

Colegio Las Cumbres

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ASIGNATURA: Inglés

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CURSO: 4to. año

CONTENIDO NODAL: Analysis and writing descriptive texts

Writing a summary

TRIMESTRE: 2do.

PRACTICE

Read **Passage A** carefully, and then answer **Questions 1** and **2**.

Passage A

This passage is about a visit to a remote part of Mongolia, where the writer, Donovan Webster, meets a woman who still farms in the old style.

Visiting Diudiu

We reach the top of a pass through giant sand dunes, and below us is a bowl-shaped valley. At the valley's northern end, fringed in rich green grasses and reeds, there's a small lake so saturated with salt-loving bacteria that its colour is glittering vermilion. Sheep and goats drift across the dune hillsides, eating the sagebrush-like artemisia that grows on them. Camels and a few horses graze near the shore. At the far end of the lake, all alone, sit two small, square blockhouses.

We trudge down the dune, surprising the lady who lives in the valley. Her name is Diudiu, and she's seventy-two. She was born to a semi-nomadic Mongolian family near here. She never had children, and her husband died in 1974, leaving her as the last of her family.

With the same hospitality we'll find in the whole area, Diudiu sets up for visitors. She goes inside her house and fills a tea-kettle from a small container, then walks outside to a mirrored solar collector the size of a TV satellite dish. At the dish's centre, where the rays of the sun will be focused, Diudiu snaps the kettle into an iron fitting, and then pivots the dish to face the afternoon sun. Within three minutes, the water is boiling furiously. 'I sold hair from my camels and sheep to buy this,' she says, turning the mirrored face of the dish from the sun so that she can retrieve the kettle. 'It keeps me from having a fire going all day.'

Diudiu invites me inside. A wide earthen platform for sleeping and sitting occupies the back wall. The other walls are lined with wooden cupboards and lockers; the boxes hold bags of rice and dried meat, a few potatoes and wild onions in baskets, and some extra clothes. In the corner, a stack of folded blankets waits for winter. There's a small hole in the roof for the chimney of Diudiu's potbellied Mongolian stove, which is now outdoors for summer cooking.

She sprinkles dried tea into the kettle's hot water, then pulls out drinking bowls and some rock sugar. 'Come and drink,' she says, motioning me to sit.

Diudiu is a metre and a quarter tall and dressed in Modern China's standard outfit: loose trousers and a button-front jacket, both of blue cotton. Her black hair is covered with a bandanna, her dark eyes sharp and quick. She has a wide face – broad planes of cheekbones – which has weathered into a map of wrinkles.

I gesture towards a swallow's nest that clings to the interior front wall, above the door. Diudiu smiles. 'I like birds in the house,' she says. 'They're good company.'

Spending the next few days with Diudiu, I will see that she possesses everything she needs. Though winter can get very cold, she is prepared and experienced against it. Outside the house there's a

sheep and goat pen with walls made of camel-dung, wetted and pressed into bricks. In winter, she burns these bricks to warm her house and provide cooking fire. She also eats four or five sheep each winter, deep-freezing what she doesn't need by hanging the carcass in a shady spot outdoors. After an hour or so, Diuidu goes outside. She fires up her stove and boils a pot of rice. In a wok she stir-fries potatoes and wild onions. Then she walks into her house, opens one of two large ceramic containers, and dips a plastic water bottle inside. 'Rice drink,' she says. 'Have some. I drink one of these bottles a day. There's always a good supply of it. It's my recreation.'

Slipping back outside, Diuidu checks the rice and lifts the food, carrying it to her small table. 'See? I have everything,' she says. 'I don't understand the outside world. I know only eating, drinking, tending animals. This is what my parents did. The young people today, once they leave, never return. I don't blame them. The old life of herding is coming to an end. Work in cities is the future. But for me, I will live in this place until I die.'

1. Imagine that you are Donovan Webster. You are being interviewed for a television programme about your visit to Diuidu in Mongolia.

Your interviewer asks the following questions:

- Could you start by telling the viewers a little about Diuidu's lifestyle?
- What did you admire most about Diuidu?
- How has your meeting with her made you consider your own life-style and values?

Write the words of the interview. Begin as follows:

Interviewer: Could you start by telling the viewers a little about Diuidu's lifestyle?

Donovan Webster: Yes, of course. I think the first thing I noticed was...

You should write between 1 ½ and 2 sides, allowing for the size of your handwriting.

Up to 15 marks will be available for the content of your answer, and up to 5 marks for the quality of your writing.

2. Re-read the descriptions of:

- (a) the countryside in paragraph 1;
- (b) Diuidu in paragraph 6.

By selecting words and phrases from these paragraphs to support your answer, explain the effects the writer creates in using these descriptions.

Question 3 is based on both Passage A and Passage B.
Read Passage B and re-read Passage A.

Passage B

This passage describes the daily life of a man who decided to live in the woods in order to raise money for the protection of trees.

Life in the Cold

The idea of living in the woods has been in my mind for years. When I was growing up I spent a lot of time playing in the forest.

I sleep in a sleeping-bag under a tarpaulin tied between two trees, which keeps the rain off, but it's not very warm. At 6.30am I jump up and pack quickly. I take everything with me in my rucksack. I have to sleep in my clothes because it is so cold, and I add another couple of layers when I get up. Then I have to run for the bus and I get really hot. The journey to London can take two hours, but at least I get to sit in comfort. My work at Sotheby's, the famous auction-house, is split between two places in London. I have to place bids for people who can't be present at auctions. I stand next to the auctioneer, acting as a second pair of eyes, making sure that bidding runs smoothly. Everyone is very understanding at work, although I get teased relentlessly. They think I'm crazy.

Work starts at 9.00am, when I tend to have another breakfast at my desk, normally a full English breakfast. I eat a very large amount at the moment because I use so much energy keeping warm at night, and I'm so much more sensitive to temperature now. The heating at work is oppressive and can make me feel ill when the room is too hot.

Work finishes at 5.00pm, and I go to the gym. I went there a lot before winter, aware that I needed to be as fit as possible for the cold months. I've been going less frequently recently; I'm just concentrating on surviving. I get back to the woods around 8.30pm and change into my 'wood' clothes. I have three sets of clothes: a scruffy set for the wood, a casual set for travelling, and my smart clothes for work. Trying to co-ordinate my laundry can be really difficult. I'm on public display for my job, so it's important to look the part, but I have found myself working in Hammersmith, only to realise my clean clothes are in Bond Street, in the centre of the city. I often end up in the woods with suits hanging from trees.

In the evenings, I sometimes go into town to see friends. Some nights I'm too exhausted, though. Last weekend I slept thirty-two hours out of thirty-six. It is nice to have the woods to go back to, especially when there's a lot going on at work. With no phones or anything, I can just relax. But it's also nice, after a weekend of getting grimy, to go to work and be smart.

I have been ill a couple of times from not cooking meat properly, and being careless about filtering water from the stream. I've also had bronchitis. But it's an adventure. There's something deeply satisfying about being out here. If I can light a fire and cook meat, as people have been doing for thousands of years, it strikes a chord.

I get into bed about 10.00pm and only leave the fire burning when it's really cold. It isn't scary, although I did get a shock once. I was in my hammock and heard a loud gnawing noise. I had visions of axe murderers and quickly sat up. I realised, as I came crashing to the floor, that it had just been the sound of a branch breaking.

Once I've drawn the sleeping-bag cord as tight as possible, I'm ready to sleep. I hear owls a lot, or the odd visitor having a peek at the shelter.

3. Summarise:

(a) the things that make the writer's lifestyle difficult in Passage B;

(b) the things that enable Diuidu to cope with the challenges of her lifestyle in Passage A.

Use your own words as far as possible.

You should write about 1 side in total, allowing for the size of your handwriting.

Up to 15 marks will be available for the content of your answer, and up to 5 marks for the quality of your writing

