

Family Gathering



Once a year, when the summer breeze starts to playfully toss the leaves, our family comes together at our grandparents' countryside home. It's a charming old house with enough space to accommodate the extended family, and it holds countless memories of our collective childhood. The garden is always blooming with flowers, making it the perfect backdrop for our reunion. My grandparents, both in their late seventies, are the heart of the family. They await our arrival with the same excitement every time.

As we pull into the gravel driveway, aunts, uncles, and cousins emerge to greet us. Uncle George, a cheerful man with a booming laugh, is recently divorced but always the life of the party. His two kids, teenagers now, race over to challenge us to a game of soccer. Aunt Maria, George's sister, is a warm and caring teacher. She and her husband Mark, a kind-hearted lawyer, have three young children who instantly start a game of hide and seek around the garden. My mother's sister, Aunt Sophia, arrives with her husband and their adopted son; they enjoy discussing their travels and adventures with all of us.

Inside the house, a variety of aromas waft through the air as Grandma and Grandpa put the finishing touches on a feast. Our parents help by setting the elegant dining table, perfect for the occasion. Laughter and chit-chat fill the rooms, intertwining with the clinking of glasses and silverware. Stories from the past are shared, and future plans are discussed, bridging distances and renewing our bond.

As the sun sets, the younger cousins gather around a bonfire, sharing spooky stories and roasting marshmallows. The older relatives settle on the porch, sipping their tea and reminiscing

about days gone by. The divisions of age melt away as playful jests and wisdom are exchanged effortlessly. Our in-laws, once outsiders, are now entwined in the fabric of our family narrative, contributing their own tales and laughter to our shared history.

Night falls, and the stars begin to twinkle above, mirroring the sparkles of joy in our eyes. A guitar is brought out, and soon, everyone is singing along to old and new tunes alike. The music unites us, a harmonious thread linking generations. As the night grows deep, weary but hearts full, we say our goodbyes. Our grandparents stand at the doorway, waving until our cars disappear from view. Their shadows linger, a testament to the warmth and unity they bring to us all.

It's events like these that remind us of the importance of family. Regardless of our different paths in life, we come together to celebrate the love we share. The memories we create during these gatherings will last us until the next summer, when once again, we return to the embrace of family.

CEFR Level Card

General Level: B2.5

Vocabulary: C1.0

Verb Forms: A2.9

Sentences: B1.6

Vocabulary

backdrop NOUN C1 x1

Definition (En):

n. scenery hung at back of stage

booming ADJ C1 x1

Definition (En):

s. very lively and profitable

s. used of the voice

bridge VERB C2 x1

Definition (En):

n. a structure that allows people or vehicles to cross an obstacle such as a river or canal or railway etc.

n. a circuit consisting of two branches (4 arms arranged in a diamond configuration) across which a meter is connected

n. something resembling a bridge in form or function
n. the hard ridge that forms the upper part of the nose

chit-chat NOUN +∞ x1

Definition (En):

n. light informal conversation for social occasions
v. talk socially without exchanging too much information

clinking NOUN +∞ x1

Definition (En):

s. like the light sharp ringing sound of glasses being tapped

collective ADJ C1 x1

Definition (En):

n. members of a cooperative enterprise
a. forming a whole or aggregate
s. set up on the principle of collectivism or ownership and production by the workers involved usually under the supervision of a government

gravel NOUN C2 x1

Definition (En):

n. rock fragments and pebbles
v. cover with gravel

intertwine VERB +∞ x1

Definition (En):

v. spin, wind, or twist together

linger VERB C1 x1

Definition (En):

v. remain present although waning or gradually dying
v. take one's time; proceed slowly

porch NOUN C1 x1

Definition (En):

n. a structure attached to the exterior of a building often forming a covered entrance

reminisce VERB C1 x1

Definition (En):

v. recall the past

silverware NOUN C2 x1

Definition (En):

n. tableware made of silver or silver plate or pewter or stainless steel

testament NOUN C1 x1

Definition (En):

n. a profession of belief

n. strong evidence for something

n. either of the two main parts of the Christian Bible

waft VERB +∞ x1

Definition (En):

v. be driven or carried along, as by the air

v. blow gently

Phrases

PHRASE	COUNT	SENTENCES
days gone by	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The older relatives settle on the porch, sipping their tea and reminiscing about days gone by.
disappear from (something)	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Our grandparents stand at the doorway, waving until our cars disappear from view.

extended family	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It's a charming old house with enough space to accommodate the extended family, and it holds countless memories of our collective childhood.
gather (a)round (someone or something)	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As the sun sets, the younger cousins gather around a bonfire, sharing spooky stories and roasting marshmallows.
intertwine with (something)	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Laughter and chit-chat fill the rooms, intertwining with the clinking of glasses and silverware.
life of the party	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uncle George, a cheerful man with a booming laugh, is recently divorced but always the life of the party.
pull in(to) ...	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As we pull into the gravel driveway, aunts, uncles, and cousins emerge to greet us.
put the finishing touch(es) on (something)	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inside the house, a variety of aromas waft through the air as Grandma and Grandpa put the finishing touches on a feast.
regardless of (something)	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regardless of our different paths in life, we come together to celebrate the love we share.
reminisce about (someone or something)	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The older relatives settle on the porch, sipping their tea and reminiscing about days gone by.
the heart of (something)	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> My grandparents, both in their late seventies, are the heart of the family.

Reading Comprehension Exercises

True / False / Not Given

1. Uncle George's sister is a primary school teacher.
2. Grandma and Grandpa are eagerly waiting for family members to arrive each year.
3. During the reunion, children engage in various outdoor games in the garden.
4. The family reunion takes place in a new and modern building owned by the grandparents.
5. Uncle George has become more reserved since his divorce.
6. After dinner, the family spends time sharing frightening tales by a bonfire.
7. At the family gathering, music played on the guitar is exclusively from past generations.
8. The family's collective childhood memories are tied to the grandparents' urban apartment.
9. The family regularly holds gatherings throughout the year.
10. Aunt Sophia has brought her biological son to the family reunion.

Multiple Choice

1. What does the garden symbolize in the family's reunion?
 - A) An area for sports activities
 - B) The continuous growth of the family relationship
 - C) A place for the children to sleep
 - D) The grandparents' love for gardening
2. Why might the guitar playing be considered an essential part of the family gathering?
 - A) It is a signal for everyone to go home
 - B) Only the children are allowed to play it
 - C) It helps in keeping the bugs away
 - D) It serves as a unifying activity for the family
3. Why are Aunt Maria and her husband Mark described positively?
 - A) They are very wealthy
 - B) They discipline the children at the reunion
 - C) They bring exotic animals to the gatherings
 - D) They contribute to the family-friendly atmosphere
4. Why do the stars at night evoke a special feeling among the family members?
 - A) They indicate it is time to leave
 - B) They add to the magic of the family moments
 - C) They are considered good luck
 - D) They provide light for the gathering
5. In the context of the family reunion, what does the 'fabric of our family narrative' imply?
 - A) A collection of different clothes from the family
 - B) A quilt made by the grandparents
 - C) In-laws becoming an integral part of the family saga
 - D) Decorations put up for the reunion
6. How do the grandparents demonstrate their affection towards the family members each year?
 - A) They present a musical performance
 - B) By eagerly awaiting the family's arrival
 - C) They send gifts to all family members before the reunion
 - D) They charge rent for the stay
7. What role does Uncle George play at the family gatherings?
 - A) He is the one who organizes the entire event
 - B) He is known for being quiet and reserved
 - C) He uplifts the spirit of the party
 - D) He mainly focuses on cooking the meals
8. What does the act of the younger cousins sharing spooky stories signify?
 - A) It is part of a competition to scare each other
 - B) It is a ritual to summon supernatural beings
 - C) They are practicing for a play about ghosts
 - D) It is a form of bonding and creating shared experiences

9. How are distances 'bridged' during the family reunions?
- A) By traveling from far places to meet
 - B) Through phone calls to those who couldn't make it
 - C) By sharing stories and discussing future plans
 - D) By literally building bridges in the grandparents' garden
10. Why is the setting at the grandparents' house ideal for the family reunion?
- A) Because it has a lot of rooms for games
 - B) It's an ancient building that needs to be visited regularly
 - C) Because it provides sufficient space and holds family memories
 - D) It's the only place available for such events

Short Answer

1. What activity do the younger cousins engage in as the sun sets?
2. Why do the grandparents wave until the cars disappear from view?
3. What makes the family's gathering spot perfect?
4. How does Uncle George's personality influence the family reunion?
5. What is Aunt Maria's occupation?
6. How does the text describe the dining table setup?
7. What role do the grandparents play in the family according to the text?
8. Why are the in-laws now considered part of the family narrative?
9. What do the memories created during these gatherings provide for the family?
10. What does the guitar playing signify for the family gathering?

Multiple Choice Cloze

Once a year, when the summer breeze starts to playfully toss the leaves, our family comes together at our grandparents' countryside home. It's a ___1___ old house with enough space to accommodate the extended family, and it holds ___2___ memories of our collective childhood. The garden is always blooming with flowers, making it the perfect ___3___ for our reunion. My grandparents, both in their late seventies, are the heart of the family. They ___4___ our arrival with the same excitement every time.

As we pull into the gravel driveway, aunts, uncles, and cousins ___5___ to greet us. Uncle George, a cheerful man with a booming laugh, is recently divorced but always the ___6___ of the party. His two kids, teenagers now, race over to challenge us to a game of soccer. Aunt Maria, George's sister, is a warm and caring teacher. She and her husband Mark, a kind-hearted lawyer, have three young children who instantly start a game of hide and ___7___ around the garden. My mother's sister, Aunt Sophia, arrives with her husband and their adopted son; they enjoy discussing their travels and adventures with all of us.

Inside the house, a variety of aromas waft through the air as Grandma and Grandpa put the finishing touches on a ___8___. Our parents help by setting the elegant dining table, perfect for the occasion. Laughter and chit-chat fill the rooms, intertwining with the clinking of glasses and silverware. Stories from the past are shared, and future plans are discussed, ___9___ distances and renewing our bond.

As the sun sets, the younger cousins gather around a bonfire, sharing spooky stories and roasting marshmallows. The older relatives settle on the porch, sipping their tea and reminiscing about days gone by. The ___10___ of age melt away as playful jests and wisdom are exchanged effortlessly. Our in-laws, once outsiders, are now entwined in the fabric of our family narrative, contributing their own tales and laughter to our shared history.

1. A. ancient B. charming C. weird D. dark
2. A. forgettable B. recent C. countless D. few
3. A. spot B. backdrop C. place D. location
4. A. foresee B. delay C. await D. postpone
5. A. conceal B. emerge C. hesitate D. scatter
6. A. trouble B. nuisance C. life D. burden
7. A. play B. seek C. chase D. look

8. A. feast B. snack C. menu D. diet
9. A. works B. burying C. bridging D. crossing
10. A. divisions B. unions C. encounters D. bridges

Exercise Answers

True / False / Not Given Answers

1. Not Given

Explanation: The text mentions Aunt Maria is a teacher, but does not specify that she is a primary school teacher.

("N/A")

2. True

Explanation: The text indicates that the grandparents look forward to their family's arrival with consistent excitement.

("They await our arrival with the same excitement every time.")

3. True

Explanation: The text confirms that children and teenagers play games such as soccer and hide and seek in the garden.

("His two kids, teenagers now, race over to challenge us to a game of soccer... children who instantly start a game of hide and seek around the garden.")

4. False

Explanation: The text clearly states that the reunion is held in a charming old house, not a new modern one.

("It's a charming old house with enough space to accommodate the extended family")

5. False

Explanation: The text describes Uncle George as cheerful and the life of the party, even after his recent divorce.

("Uncle George, a cheerful man with a booming laugh, is recently divorced but always the life of the party.")

6. True

Explanation: The text indicates that spooky stories are told by the younger cousins around a bonfire.

("The younger cousins gather around a bonfire, sharing spooky stories and roasting marshmallows.")

7. False

Explanation: The text specifies that the family sings to both old and new tunes, not just old ones.

("A guitar is brought out, and soon, everyone is singing along to old and new tunes alike.")

8. False

Explanation: The text associates the childhood memories with the old house in the countryside, not an urban apartment.

("It's a charming old house with enough space to accommodate the extended family, and it holds countless memories of our collective childhood.")

9. Not Given

Explanation: The text suggests a yearly gathering but does not mention the frequency of gatherings throughout the year.

("N/A")

10. False

Explanation: The text explicitly states that Aunt Sophia's son is adopted, not biological. ("Aunt Sophia, arrives with her husband and their adopted son")

Multiple Choice Answers

1. B

Explanation: The blooming garden as the perfect backdrop for the reunion suggests it symbolizes the flourishing of family relationships. ("The garden is always blooming with flowers, making it the perfect backdrop for our reunion.")

2. D

Explanation: The text indicates that the music from the guitar unites everyone, thus it's a unifying activity.

("A guitar is brought out, and soon, everyone is singing along to old and new tunes alike. The music unites us, a harmonious thread linking generations.")

3. D

Explanation: The text describes both Aunt Maria and Mark with positive attributes, which indicates they contribute to a warm and caring atmosphere.

("Aunt Maria, George's sister, is a warm and caring teacher. She and her husband Mark, a kind-hearted lawyer...")

4. B

Explanation: The stars twinkle above and mirror the sparkle of joy, adding to the magic of the moment.

("Night falls, and the stars begin to twinkle above, mirroring the sparkles of joy in our eyes.")

5. C

Explanation: The phrase suggests the in-laws have become an essential part of the family's history and tales.

("Our in-laws, once outsiders, are now entwined in the fabric of our family narrative...")

6. B

Explanation: The grandparents show their affection by awaiting the family's arrival with excitement.

("My grandparents, both in their late seventies, are the heart of the family. They await our arrival with the same excitement every time.")

7. C

Explanation: The text describes Uncle George as 'always the life of the party', indicating his role in uplifting the gathering's spirit.

("Uncle George, a cheerful man with a booming laugh, is recently divorced but always the life of the party.")

8. D

Explanation: Sharing stories is a way for the younger cousins to bond and create shared experiences.

("As the sun sets, the younger cousins gather around a bonfire, sharing spooky stories...")

9. C

Explanation: Bridging distances here means connecting emotionally through sharing stories and discussing future plans.

("Stories from the past are shared, and future plans are discussed, bridging distances and renewing our bond.")

10. C

Explanation: The text explains that the house can accommodate everyone and is filled with family memories, making it ideal for reunions.

("It's a charming old house with enough space to accommodate the extended family, and it holds countless memories of our collective childhood.")

Short Answer Answers

1. Sharing spooky stories and roasting marshmallows.

Explanation: The part of the text specifies the activities the younger cousins do as the sun sets.

("As the sun sets, the younger cousins gather around a bonfire, sharing spooky stories and roasting marshmallows.")

2. It shows the warmth and unity they bring to the family.

Explanation: The text implies that their gesture of waving until the cars disappear is a sign of the love and unity they promote within the family.

("Their shadows linger, a testament to the warmth and unity they bring to us all.")

3. The garden is always blooming with flowers, making it the perfect backdrop.

Explanation: The blooming garden is mentioned as the element that makes the reunion backdrop perfect.

("The garden is always blooming with flowers, making it the perfect backdrop for our reunion.")

4. He's the life of the party which suggests he contributes to a cheerful atmosphere.

Explanation: The text describes Uncle George as cheerful and the life of the party, implying he adds fun and liveliness to the reunion.

("Uncle George, a cheerful man with a booming laugh, is recently divorced but always the life of the party.")

5. Teacher.

Explanation: Aunt Maria is directly described as a teacher in the text.

("Aunt Maria, George's sister, is a warm and caring teacher.")

6. Elegant and perfect for the occasion.

Explanation: The dining table is described as 'elegant' and 'perfect for the occasion', indicating its setup.

("Our parents help by setting the elegant dining table, perfect for the occasion.")

7. The heart of the family.

Explanation: The grandparents are explicitly referred to as 'the heart of the family', indicating their central role.

("My grandparents, both in their late seventies, are the heart of the family.")

8. They contribute their own tales and laughter to the shared history.

Explanation: According to the text, the in-laws have become integrated into the family by sharing their stories and laughter.

("Our in-laws, once outsiders, are now entwined in the fabric of our family narrative, contributing their own tales and laughter to our shared history.")

9. They last until the next summer reunion.

Explanation: The text indicates that the memories from the gatherings sustain the family until they meet again the following summer.

("The memories we create during these gatherings will last us until the next summer, when once again, we return to the embrace of family.")

10. It unites everyone, linking generations with music.

Explanation: The text suggests that playing the guitar and singing together serves as a unifying activity for the family across different generations.

("A guitar is brought out, and soon, everyone is singing along to old and new tunes alike. The music unites us, a harmonious thread linking generations.")

Multiple Choice Cloze Answers

1. B

Explanation: 'charming' suggests attractiveness with a touch of old-fashioned quality, fitting the context.

2. C

Explanation: 'countless' emphasizes the large number of memories, which is coherent with the context.

3. B

Explanation: 'backdrop' means the setting or background, fitting for a garden during a reunion.

4. C

Explanation: 'await' means to wait for, which is the correct action that the grandparents are doing.

5. B

Explanation: 'emerge' means to come out into view, appropriate for greeting someone's arrival.

6. C

Explanation: 'life of the party' is an idiomatic expression meaning the most lively and entertaining person at a social gathering.

7. B

Explanation: 'hide and seek' is the name of a well-known children's game, making it the only logical choice.

8. A

Explanation: 'feast' refers to a large meal prepared for celebrations, appropriate for the reunion context.

9. C

Explanation: 'bridging' means to connect or reduce the distance between things, metaphorically fitting here for family bonds.

10. A

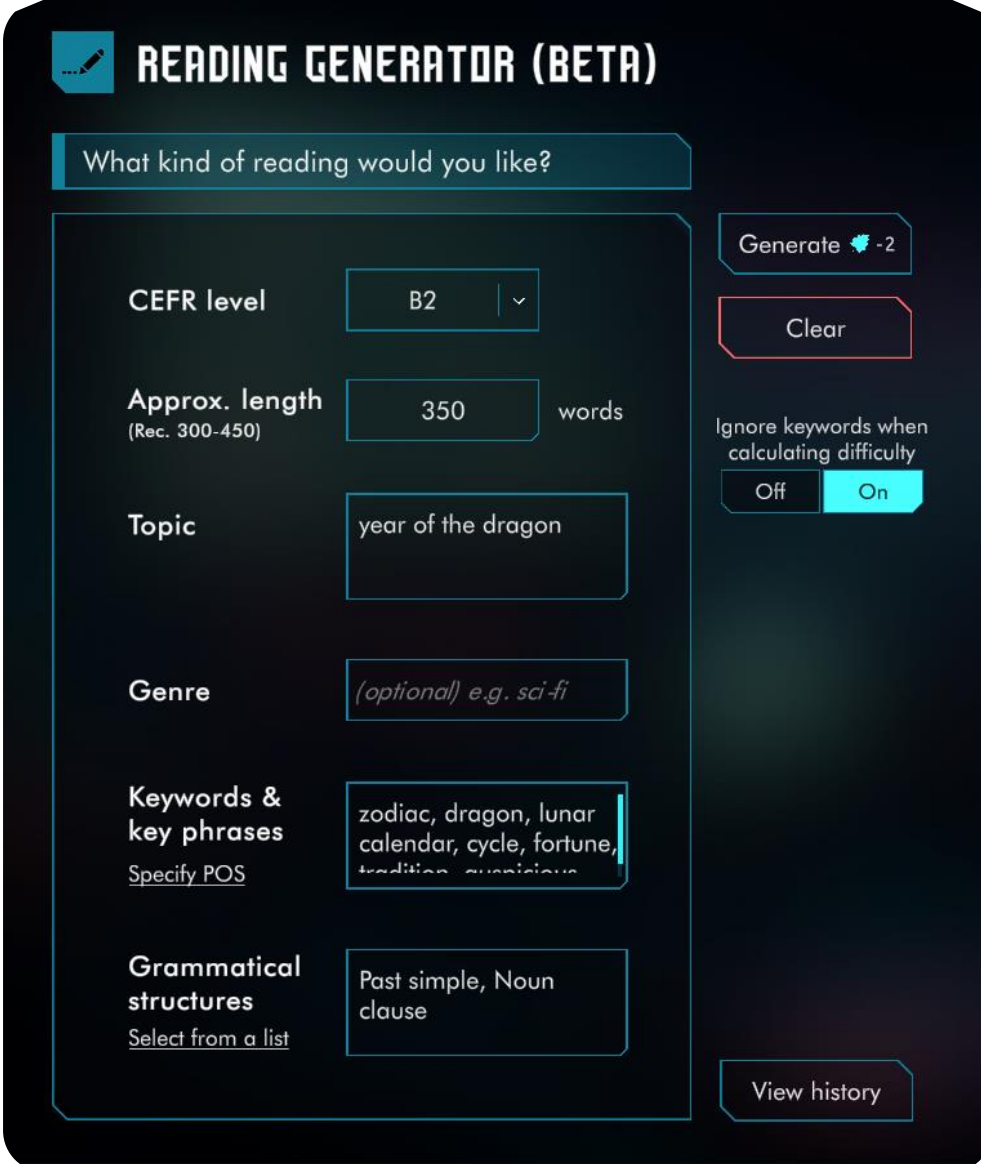
Explanation: 'divisions' means differences or separations, and in this context it refers to age differences that are set aside.

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Ignore keywords when calculating difficulty
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