


## II

## READING COMPREHENSION

 The Royal Mail has a long and interesting history.

**Read the text. For questions 1–10, choose the best answer (a, b, or c).**

The Royal Mail is the national postal service<sup>1</sup> of the United Kingdom, which collects and delivers letters. Letters are posted in red pillar boxes or post boxes, also called letter boxes. Postmen also deliver mail each morning direct<sup>2</sup> to homes or offices. In the countryside they travel round in vans, but in towns and villages they ride bicycles. There are 35,000 Royal Mail bikes and the distance postmen travel by bikes each year is the same as going to the Moon and back again 200 times!

The Royal Mail delivers 84 million items every working day and has more than 14,000 post offices. Every year the British send one billion letters to other countries.

The Royal Mail has a long and interesting history. It has been around since the days of Henry VIII. The Royal Mail appeared in 1516. In 1635 King Charles I opened the Royal Mail to the public. Post boys who worked for the Royal Mail carried letters, riding on horses. In 1784, fast coaches started to carry the mail. In the 1830s, coaches disappeared because of the arrival of the railways. In those days a person who got a letter had to pay for it and a postman had to wait to collect money. The cost was high, a postman's visit was often unwelcome, and many people didn't want to pay. In 1840 Rowland Hill suggested a postal *reform*, according to which the one who sent a letter had to pay a penny for it no matter how far the distance travelled.

Thanks to Rowland Hill, on May 6, 1840, Penny Black, the world's first postal stamp, appeared. Penny Black cost one penny and had a picture of Queen Victoria on it. It was the first stamp in the world and that is why there was no word "Britain" on it. Penny Blacks are now quite rare.

Today, British stamps do not have the country's name on them either and British people rely on the Royal Mail as much as they did hundreds of years ago.

If you want to learn more about the Royal Mail you can visit the British Postal Museum and Archives in London or the Postal Museum in Bath. They both tell you about the Royal Mail and its significant place in history. In the Royal Mail Archives one can also find information on family members who worked in the postal service. In the Postal Museum in Bath you can see working machines, a life-size Victorian post office and a children's activities room.

- 1 The Royal Mail
  - a collects and delivers letters.    b collects letters.    c delivers letters.
- 2 In the UK you can see
  - a three types of boxes for posting letters.
  - b two types of boxes for posting letters.
  - c one type of boxes under three different names.
- 3 Nowadays in the UK postmen usually deliver mail using
  - a bicycles and coaches.    b bicycles and vans.    c coaches and railways.
- 4 Postmen also deliver mail direct to
  - a offices every working day.    b offices and homes every working day.
  - c homes every working day.
- 5 One billion letters are
  - a posted by British people every year.
  - b delivered by British postmen every day.
  - c sent by British people to other countries.
- 6 The Royal Mail has been around since the days of
  - a Henry VIII.    b King Charles I.    c Queen Victoria.
- 7 The Royal Mail opened to the public in
  - a 1516.    b 1635.    c 1784.
- 8 Before 1840 people
  - a paid for the letters they sent.    b paid for the letters they got.
  - c did not pay for the letters they sent or got.



### USE OF ENGLISH (GRAMMAR/VOCABULARY)

**1. Grammar.** Rewrite the sentences below in a different way. Make all necessary changes. There is an example (0) for you at the beginning.

0) It's dangerous to swim in Loch Ness!

Loch Ness is dangerous to swim in.

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1) It's exciting to watch May Day celebrations!

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2) Is it easy to choose May Queen?

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3) It's not difficult to make a bracelet of friendship!

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4) Is it interesting to take part in cross-cultural projects?

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5) It's not easy to win the Wimbledon CUP Final.

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6) It is not healthy for little children to play computer games.

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**2. Vocabulary.** Read about Hamleys, the Museum of London and the Museum of the History of Moscow. Circle the correct variant. There is an example (0) at the beginning.

Hamleys is one of (0) the largest /largest toy shops in the world. It (1) has been around/has been since 1760. Its seven floors are packed (2) with/in toys, toys and toys! Here you can buy any type of (3) toy/a toy you like. There are (4) thousands of/thousands cars, computer games, soft toys, teddy bears, dolls, and what not.

The Museum of London is (5) recognized/recognized as one of the largest city museums in the world. Few museums have (6) collections/publications of items as the Museum of London has. Almost every item that illustrates London's central place in the life of the country is (7) represented/packed here. The Museum (8) includes/imagines different items: costume, *photographs*, glass, furniture, manuscripts and other publications. The (9) symbol/character of the Museum is Dick Whittington, a real historical (10) detective/figure.

The Museum of the History of Moscow, which opened in 1896, shows (11) the significant/an intelligent role of Moscow in the history of the country. The Museum (12) includes/supposes more than one million (13) items/copies: costume, *textiles*, photographs, glass and furniture. The museum has different types of collections (14) like/as archaeological, postcards, plans and maps and others.