

Listening comprehension

*For items 1–10 listen to a passage from a lecture about the growth of book clubs and decide whether the statements (1–10) are **TRUE (A)**, or **FALSE (B)** according to the text you hear. You will hear the text twice.*

You have 20 seconds to study the statements.
(pause 20 seconds)

Now we begin.

For several years now, Mark Zuckerberg, the billionaire co-founder of Facebook, has been making very public - and often quite eccentric - New Year's resolutions. There was the year he promised to only eat meat that he'd killed himself and the time he vowed to learn Mandarin Chinese; then there was the year when he tried to meet a different new person who wasn't an employee every single day. And then in 2015, he announced he'd be switching his media diet towards reading more books. He planned to get through one every fortnight. To aid him in this pursuit, he set up a page called *A Year of Books* on his own social networking site, where recommendations could be dissected and discussed. Its impact was both dramatic and immediate.

With its focus on learning about different cultures, beliefs, histories and technologies, the page soon had half a million followers, and was making a huge difference to sales of selected titles. Purchases of *The End Of Power* by Venezuelan journalist Moises Naim rocketed after it was chosen as the first title for consideration, with the book jumping to the top of Amazon's economics chart overnight!

The degree to which Zuckerberg will continue to influence popular purchases remains to be seen, but the venture is very much in keeping with broader cultural trends. Social media has had a marked influence on reading choices over recent years, with, for instance, tens of thousands sharing current enthusiasms on Twitter, using hashtags like 'amreading' or 'fridayreads'. We are also seeing what UNESCO has dubbed 'a mobile reading revolution' across the developing world, where in the past paper-based products were hard to come by. Now though, according to one recent survey, 62% read more as they can freely access books on their phones. This has resulted in initiatives such as the Africa-wide cell phone book club, started by a Zimbabwean librarian.

Of course, all this online activity is an extension of the face-to-face reading groups which have thrived since the start of the century. If you'd googled the phrase 'book club' back in 2003, it would've returned around 400,000 hits; try it today and you're guaranteed more than 30 million! In Britain alone, there are now an estimated 40,000 reading groups, with people meeting to discuss their latest literary loves in private homes or cafes, in libraries and in bookstores. This phenomenon has resulted in specialist gatherings, such as a Vegan Book Club and a Socialist Feminist group, as well as meetings specifically targeted at lovers of crime novels and even comics!

Now, let's say each club has around ten members, and picks perhaps six books a year, then that's 60 books per club and almost two and a half million sales per year. And that's before you even factor in the power of Facebook!

You have 20 seconds to check your answers.
(pause 20 seconds)

Now listen to the text again.
(text repeated)

You have 20 seconds to check your answers.
(pause 20 seconds)

<i>For items 11–15 listen to the dialogue. Choose the correct answer (A, B or C) to answer questions 11-15. You will hear the text only once.</i>

You now have 25 seconds to study the questions.
(pause 25 seconds)

Now we begin.

Brian: Is that you there?

Ann: Yeah.

Brian: Where is that? It looks pretty high up.

Ann: It was in the Dolomites. It's a range in northern Italy. That peak was about 3,000 metres, I think.

Brian: Wow! The view from up there must've been pretty breathtaking!

Ann: Yeah, it was stunning, it really was.

Brian: So, was there a cable car, or something?

Ann: Cable car! What? You don't think I'm fit enough to climb up?

Brian: No, no, it's not that. It's just that it looks pretty terrifying. I mean, that's a proper rocky ridge.

Ann: Yeah, it looks a bit worse than it actually was, to be honest, and there are these fixed metal ropes that you can clip yourself onto. I mean, it's a bit of a scramble, but you don't need any great technical expertise. You can more or less just pull yourself up the worst bits.

Brian: Really? I'm not sure I'd trust some rusty old cables.

Ann: No, they're fairly secure. I mean, you need a head for heights, but it's fine. It's not like these guys we saw base jumping.

Brian: What?

Ann: You know what it is, yeah? Where they just throw themselves off a cliff and parachute down?

Brian: Yeah, yeah. It's nuts.

Ann: I know! We saw people doing it. I mean, all round that area there are these peaks and deep gorges with these incredible sheer cliffs and we watched some guys jump off one in these kind of flying suits.

Brian: They must be insane, those people, they really must.

Ann: There are videos of them all on YouTube - just search Dolomites and base jumping.

Brian: Wugh! It makes me frightened just thinking about it!

You have 1 minute to complete your answer.

(pause 1 minute)

This is the end of the listening comprehension part.