

You are going to read an extract from a newspaper article. Six paragraphs have been removed from the article. Choose from the paragraphs **A – G** the one which fits each gap (**41 – 46**). There is one extra paragraph which you do not need to use.

In the exam, you mark your answers **on a separate answer sheet**.

Call of the wild

What can wild animals tell us about the way life should be lived? Well, take the example of the whitethroat. You could say that it's a rather drab little bird with a rather ordinary and tuneless little song. Or, on the contrary, you could say the whitethroat is a messenger of excitement and danger – a thrilling embodiment of life and risk and defiance of death.

41

Whitethroats, however, are mostly lurkers and skulkers. You'll usually find them well hidden in a nice thick, prickly hedge, their brown plumage picked out with the small vanity of, yes, a whitethroat. The male bird sings a jumble of notes thrown together any old how, a song that is generally described as 'scratchy'. A whitethroat is not normally a bird that hands out thrills to human observers. But all the same, it is a bird that lives by the thrill and is prepared to die by the thrill.

42

Or not, of course. A small bird that makes such a big racket and then flies into the open will clearly excite the interest of every bird of prey within earshot. And that is part of the point: "Come on, you hawks! Have a go if you think you're hard enough!"

43

But I can't help wondering how the bird feels about this. Does he do it because he is a clock, a feathered machine that has been wound up by the passing of the seasons to make this proven ancestral response? Or does he do it because making a springtime song flight is the most wonderfully thrilling thing to do?

44

And it is there in aspects of human behaviour too. I have spoken to mountaineers, power-boaters, Grand Prix drivers, parachutists and jockeys and they all say the same thing. It's not something they do because they have a death wish. The exact opposite is the case – risk makes them feel more intensely, more gloriously alive. They take risks because they love life. It is part of the contradiction of being ourselves. We thrill to danger. We can't resist it. We love safety and security and comfort, yet we seek risk and adventure.

45

That's why we watch films and identify with risk-taking heroes and feisty heroines in all kinds of precarious situations. It's why we pass the time on a long journey by reading a thriller in which the main character dodges death by inches all the way to our destination. And it explains why we support a football team; knowing that the more we care, the more we will find both excitement and despair.

46

But if home is so great, why did we ever leave it? And if adventure is so great, why did we come back? It is because our nature – our human, mammalian, animal nature – insists that we love both; that one is not complete without the other.

- A** And so, like the whitethroat, we all seek danger, even if we don't take the actual risks ourselves. In other words, although we've spent 99 per cent of that history as hunter-gatherers, the deepest parts of ourselves are still wild.
- B** And the whitethroat tells us that we don't have the monopoly on this feeling – it is something that other living creatures understand just as well. A liking for danger is part of our inheritance as mammals, as animals
- C** Because every now and then in springtime he will leave that little leafy home of his and launch himself skywards – so moved by his own eloquence that he must take to the wing and fly up, singing all the time, before gliding gently back down to safety.
- D** You must make your own mind up on these issues – but one thing you can't avoid is that this deliberate annual courting of danger is part of the way the whitethroat lives his life.
- E** Of course, it's not the same for everybody, not to the same extent. Most of us enjoy different levels and different forms of risk at different times, just like the whitethroat in his hedge. And it is all the better for the time afterwards, when we have risked and survived and returned safe and sound.
- F** The glories of the whitethroat's song demand this exhibition: the better and bolder and louder the song flight, the more likely the male is to attract a nice mate and keep that patch of prickly territory for himself. That's the evolutionary reason for it, anyway.
- G** You might take this opposite view because what the whitethroat shows us, amongst many other things, is why humans love tigers, love going on safari, love winter sports and fast cars, love riding horses and, above all, love all the vast, wild open spaces left on this planet. Most other creatures will give you the same message, too, if you study them. But the whitethroat does it in an especially vivid way.