to each other about why people often complain about these things. Then decide together which thing people complain about the most.



7 Now think of one thing or person you would like to complain about. Tell your partner what you don't like and why. Use the phrases below to help you.

I'm not happy with …

The problem is that …

He / She is always … + -ing

If I'm honest, I …

20

TOTAL SCORE 70

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