OPTION A

“The way of St. James: a unique experience”

My backpack weighed 14kg at the airport. Three days later, after throwing away many essential items, it was just 10kg, which was still too heavy. As well as the excess from my backpack I lost 8kg, which was a pleasant surprise when I returned home.

I was hiking the Way of St. James, an ancient pilgrimage route dating back to the 9th century. The main route is a path across the north of Spain to Santiago, 760 km long. The official Camino hostels are amazingly cheap (usually about €4); however, to stay in one you must have a pilgrim passport. Tolerance is an essential condition for hostels living so I wondered if I would sleep but, as was the case on most nights, sleep came easily and quickly.

There are beautiful old churches in every little village, and incredible cathedrals in each city. I had wanted time to contemplate life, but the mental noise quickly evaporates while walking, and the need to always be thinking disappears. Most of us had started alone, and then walked along the way with the pilgrims we met, who provided the greatest entertainment. We developed a camaraderie that does not normally happen on holiday, or even in life. I can’t help smiling when I remember an Italian girl who had a little cat’s bell on her pack that drove me crazy as we went along quiet desolate paths.

I walked on the Camino for four amazing weeks. Four weeks without mobiles ringing, without television, without newspapers and without background radio noise. I would repeat without blinking.

I * COMPREHENSION (4 points: questions 1-3, 1 point each; 4-5, 0.5 points each)
ANSWER QUESTIONS 1-3 ACCORDING TO THE INFORMATION GIVEN IN THE TEXT. USE YOUR OWN WORDS.
1. Describe briefly two characteristics of accommodation along the Way of St. James.
2. Why couldn’t the author contemplate life as much as she or he had wanted?
3. What things didn’t the writer miss along the journey?

ARE THESE STATEMENTS TRUE OR FALSE? JUSTIFY YOUR ANSWERS WITH THE PRECISE WORDS OR PHRASES FROM THE TEXT, OR USE YOUR OWN WORDS.
4. There is only one route to walk the Way of St. James.
5. One of the girls the writer met carried a pet with her.

II * USE OF ENGLISH (3 points; questions 6-9, 0.25 points each; 10-13, 0.5 points each)
6. FIND IN THE TEXT ONE SYNONYM FOR “noiseless” (adjective).
7. FIND IN THE TEXT THE WORD WHICH HAS THE FOLLOWING DEFINITION: “A person who travels to a holy place as an act of religious love” (noun).
8. FILL IN THE GAP WITH THE CORRECT PREPOSITION: I’ve always dreamt _______ walking along the Way of St. James. (at / of / with / for)
9. WHICH WORD DOES NOT HAVE THE SAME MEANING?: Track / landscape / way / path
10. REWRITE THE SENTENCE WITHOUT CHANGING ITS MEANING. BEGIN AS INDICATED: The party was so noisy that I couldn’t sleep. It was such _______.
11. GIVE A QUESTION FOR THE UNDERLINED WORDS: Most pilgrims walked with the people they met.
12. TURN THE FOLLOWING SENTENCE INTO THE ACTIVE VOICE: The passport can be collected from the pilgrim’s office.
13. FILL IN THE GAP WITH THE CORRECT OPTION: I wasn’t used _______ next to strangers. (to sleeping / to sleep / sleeping)

III * PRODUCTION (3 points)
14. WRITE A COMPOSITION OF APPROXIMATELY 120 WORDS ABOUT THE TOPIC PROPOSED. YOU MUST FOCUS STRICTLY ON IT:
   Could you live for four weeks without television, the Internet, video games or your mobile? Explain.