How Safe Are We?

A. Choose the correct answer(s).

1. The adjective "steep" is used when referring to:
   a. a person
   b. a slope or hill
   c. a graph
   d. a price

2. A "border" is:
   a. a line dividing two countries or areas
   b. a strip of soil planted with flowers
   c. a strip around the edge of something like a picture
   d. a frontier.

3. The word "facilities" refers to:
   a. things that are easy to do
   b. buildings that are provided for a specific purpose
   c. a person's gifts
   d. parts of a house or building for a specific purpose like bathrooms

4. The phrase "electric power transmission" refers to:
   a. the power to broadcast radio or TV programs.
   b. the fact of "transporting" electric power from one place to another

5. The word "fatalities" refers to:
   a. events that inevitably happen
   b. fatal accidents
   c. deaths resulting from accidents

6. A "plume" is:
   a. a large feather that women sometimes wear on their hats
   b. a sort of cloud that rises into the air like smoke for instance
   c. a fruit
   d. the feathers covering a bird's body
7. "inhabitable" means that:
   a. no one can live there
   b. anyone can live there

8. I wouldn't care to live by a dam means:
   a. I wouldn't mind living by a dam.
   b. I WOULD mind living by a dam.
   c. I wouldn't feel safe living by a dam.
   d. I wouldn't like living by a dam.

9. If someone is "afraid of heights", the person:
   a. suffers from vertigo
   b. gets dizzy on high places
   c. would rather live on the ground floor of a building
   d. can't look up at the top of tall buildings.

10. When we say that "danger is lurking", we mean that:
    a. People are not aware of danger;
    b. People can't see danger;
    c. Danger is like a predator in the dark waiting to pounce on us.

11. The phrase "the green lobby" refers to:
    a. a large hall in a hotel where people can meet and wait
    b. a group of militant ecologists
    c. a large hall in the British Parliament that is full of exotic plants and
        where people can meet and talk to their representatives
    d. a sort of corridor

12. "I can't see what you are driving at" means:
    a. I have no idea where you are going.
    b. I don't know what kind of car you're driving.
    c. I don't understand what you intend to say.
    d. I don't know where you are going to.

**B. Find the odd one out**

1. Lobby, vestibule, corridor, entryway
2. Innocuous, lethal, deadly, harmful
3. Safe, harmless, inoffensive, hazardous
4. Humdrum, daily, unusual, monotonous
5. Torrid, sweltering, blazing, polar
6. Renunciation, attempt, trial, endeavour
7. Ragtown, slum, posh district, squatter’s camp
8. Misgiving, certainty, doubt, anxiety
9. Differ, match, equal, rival,
10. Blow out, ignite, set off, burst into flames
11. Operate, break down, work, function
12. Plague, burden, help, strain

❖ Brush up your Grammar

Veuillez vous référer à la grammaire en ligne disponible depuis votre Espace Membre :
- Double comparatifs
- Accroissement parallèle
- Comparaison de quantités.

❖ Listening Comprehension

Read the questions before listening to the recording, then listen to the document and answer them.

Chernobyl

1. Who is the speaker?

2. Where was he stationed?

3. What kind of political regime was there at the time?

4. Was democratic? How can you tell?

5. What important news did he hear? How?
6. Did he know the place where the events took place?
____________________________________________________

7. Was he surprised when he heard what had happened? Why/not?
____________________________________________________

8. How did the accident happen?
____________________________________________________

9. Name three consequences of the accident.
____________________________________________________

10. How many victims did the accident make?
____________________________________________________

11. What can be considered as incredible and/or scandalous?
____________________________________________________

❖ Reading Comprehension

Read the following text and answer the questions.

**Hoover Dam**

Hoover Dam was once known as Boulder Dam. It is a concrete arch-gravity dam built in the Black Canyon of the Colorado River, on the border separating the states of Arizona and Nevada. It was built between 1931 and 1936.

Since about 1900, the Black Canyon and nearby Boulder Canyon had been studied for their potential to support a dam so as to control floods, provide irrigation water and produce hydroelectric power.

It was the first time such a large concrete structure had ever been built, and some of the techniques had never been tested. The torrid summer weather and the lack of facilities near the site added extra difficulties. Today, the dam’s generators provide electric power for the states of Nevada, Arizona, and California. Hoover Dam has become a major tourist attraction with nearly a million people visiting the site each year.
Why build a dam at this precise location and in the middle of a desert, you might ask. Well, as the Southwest of the US was developing, the Colorado River was seen as a potential source of irrigation water. A previous attempt at diverting the river for irrigation purposes had occurred and failed in the late 1890s.

The technology of electric power transmission improved at the beginning of the 20th century but was not sufficiently advanced to "transport" electricity from the Lower Colorado area to cities where electricity was in demand because the limit of transmission of electric power was only 80 miles (130 km) at the time.

The first idea that a man called Arthur P. Davis was to blast 20 miles of rock from the Boulder Canyon so that the rubble might be used as a base for a dam. But the idea was finally turned down as it could not be proven either efficient or safe enough.

When the final plan was authorized the Great Depression had already started and huge numbers of unemployed converged on southern Nevada. So that Las Vegas which was then but a small city of 5,000 quickly grew to between 10,000 and 20,000 souls.

A government camp was established for surveyors and other personnel near the dam site but this soon became surrounded by a squatter's camp. Another camp along the Colorado River was officially built and called Williamsville, but was known to its inhabitants as Ragtown. The number of workers employed to build the dam soon reached over 5,000, 30 of them were ... Blacks. The building of the dam cost 112 lives Not included in the official fatalities number were deaths that were recorded as pneumonia or over-exposition to the sun in the summer time.

Questions
1. Say where Hoover Dam is located.

2. How long did it take to build the dam?
3. What were those who wanted to build a dam trying to achieve?  
________________________________________________________________________

4. What might have made this undertaking a dangerous one?  
________________________________________________________________________

5. What made the building difficult?  
________________________________________________________________________

6. Name an economical windfall of the dam other than the three for which it was first built to provide.  
________________________________________________________________________

7. Was this the first time someone thought and tried to build a dam in the region?  
________________________________________________________________________

8. Why build a dam in the middle of a south western desert?  
________________________________________________________________________

9. What did the people who first tried to build a dam think of doing?  
________________________________________________________________________

10. Why did they give up on the idea?  
________________________________________________________________________

11. Name another technical difficulty.  
________________________________________________________________________

12. Was there enough or not enough manpower?  
________________________________________________________________________

13. Why?  
________________________________________________________________________
14. Say something about the housing conditions of the workers on the site.

15. What about discrimination?

16. How much did the dam cost?
CHECK YOUR ANSWERS

❖ Build up your Vocabulary

A. Choose the correct answer(s).
1. The adjective "steep" is used when referring to:
   a. a slope or hill
   b. a graph
   c. a price

2. A "border" is:
   a. a line dividing two countries or areas
   b. a strip of soil planted with flowers
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10. When we say that "danger is lurking", we mean that:
   c. Danger is like a predator in the dark waiting to pounce on us.

11. The phrase "the green lobby" refers to:
   b. a group of militant ecologists

12. "I can't see what you are driving at" means:
   c. I don't understand what you intend to say.

B. Find the odd one out

1. corridor
2. Innocuous
3. hazardous
4. unusual
5. polar
6. renunciation
7. posh district
8. certainty
9. differ
10. blow out
11. break down
12. help

❖ Listening Comprehension

A/ SCRIPT

The Chernobyl Disaster

I was a reporter in Kiev at the time of the Chernobyl disaster. In spite of the Soviet censorship and policy of secrecy that prevailed in those years, it soon turned out to be a nuclear accident of catastrophic proportions.

I remember it was April 26, 1986 and I was listening to the Voice of America when my Russian neighbour entered my room to tell me that she'd heard that the Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant in the Ukraine had sustained what appeared to be a major accident. Ironically enough I had been authorized to visit the plant about a month before and I then remembered the misgivings I had had when seeing some of the installations, which would by no means have matched US or European safety regulations. Today it is considered the worst nuclear power plant accident in history and is the only such level 7 event on the International Nuclear Event Scale.

Soon I heard that fire crews and technicians were being flown at great speed to the site, and I suspected that most of them would never be seen alive again for it appeared that reactor number four at the Chernobyl
plant, near the town of Pripyat, had exploded following a faulty and unauthorized systems test.

The graphite moderator components of the reactor were exposed to air and they ignited. The fire that ensued sent a plume of radioactive fallout into the atmosphere and over an extensive area, including Pripyat which had to be evacuated. The plume drifted over large parts of the western Soviet Union, and much of Europe.

As of December 2000, 350,400 people had been evacuated and resettled from the most severely contaminated areas of Belarus, Russia, and Ukraine with most of the damage being borne by Belarus.

It seems incredible to think that despite the accident, Ukraine continued to operate the remaining reactors at Chernobyl for many years. The last reactor at the site was closed down in 2000 only, with the financial help of the European Union.

Since then, Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus have been burdened with the continuing and substantial decontamination and health care costs of the Chernobyl accident.

Twenty years later, a World Health Organization report stated that among the 134 emergency workers involved in the immediate mitigation of the Chernobyl accident 28 persons died in 1986.

Another 19 died between 1987 and 2004 from different causes. It is estimated that there will ultimately be a total of 4,000 deaths attributable to the accident, due to increased cancer risk. What the report does not say however is that the whole area for miles around was made uninhabitable for decades.

B/ANSWERS
1. He was a reporter at the time.
2. In (the) Ukraine.
3. It was part of the Soviet Empire.
4. Certainly not. There was a policy of secrecy and censorship was systematic.
5. There had been a major explosion at a nuclear plant. He heard the news through his neighbour.
6. Yes, he'd visited it a month before.
7. No, because he then thought the installations and safety measures were not up to normal standards.
8. A systems test went wrong and one of the reactors exploded releasing a radioactive cloud.
9. The area around the plant was made uninhabitable for decades.
   The cloud contaminated many countries west of Ukraine.
   The costs of health care for contaminated people is still running high.
10. Up to 4,000 if we take into account those who died of radiation-induced cancer.
11. The fact that the plant kept being operated in such an environment.

Reading Comprehension

ANSWERS
1. On the Colorado River between Nevada and Arizona, in the southwest of the USA.
2. Five years.
3. They were trying to find ways to make irrigation possible, to control floods and to produce electricity.
4. The fact that the techniques used had never been tested or proven safe before.
5. The terrain and the weather.
6. It is visited by a million people every year.
7. No, there had been attempts at the end of the previous century.
8. Because the government wanted to develop the Southwest.
9. They thought they could blow up part of the canyon and use the rubble as a base for the dam.
10. Because it soon turned out to be both dangerous and inefficient.
11. People didn't know how to "transport" electricity from one point to another then, or when they found a solution it could only be "transported" as far as 130 kms, not any further.
12. There were more people willing to work than there was work to be distributed.
13. Because this was the beginning of the Great Depression and millions were unemployed.
14. They were terrible. People lived in shacks.
15. There was less than 1% of black workers.
16. The text only mentions the price in human lives. And it looks rather steep!