

Task 1. Read an article about a cycling holiday that went wrong. Five sentences have been removed from the article. Choose from the sentences A-F the one which fits each gap (11-15). There is one extra sentence which you do not need to use.

- A. But if we – or maybe that should be I – were to do the trip again, there are several things I would change.
- B. As a result, we missed the last bike ferry across to our hotel for the night and were then redirected by our route map on to a busy road where we encountered the juggernauts.
- C. I began my research by excluding any tours that included hills, heavy luggage and – most important of all – terrifying traffic.
- D. Welcome to the first day of the Morris family cycling holiday.
- E. When did you first encounter these difficulties?
- F. In isolation, a full day's cycling of about 22 miles was fine, it was the cumulative effect of several days on the bike that was the problem.

The cycling holiday that went wrong

Picture the scene: it is twilight and my wife, my eight-year-old son and I are pushing our bicycles up a busy country road in Austria, when three supercharged motorbikes whip by like bats out of hell. Ahead, there is an oncoming juggernaut so, without dropping below 50kph, the motorbikes swerve within inches of us, leaving us frozen with fear. The roaring horn of another giant lorry charging up behind us sends us into the ditch. Except that there is not a ditch, just a dense forest, so we hold our breath at the edge of the tarmac as the monster machine rattles past. My wife and son burst into tears and I feel vulnerable – and very angry. (11)_____.

It was not meant to be like this. The idea had been to introduce my loved ones gently to the joys of exploring a country on two wheels, but after just 11 hours it was doubtful they would ever get back on a bike again. Before this, my son, Ben, had not cycled much further than to his local school; my wife had given up pedal power after a nasty encounter with a van when she was a student. To win them over, I had to make sure our first family trip would be as stress-free, safe and pleasure-packed as possible.

(12) _____. I came across a specialist travel company which suggested the River Danube Cycle Way in northern Austria as the best route for beginners. Ninety per cent of the journey would be on dedicated cycle paths – flattish and car-free. Better still, the seven night package included cycle hire, maps, decent hotels, luggage transfers and a back-up team, all at a reasonable price. It sounded perfect for cycle-tour newcomers.

The first day's ride was not only terrifying, but also too long for beginners: 26 1/2 miles not 19, as advised. (13) _____. Grim first impressions are difficult to wipe out.

As for the problems of the rest of the trip, I mostly blame myself. I had not taken on board that a week's cycling does involve a lot of cycling. I remember reading the itinerary and thinking that 165 miles in seven days did seem a bit ambitious, but not impossible. (14) _____. So for my poor wife, tired legs, sore hands and the discomfort of being on a saddle for so long turned a potentially relaxing holiday into more of an endurance challenge.

My own difficulty lay with the luggage. The prospect of having our bags transported for us had seemed luxurious, but it soon became a daily chore. By 8.30am, our luggage had to be ready for collection, no mean feat for a family with a totally disorganized approach to packing. With our belongings on their way to the next hotel, we were tied into covering a certain distance just to catch up with a clean pair of underpants. The rigid schedule is, of course, essential for the safe transportation of hundreds of pieces of luggage. It just didn't fit in with the spontaneity and freedom I normally associate with cycling. Similarly, dragging my son away from the many excellent playgrounds and outdoor swimming pools along the route in order to keep up did not feel nice.

Admittedly, the journey wasn't all traffic terror and damaged bottoms. The steep-sided Danube Ring was stunning, and whizzing through the cornfields as high as a cyclist's eye around Feldkirchen was well worth the detour. But the real discovery of the holiday was the Wachau district. Winding between medieval towns,

the Wachau Valley is stuffed full of fairy-tale castles, monasteries, abbeys and rolling vineyards. It is a rich landscape that is best savoured from the saddle of a bicycle. (15) _____. For a start, I would limit the packaging. We would have been far more relaxed if we had carried our own bags.

Complete the table with your answers.

Gap 11	Gap 12	Gap 13	Gap 14	Gap 15

Task 2. Look at the underlined words in the text. Choose the correct meaning (1, 2, 3 or 4) for each of them.

16. ...had not taken on board that...

1. had not believed that...
2. had not understood that...
3. had not known that...
4. had not liked that

17. To win them over...

1. to persuade them to agree with him
2. to sign an agreement with them
3. to comfort them and stop them from worrying
4. not to frighten them

18. are difficult to wipe out...

1. are not easy to destroy
2. are difficult to trust
3. are difficult to remember
4. are easy to make

19. dragging my son away from...

1. not letting him continue doing something
2. forcing him to do something he does not want to
3. allowing him to take something
4. making him leave a place

20. it was the cumulative effect of several days on the bike

1. increasing by one addition after another
2. a feeling of needing to rest or sleep
3. communicative
4. huge

Task 3. Writing.

You have received a letter from your English-speaking pen friend, Mark.

...My parents and I have just come back from New York. What an exciting city it is! We stayed there for two weeks.

What kind of travel experience do you have? Where would you go if you had a chance to go travelling now? What is your most exciting travel experience?

Write him a letter and answer his three questions. Write **100–120** words. Remember the rules of letter writing.