

**CLASS B' LYCEUM**  
**OXFORD DISCOVER FUTURES 3**  
**UNIT 1- WHAT CONNECTS US**  
**PART II: READING AND WRITING**  
**Teacher: Jovanna Xenophontos**

**TASK 1: Questions 1-5**

**Passage 1**

**Read the article and choose the best answers A, B C or D.**

**We All Want to Fit In**

**Par. 1** On the playground, we first begin to notice the differences between ourselves and other children, and we start to mirror the behaviour of a dominant group in order to be accepted by them. This mimicry continues into adulthood, and we often unintentionally change the way we do things, our speech patterns, our expressions and even the tone of our voice, depending on who we're talking to. Familiarity is the social glue that bonds people together, and we deliberately seek out the similar and the recognisable in order to feel secure. If we're doing the same as everyone else, we must be doing it right. The need for acceptance is a basic human instinct – although some value it more than others.

**Par. 2** We all want to belong to a group. As we try to conform to the standards and norms of the group we are trying to be part of, we often present slightly different versions of who we are, depending on the environment and whose company we are in. We might have numerous 'editions' of ourselves – for work, or at home, or even online. All twisted and modified in order to be accepted in that particular situation (of course, the question is, are we being accepted for who we truly are, or merely for the version of ourselves we choose to present?

**Par. 3** This duplicity works very well for most of us, but some people only have one version of themselves to present. They are unable, or unwilling, to change in order to fit society's expectations, and because their behaviour or appearance doesn't quite match the "**herd**", they are pushed further and further to the periphery of a community. These are the "goats" all around us; people who are different from us and who do not fit in. We use very strange criteria to separate the "goats" from the "sheep". Their hair might be a little too long, their clothes a little unconventional, they may choose to live their lives in a way we don't like.

**Par. 4** As a doctor, I meet a lot of people who "*unbelong*"; people who try to copy what everyone else is doing, but never quite getting it 'right'. These are people who are only ever noticed when something goes wrong, when we need someone to blame. The rest of

the time, they are generally excluded and ignored because who they represent doesn't fit into the jigsaw of a community. As a society, we struggle to deal with the unusual and the unknown. We choose the ordinary over the extraordinary. In our search for familiarity and reassurance, we reject those who highlight our differences, because those differences question our own choices and our own sense of belonging.

**Par. 5** It would be empowering to embrace our differences, rather than fear them. Instead of living our lives in “monochrome”, it would be more fulfilling to search for the colour and the variance in those around us. Only then can we allow ourselves to be accepted for who we really are – not for the fragments of our characters we allow people to see. The view from the edge of the dance floor could turn out to be a much more interesting one than we imagined, and we could very well discover that “unbelonging” is actually a belonging all of its own.

Adapted from: <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/brainstorm/201607/we-all-want-fit-in>

**1. Human beings have a \_\_\_\_\_ need for acceptance.**

A. natural

B. rare

C. unique

D. temporary

**2. The need to belong to a group can lead to changes in \_\_\_\_\_.**

A. the standards and norms of the group we are trying to fit into

B. how and when we identify with others around us

C. the way others generally communicate with us

D. our behaviour, beliefs, and attitudes

**3. The word “herd” in par 3, refers to a large group of people who \_\_\_\_\_.**

A. live together

B. feel they do not belong

C. think and behave in the same way

D. are identical and have the same habits

4. According to the writer, we don't embrace diversity because it\_\_\_\_\_.

A. pushes us out of our comfort zone

B. helps us feel blue

C. helps us come to grips with reality

D. keeps us on the edge of their seat

5. The author's tone in par. 5 is \_\_\_\_\_.

A. concerned

B. optimistic

C. amused

D. excited

## TASK 2: Questions 6-10

### Passage 2

Read the magazine article about four people (A-D) who blog about ways to handle change in the workplace. Then answer questions 6-10.

#### HOW TO BETTER HANDLE CHANGE IN THE WORKPLACE

One of the qualities all employees need to have is being able to adapt to change. We've accepted that employees don't stay in one role for life and one of the challenges that comes with that is to handle new situations. Here, four of our readers share tips to help you better handle change in the workplace.



### **A. John**

You always have to be optimistic regardless of what new company, department, or group you're working with. Come to terms with the fact that your new situation might not be perfect, but your previous situation probably wasn't either. Think about how you can best leverage your skills, experiences and network to maximize your new role. It is also important to take some time to relax and think about what you've already accomplished and what your goals are for your new role.

### **B. Gerald**

People have several careers and jobs in their lifetime and companies are always moving employees from group to group based on current needs. You will have change happen to you, whether you like it or not, so you must accept that reality. The good thing about change is that it prevents you from getting bored in your current role and challenges you to work on projects that you haven't before.

### **C. Stewart**

Never forget about the people you've already had the chance to work with because they could become extremely beneficial to you down the road. If they are staying with your previous group or moving around, you could tap them to help you on a project. They could also become your lifeline back to your previous group or a different group within your company (or at another company).

### **D. Alan**

There are no bad questions unless you ask something that has already been asked or explained. Come up with a list of questions and as you receive the answers, write them down. This way, you can show people that you're paying attention to what they have to say. Asking questions will help you further develop yourself in the new role.

Adapted from: <https://www.quickbase.com/blog/10-tips-for-handling-change-in-the-workplace>

<b>Which blogger advises people to _____ in order to better handle change in the workplace?</b>	
6. be inquisitive about their new role	
7. self-reflect	
8. maintain a positive attitude	
9. stay connected with previous co-workers	
10. recognise that change is constant	

### **TASK 3 Questions 11-16**

#### **Passage 3**

**Read the article about a book called “The Hundred dresses” by Eleanor Estes, and then answer the following questions.**

Maddie is upset. She knows that she’s done something wrong but is it too late to fix things? It all starts with her best friend Peggy and a new girl at school named Wanda Petronski. Peggy is rich and the most well-liked girl at school. Everyone admires her. Wanda is a quiet girl who wears the same faded blue dress to school every day. At school she feels left out and excluded. She lives in a poor neighbourhood and has an unusual sounding name.

One day, when a group of girls admire another girl’s new dress, Wanda speaks up. Until that moment, she had been invisible, standing in the group, but never a part of it. She desperately wants to fit in. Now, with just a few words, shyly claiming to have one hundred beautiful dresses in her own closet, she suddenly becomes the center of attention.

Sadly, Peggy starts a game where they bully her about her “supposed” dresses. Maddie, Peggy’s best friend, goes along with the game, but wishes they would stop. She’s afraid to speak up, though, because she is poor . She is also worried that she’ll be the next target if she says something.

One day, the teacher announces that it's time for the annual drawing contest. One boy and one girl will be chosen as winner of the contest. When it's time to turn in the drawings, the children are amazed to find that Wanda has turned in 100 drawings. Each is a beautiful dress and it's obvious this is the 100 dresses she claimed were lined up in her closet at home. Everyone agrees that she is a talented artist and it's no surprise when she wins the prize.

When Maddie sees the one hundred beautiful dresses that Wanda drew for the contest at school, she feels awful because she knows that teasing Wanda was wrong and decides to do something to make things better.

Unfortunately, it is too late, as Wanda's family has moved away to avoid the discrimination they had been facing in their current situation. Maddie does some serious thinking and concludes that standing by and watching someone do something wrong is just as bad as doing it, and even more important, it is cowardly. In the end, she can't make things right with Wanda so she writes to her at her old address and hopes it will be forwarded to her.

Maddie has learnt that we should accept people for who they are. She now knows that mistreating someone for being different was wrong . She knows that she should have put herself in Wanda's shoes and have the courage to speak up. Whether or not Wanda receives the letter, she has made a lasting impression on Maddie and Peggy and hopefully on the reader as well.

Adapted from: <https://www.readingkingdom.com/blog/the-hundred-dresses-2/>

**11. Who is the most popular girl at school?**

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**12. Why do other kids at school make Wanda feel unwanted? Give two (2) details.**

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**13. Why does Wanda claim to have 100 dresses in her wardrobe?**

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**14. Why doesn't Maddie step in to stop the bullying? Give two (2) details.**

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**15. What does Wanda draw for the competition?**

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16. What lessons is Maddie taught? Give three (3) details.

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**TASK 4 Question 17**

**Passage 4**

Read the following article about empathy.

Write a summary about the disadvantages of being overly empathetic.

Your summary should be about 100 words long (and no more than 120 words long).

You should use your own words as far as possible



Empathy

The concept of empathy has been the subject of social psychological research for many years. There the principle applies that empathy is a desirable quality that allows people to build social connections with others. By understanding what people are thinking and feeling, people are able to respond appropriately in social situations and learn to regulate their own emotions.

In this day and age, however, the virtues of empathy are not clear. Scientific research at the University of Alabama has shown that particularly empathetic people have greater problems maintaining good relationships with their relatives and friends.

Research has also shown that too much empathy can lead to a state of extreme exhaustion that causes people like psychologists, counsellors, and doctors to lose their resiliency and coping abilities. It usually happens because of “being continually exposed to their clients’ life stories of chronic illness, disability, trauma, grief, and loss.” During the pandemic, this sense of empathy fatigue has become of particular concern

among care-givers, such as those working in mental health support or hospital doctors and nurses.

In recent years, researchers have also found that too much empathy can be bad for you and others, leading to apathy, and preventing you from helping the very people you need to. People feel “empathic distress”, which can become a barrier to action.

Additionally, when it comes to choices , psychologist Paul Bloom says empathy can cloud our judgment.

Worse still, people’s empathetic tendencies can be exploited to manipulate them into aggression and cruelty. This is evident in political rhetoric, where politicians use empathy to manipulate. They exploit the strong emotional responses evoked by drawing attention to victims of terrorist attacks in Western countries to encourage people to support anti-immigration policies and turn away refugees.

Overly empathetic people feel guilty about the misfortunes of others. They falsely believe they are the cause of other people’s distress and create false beliefs in their minds that they can relieve their suffering. This mostly leads to their giving away of possessions and often ending up broke and bankrupt down to the last penny.

So, where does that leave us? The research suggests that we ought to start making a clearer distinction between empathy and its apparent synonym: “compassion”. To be compassionate does not mean you have to share somebody’s feelings. It is more about the idea of extending kindness towards others.

### **TASK 5: Question 18**

You recently saw a classmate you had not seen for a long time. Write an email to another friend from school telling them all about it.

In your email, you should:

- say where and when you saw the person
- describe how the person has changed over the years
- explain how you feel about meeting him/her after such a long time

**Your email should be between 150-200 words.**



### **Task 6: Question 19**

Your teacher has asked you to write an article entitled “A person I admire”.

In your article, you should

- say why you have chosen the particular person
- explain what makes him/her special
- describe your feelings about him/her

**Your article should be between 150 and 200 words long.**

