

2A

Exceptional people

Vocabulary intensifying adverbs  
Grammar relative clauses with prepositions

**QUICK REVIEW Sayings**  
Work in pairs. Give the beginning of four English sayings. Your partner completes and explains them. **A** *We'll cross that bridge ...* **B** *We'll cross that bridge when we come to it. What this means is ...*

Reading

- 1 a** Look at the book cover and the definition of *savant*. What do you think Daniel Tammet's unusual abilities are?
- b** Read the article. Name two things Daniel can do exceptionally well and two things he finds difficult.
- c** Read the article again and choose the best ending for these sentences.
- 1 Daniel didn't speak much as a child because he ...
    - a was shy.
    - b was more interested in the numbers in his head.
    - c found it difficult to learn to talk.
  - 2 Daniel finds mental arithmetic easy because he ...
    - a enjoys working out the answers.
    - b doesn't have to write anything down.
    - c can see the answers in his head.
  - 3 Regarding savants, scientists are not able to tell us ...
    - a the reasons for their skills.
    - b the type of skills they often have.
    - c how many savants exist.
  - 4 Daniel is unusual for a savant because ...
    - a he has a range of abilities.
    - b his abilities are exceptional.
    - c he can offer insights into his abilities.
  - 5 Working independently is important for Daniel because ...
    - a flexibility is a priority for him.
    - b it enables him to do things in his own way.
    - c he prefers working directly with his clients.
  - 6 Nowadays, Daniel finds it ...
    - a easier to appreciate his individuality.
    - b harder to deal with painful experiences.
    - c harder to cope with life's ups and downs.
- d** Work in pairs. Discuss these questions.
- 1 Why do you think Daniel finds *Pi* as beautiful as the Mona Lisa or a Mozart symphony?
  - 2 Daniel says: "I would have traded everything for normality. But I've since learned that being different isn't necessarily a bad thing." Why do you think his attitude has changed?
  - 3 Which do you think is more important in life: academic brilliance or emotional intelligence? Give reasons.

A GENIUS EXPLAINS

Daniel Tammet is an autistic\* savant with an extraordinary gift for numbers and languages. Unlike other savants, Daniel has described how he does it in a book, *Born on a Blue Day*, in which he writes about his life.

"I've got a quiet voice," he says, in his gentle monotone. "I think it's because as a child I didn't speak very much. It was hard for me to find my voice, because I was absorbed in my own world." Daniel's world is a rich and strange one, in which every number up to 10,000 has colour, texture and emotional resonance. "The number one is a brilliant, bright white, like somebody shining a torch in my eyes ... Four is shy and quiet, like me. Eighty-nine is like falling snow."

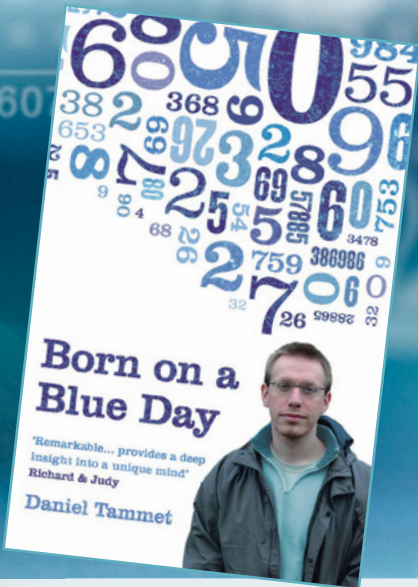
Daniel's condition allows him to achieve extraordinary mathematical feats, all of which he finds simple; he holds the European record for recalling Pi – the mathematical constant – to the furthest decimal place. It took him five hours and nine minutes.

"Pi is for me an extremely beautiful thing," he says, "like the Mona Lisa or a Mozart symphony." For Daniel, mental arithmetic is a gorgeous kaleidoscopic process. "When I divide one number by another, say, 13 divided by 97, I see a spiral rotating downwards in larger and larger loops that seem to warp and curve. The shapes coalesce into the right number. I never write anything down."

Savants constitute less than 1% of the population, and about 10% of the autistic population, yet their abilities are shrouded in mystery. Savant skills tend to occur in five areas: music, art, calendar calculating, mathematics and mechanical or spatial skills (for instance, the capacity to measure distances without instruments). Generally, a single special skill exists but, in some instances, multiple skills can occur. One skill for which all savants are known is an extraordinary memory.



**savant** /'sævənt/ someone who has unusual, often exceptional, abilities or knowledge



While many savants have a restricted vocabulary and are not able to explain their abilities, this is clearly not the case with Daniel. Not only can he describe how his mind works, but he can also speak ten languages, including Lithuanian and Welsh. He is even creating his own language: Mänti, meaning a type of tree.

However, Daniel's condition also has its limitations. "I had to teach myself to look into people's eyes," he explains. "Before that, I used to look at their mouth, because it was the part of their face that was moving." He would find it impossible to fit a 9–5 job around his daily tasks, all of which he does in the same order every day. For instance, he drinks his five cups of tea at exactly the same time each day and feels upset and anxious if his routine is interrupted. In order for work to fit in with his particular needs, he set up his own business, writing internet courses for private clients in language learning, numeracy and literacy, which he does at home. This has the advantage of being in his control and allowing him to work autonomously.

Daniel's condition was not diagnosed until he was 25. Growing up as an undiagnosed savant was not easy and he was often lonely. It was difficult being at school surrounded by children, none of whom understood his condition. "I was desperate for a friend. My brothers and sisters had friends and I used to watch them playing, to try to work out what they did and how friendship worked. I would have traded everything for normality. But I've since learned that being different isn't necessarily a bad thing."

Daniel feels he is progressing towards 'outgrowing' his autism. He cried for the first time in his adult life a few years ago, when his cat died. He is getting better at social interaction.

"Every experience I have I add to my mental library, and hopefully life should then get easier." In this, he seems to sum up the progress we all hope for.



Daniel Tammet



## HELP WITH GRAMMAR

Relative clauses with prepositions

### 2 a Match the sentences to these styles of English.

- more formal, usually written English
- less formal, usually spoken English

- Daniel has described how he does it in a book **in which** he writes about his life.
  - Daniel has described how he does it in a book **that** he writes about his life in.
- One skill **for which** all savants are known is an extraordinary memory.
  - One skill **that** all savants are known **for** is an extraordinary memory.

### b Complete these rules.

In more formal, usually written English ...

- that* changes to \_\_\_\_\_ after a preposition.
- the preposition comes \_\_\_\_\_ the relative pronoun.

### c Look at the phrases in bold in sentences a and b and answer the questions.

a *Daniel's condition allows him to achieve extraordinary mathematical feats, **all of which** he finds simple.*

b *It was difficult being at school, surrounded by children, **none of whom** understood his condition.*

- What does *who* change to when it comes after a preposition?
- Which ideas do the phrases in bold refer to?
- Which phrase in bold is the subject of the clause that follows?
- Which phrase in bold is the object of the clause that follows?
- What additional determiners (*all*, *none*, etc.) can combine with *of which* or *of whom* in non-defining relative clauses?

**TIP** • When we are speaking informally, we can use *none of them*, *all of them*, etc. Notice the change in word order.

*He would find it impossible to fit a 9–5 job around his daily tasks. **He does all of them in the same order every day.***

*He would find it impossible to fit a 9–5 job around his daily tasks, **all of which he does in the same order every day.***

d Check in **GRAMMAR 2.1** p138.

### 3 a Complete each gap in the article with a preposition, and *which* or *whom*.

b Work in pairs. Change the gapped sentences to a more informal spoken style.

KIM PEEK, who died in 2009, was known as a 'megasavant' due to his exceptional memory. At the age of four, although no school would accept him, he sought out encyclopaedias, atlases and telephone directories, all <sup>1</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ he memorised. As a result of his motor deficiencies, Kim was looked after by his father, <sup>2</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ he totally depended. It was Kim's life <sup>3</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ the Oscar-winning film, *Rain Man*, was based. Following the film's success, Kim was invited to take part in public appearances. On some of these occasions, screenwriter Barry Morrow, <sup>4</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ Kim had collaborated, gave him the Oscar statuette to carry. These appearances increased Kim's self-confidence. He thoroughly enjoyed meeting people and had a marked sense of humour. He also loved showing strangers his remarkable ability for calendar calculations, by telling them <sup>5</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ day of the week they were born.



## Listening

### 4 a Look at the photo of Tommy McHugh, a builder who became a painter. What do you think of his work?

b **CD1** 7 Listen to the radio programme. Why did Tommy become a painter?

c Listen again and complete these sentences.

- Tommy hadn't done any painting at all until he reached his \_\_\_\_\_.
- He compares his mind to a \_\_\_\_\_, which generates bubbles full of creative ideas.
- After hospital, Tommy and his wife received no \_\_\_\_\_.
- Tommy's life changed when Marion Kalmus told him that he was an \_\_\_\_\_.
- Changes to the temporal lobe increase people's \_\_\_\_\_.
- As well as painting, many people with Tommy's condition tend to \_\_\_\_\_ a lot.
- Being very productive can result in work of variable \_\_\_\_\_.
- Although Tommy's lifespan is uncertain, he regards his life as an \_\_\_\_\_.

### 5 a Work in pairs. Try to summarise Tommy's story.

b Discuss these questions.

- Do you think what happened to Tommy was good or bad?
- How do you think Tommy feels? What about his ex-wife?

## HELP WITH PRONUNCIATION

### Speech units

- 6 a** **CD1** **8** Listen and notice how the presenter organises what he is saying into speech units. The speech units are marked with //.

The transformation in Tommy has been quite // remarkable. //  
So // what happened six years ago // to bring it about? //  
The extraordinary answer // is // a brain haemorrhage. //  
One day Tommy was in the bathroom // when he remembers something // popping in his head.

**TIP** • Speech units help us to organise what we say by dividing it into groups of words. Speech units can vary in length in order to emphasise particular words.

// *popping in his head* //

**b** Listen again and practise.

**c** Work in pairs. How do you think the extract below can be organised into speech units? (There are many possible answers.)

A few days later, he was sent home with a bag full of tablets. I didn't know what to do – he couldn't walk, or feed himself, or do anything really. Sometimes he didn't even know where he was. It was awful. He was totally frustrated, angry, and in pain.

**d** **CD1** **9** Listen to Jan. Practise saying the extract in **6c**, paying attention to speech units.

## Vocabulary Intensifying adverbs

- 7 a** Which adverb does not go with these adjectives or verbs? Check in **VOCABULARY 2.1** p137.

- 1 I ~~utterly~~/thoroughly/really enjoy ...
- 2 I'd be ~~deeply~~/strongly/totally frustrated if ...
- 3 It's ~~highly~~/completely/extremely (un)likely that ...
- 4 I ~~strongly~~/firmly/highly believe that ...
- 5 I ~~bitterly~~/deeply/perfectly regret ...
- 6 I was ~~bitterly~~/utterly/extremely disappointed when ...
- 7 I ~~completely~~/entirely/highly agree ...
- 8 I ~~vividly~~/distinctly/perfectly remember ...

**b** Use five of the adverbs and adjectives/verbs to make true or false sentences about you. Think about how to organise your sentences into speech units.

**c** Work in pairs. Take turns to say your sentences. Guess which of your partner's sentences are false.

### Get ready ... Get it right!

- 8** Think of someone who should win an award for being exceptional (someone famous or someone you know). Write five reasons.
- 9 a** Work in groups. Take turns to tell each other about the person you chose.

I firmly believe my cousin Julia should win the award. She was ill for a while and made redundant, neither of which put her off starting her own business.

**b** Vote for the person you think should win the award. Then tell the class.





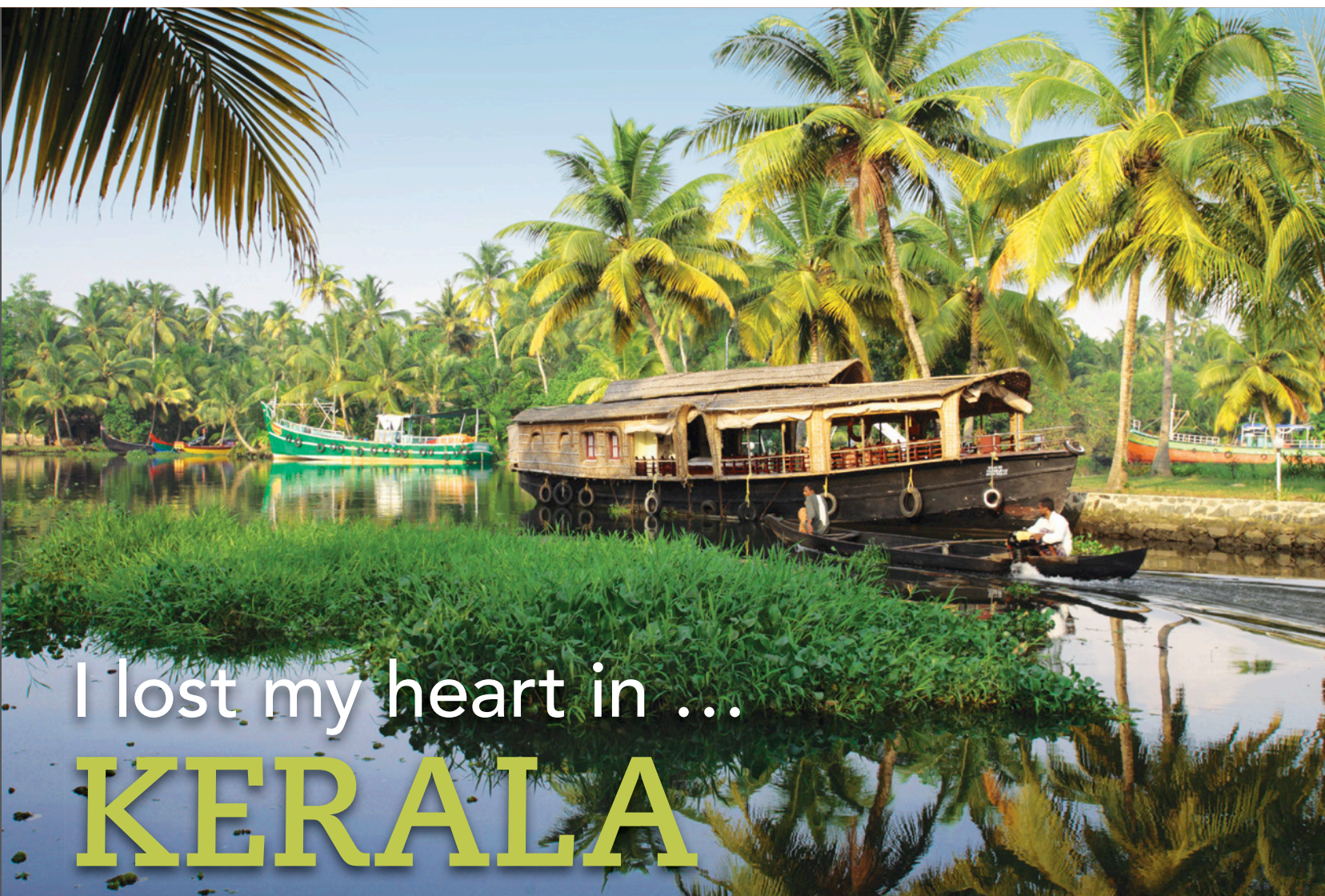
**QUICK REVIEW** Relative clauses with prepositions; intensifying adverbs Think of two famous places you have visited. Prepare to describe them. Work in pairs. Your partner tries to guess the place you're describing. *A I thoroughly enjoyed visiting this Spanish city, in which you can find Gaudí's famous cathedral. B Is it Barcelona?*

### Speaking and Reading

- 1
- Work in pairs. Which three reasons are most important to you when choosing a holiday, and why?
- the climate
  - the tourist facilities
  - the landscape
  - the local culture
  - the accommodation
  - the cost of the holiday
  - the nightlife
- 2
- a Look at the photo of Kerala on p21. What do you think the writer loved about this place?
- b Read the article on p21 and check your ideas.
- c Read the article again. Answer these questions.
- Why did the writer choose January to visit Kerala?
  - What did the writer find surprising about Kerala?
  - What does the writer predict will happen to Kerala soon?
  - Which is the best way to travel if you want to see the 'real' Kerala?
  - What is unusual about the way people fish in Cochin?
  - Why are some famous people attracted to Kerala?
- d Work in pairs. In which place, if any, have you 'lost your heart'? What made it so wonderful? How would you spend a perfect day there?

### HELP WITH GRAMMAR Participle clauses

- Participle clauses can be used to give more information about things, events or ideas in a sentence. They are often used to make a piece of writing more varied and sophisticated.
- 3
- a Look at participle clauses 1–5 in the article. Which ones use the forms below?
- a present participle
  - a past participle
  - a perfect participle
- b Compare examples a–e below with clauses 1–5 in the article. What changes occur when we use participle clauses?
- ... **so** they act as a vital means of communication between remote villages and crowded towns.
  - While** you glide silently along in a canoe, you get to see a rural Kerala preserved through the ages.
  - Because** it's caught locally every day, it's always wonderfully fresh.
  - After** I'd had an indulgent lunch, I'd lie in a hammock.
  - If** it's poured very slowly across your forehead, the oil feels like a cow is licking you.
- TIP • When we use *not* in a participle clause, it usually comes before the participle.
- Not knowing much about Kerala, we bought a guidebook.*  
not ~~Knowing not much about Kerala, ...~~
- c Match the words in bold in a–e in 3b to meanings 1–4.
- |          |             |
|----------|-------------|
| 1 cause  | 3 condition |
| 2 result | 4 time      |
- d Complete the rule.
- Past participles are used in *passive/active* clauses, and present participles are used in *passive/active* clauses.
- e Check in **GRAMMAR 2.2** p139.
- 4
- Rewrite these sentences, starting with a participle clause.
- Because I didn't know my way round Kerala, I headed straight for the Tourist Information office.
  - The rain was very heavy at that time of year, so it caused flooding everywhere.
  - If it is visited out of season, Kerala is not full of tourists.
  - As we drove through the Periyar Wildlife Sanctuary, I was lucky enough to spot wild elephants.
  - After walking in the Wildlife Sanctuary, I took a boat trip on Periyar Lake.
  - After I'd had breakfast, I went swimming in the lake.
- 5
- a Think of an interesting experience you have had. Write a short paragraph, using participle clauses, to describe the ideas, events and things that happened.
- b Work in groups. Read about each other's experiences and ask questions to find out more.



# I lost my heart in ... KERALA

## WHY?

It's incredibly beautiful and hypnotic, with lush vegetation, white beaches and vividly green countryside. Entire communities live along the canals and lagoons, which stretch over 1,900 km, <sup>1</sup>**acting as a vital means of communication** between remote villages and crowded towns. In order to avoid the monsoon season, I went in January. At that time of year, the weather is great and you are normally guaranteed warm days and cooler, comfortable nights.

I didn't expect to find it still so unspoilt, given that it's relatively close to Goa. People don't seem to have worked out yet that Kerala is a lot nicer and much less touristy. So you feel as if you're discovering somewhere entirely new, like you're on a totally different planet. However, since it's been nominated one of National Geographic's '50 must-see destinations of a lifetime', it's only a matter of time before all this now changes.

## WHAT SHOULDN'T I MISS?

Take a trip along the backwaters. <sup>2</sup>**Gliding silently along in a canoe**, you get to see a rural Kerala preserved through the ages and completely hidden from the road. You'll pass locals doing their laundry in the river, schoolteachers taking classes on the banks and so on, which is an enchanting experience. Make sure you take a camera. A stopover in the fascinating capital, Cochin, is also a must. A cluster of islands surrounded by a network of rivers and lakes, Cochin is home to a unique culture. There's extraordinary fishing on the coast there; people hang from their boats into the water and pick up fish with their teeth, before chucking them into enormous nets. In the evenings, go to a restaurant and try the wide variety of fish Kerala is so famous for. <sup>3</sup>**Caught locally every day**, it's always wonderfully fresh.

## A PERFECT DAY

I would probably wake up around 10 a.m. and tuck into a delicious Indian breakfast of pancakes with lots of curry powder. Then I'd take to the backwaters for three or four hours. Later on, <sup>4</sup>**having had an indulgent lunch**, I'd lie in a hammock, sipping fresh coconut milk through a straw and reading a good book. I might follow in the footsteps of the Hollywood stars, who come to Kerala in search of Ayurveda, the natural Indian healthcare which dates back more than 3,000 years. The treatments use herbal oils made from the exotic spices that are so plentiful here. <sup>5</sup>**Poured very slowly across your forehead**, the oil feels like a cow is licking you; this may sound revolting but is actually very enjoyable and is supposed to be good for people suffering from the stresses and strains of modern life.

After supper, totally relaxed, I'd head for bed, not forgetting to put on an eye mask in order to avoid seeing any of the local spiders!



Listening

6 a CD1 10 CD1 11 Look at the photos and captions. Listen to two conversations. Did Bruce and Melissa enjoy their holidays?

b CD1 10 Listen to Bruce again. Answer these questions about his comments.

- 1 "They were quite grey." (What were? Give more information.)
- 2 "It's brilliant for that." (What is it? What is it brilliant for?)
- 3 "They're great." (What are they? What do they do?)
- 4 "You can walk right up to them." (Up to what? Why can you do this?)

c Look at these words/phrases Melissa uses. Which describe her expectations and which describe her actual experiences?

- |                          |                       |
|--------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1 a beautiful lodge      | 5 gravel              |
| 2 driving, pounding rain | 6 a very small dinghy |
| 3 a log cabin            | 7 choppy seas         |
| 4 a sandy beach          |                       |

d CD1 11 Listen to Melissa again and check. Add details about her actual experiences.

e Which of these places would you prefer to go to? Why?

HELP WITH VOCABULARY Adjective word order

- When describing a noun, there is an order that adjectives usually follow. Notice that opinions come before facts, the general before the specific.

opinion	size	age	colour	origin	material	
beautiful			white		sandy	beaches
stark		modern			log*	cabins
	massive	100-year-old				tortoises
charming				rustic	stone*	cottages

\*These are nouns used as adjectives.

7 a Look at these adjectives in bold. Do they describe opinion, size, age, colour, origin or material?

- 1 **breath-taking** **high** **snow-capped** peaks
- 2 **delicious** **Thai** **fish** and **coconut** curries
- 3 **extravagant** **white** **marble** buildings
- 4 **picture-book** **medieval** **Italian** villages

b Look at these examples. When speaking, we try not to put too many adjectives in front of the noun. How do we avoid doing this?

- rather **stupid-looking** **clumsy** **birds**, **with** **blue** **feet** **and** **long** **necks**
- charming** **rustic** **cottages** **in** **stone**
- delicious** **Thai** **curries**, (**which** **were**) **made** **of** **fish** **and** **coconut**

c Check in VOCABULARY 2.2 p137.

8 Add the extra information in brackets. Use a relative clause and/or with, and or in.

- 1 a delightful Victorian cottage (six bedrooms, quiet area)
- 2 a spacious, modern flat (well-decorated, inexpensive)
- 3 a classic round-necked sweater (blue, cotton)
- 4 a funny, well-written contemporary drama (original, superbly acted)
- 5 a scruffy young writer (dark hair, beard)
- 6 an Italian sports model (metallic grey, sun-roof)



Come face to face with blue-footed boobies in the Galápagos Islands.



Spend summer in Ireland  
Stay in charming rustic stone cottages  
and sunbathe on its beautiful white  
sandy beaches.

Get ready ... Get it right!

9 Think about a place that you have been to that you either love or hate. Use adjectives to describe it.

10 a Work in groups. Describe your place. Ask follow-up questions.

The first time I visited this city I really disliked it because it was so noisy and chaotic, with a lot of traffic and pollution. But ...

b Tell the class about the best or worst place you heard about.

1 Work in pairs. What do you know about Venice?

2 Read extract A, from a review of Venice. Find and correct eight mistakes with apostrophes.

WRITING 2.1 ► p140.

A

Venice is one of Europes most romantic cities. I vividly remember the first time I saw it because its so beautiful and theres nowhere else like it anywhere in the world. <sup>1</sup>As soon as you come out of the station you see all the boat's going up and down the Grand Canal, which contributes to its' fairytale atmosphere.

I <sup>2</sup>first went there with my parents when I was ten, and I've been going there <sup>3</sup>regularly for the last 20 years. <sup>4</sup>When I arrive, I usually take the river bus and I'm still impressed by the stunning building's which line the canals. In fact, the building's unique architecture makes Venice a real open-air museum. <sup>5</sup>Then, I like to go for a wander around the citys colourful, narrow streets and drop in to the local people's bars for the best coffee in the world. <sup>6</sup>While I sit drinking, life bustles on around me. Pure bliss.

b Read extract B, from another review. Add one apostrophe to sentences 1–6.

B

<sup>1</sup>Venice is a historic city of small islands, carved up by canals which have proved central to the citys development and economy. <sup>2</sup>Today, the canals boats still provide the means for transport of goods and people within the city. <sup>3</sup>The city is often threatened by the Adriatic Seas tides, which cause floods between autumn and early spring. <sup>4</sup>During the 20<sup>th</sup> century, many wells were constructed to satisfy the local industries requirements and as a result, Venice began to subside. The sinking has slowed markedly since these wells were banned in the 1960s. <sup>5</sup>However, the city is still threatened by low-level floods that have made many of Venices old houses uninhabitable. <sup>6</sup>Some recent studies have suggested that the citys no longer sinking, but this is not yet certain.

3 a Read extract A again. Replace the underlined connecting words/phrases with phrases in the box (not all of which are necessary).

while as soon as originally the moment  
 afterwards ever since meanwhile

b Fill in the gaps with words/phrases from 3a. Sometimes there is more than one possible answer. WRITING 2.2 ► p140.

- \_\_\_\_\_ I arrived there, I wanted to make it my home.
- Tourism improved \_\_\_\_\_ they renovated the centre.
- \_\_\_\_\_ the canals were built, the city has suffered from flooding.
- The town was \_\_\_\_\_ inhabited by farm workers.
- I visited some old friends \_\_\_\_\_ I was staying there.
- I decided to stay in a cheap hotel. \_\_\_\_\_, I regretted it.
- I sat anxiously waiting for the call. \_\_\_\_\_, I tried to get on with some work but kept looking at the clock.

4 a Choose a place you know well that you would recommend to tourists. Make notes on these topics.

- what the place is known for
- a description of the place
- your personal experience of being there
- when to visit and what to see

b Work in pairs. Discuss your notes. Would you like to visit your partner's place? Why/Why not?

5 a Write a review of the place you discussed in 4b, which would be suitable for a travel website.

b Check your writing for the correct use of these features.

- apostrophes
- connecting words/phrases
- adjective word order
- intensifying adverbs

6 Read other students' reviews. Choose two places you would prefer to visit.

7 a Work in groups. Discuss the places you chose.

b Which place is the most popular? Why?

► For more Writing practice: Portfolio 2, Workbook p57.





# 2C VOCABULARY AND SKILLS

## Spoilt for choice

**Vocabulary** describing places  
**Skills** Reading: tourist information;  
 Listening: interview about tourism  
**Real World** making recommendations

**QUICK REVIEW** Adjective order **Work in groups.**  
 One person describes something, using one adjective. The next person adds an adjective in the correct order. **A** an old man **B** a nice old man **C** a nice old British man

- 1 **a** List places in China that you have heard of or been to. How much do you know about these places?  
**b** Look at the photos and read the website extracts. Which areas or cities would you like to visit? Put them in order.
- 2 Underline the words/phrases that you think the writer uses to make the areas sound interesting and attractive. Check in **VOCABULARY 2.3** p137.
- 3 **CD1** 12 Listen to Cheng, a tourism specialist. What does he say about the two most popular tourist destinations?
- 4 **a** **CD1** 13 Listen to Cheng talking about the diversity that China has to offer as a holiday destination.
  - 1 Make notes on additional information about the places on the map.
  - 2 Find Guilin on the map.
  - 3 Why does Cheng recommend it?**b** Work in pairs. Compare notes. Then listen again to check.
- 5 **CD1** 14 Work in pairs. Listen to the next part then discuss the questions.
  - 1 Which city offers the best nightlife?
  - 2 Why is food in China so diverse?
  - 3 Which place sounds the most interesting? Why?
- 6 **a** Think of three places a visitor should see to appreciate your country. Make notes on how you can describe them in an interesting way. Use these Real World phrases.

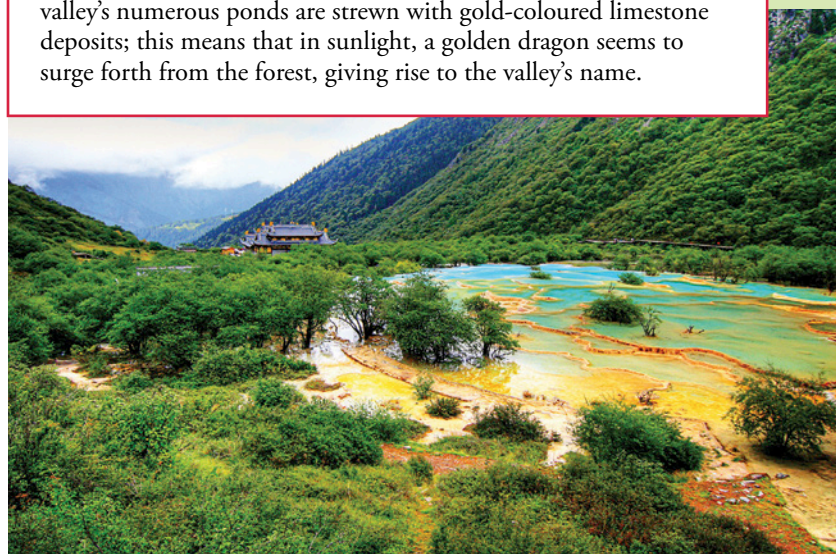
### REAL WORLD Making recommendations

- In (Shanghai), you must try the ...
- If you enjoy (culture), there are ...
- You can visit (Guilin), which is definitely worth seeing.
- If it's (history) you're after/into, ...
- You can't beat/do better than ...

**b** Work in groups. Tell each other about your places. Say why you chose them and who would enjoy them. If you are from the same country, did you choose the same places? Why?

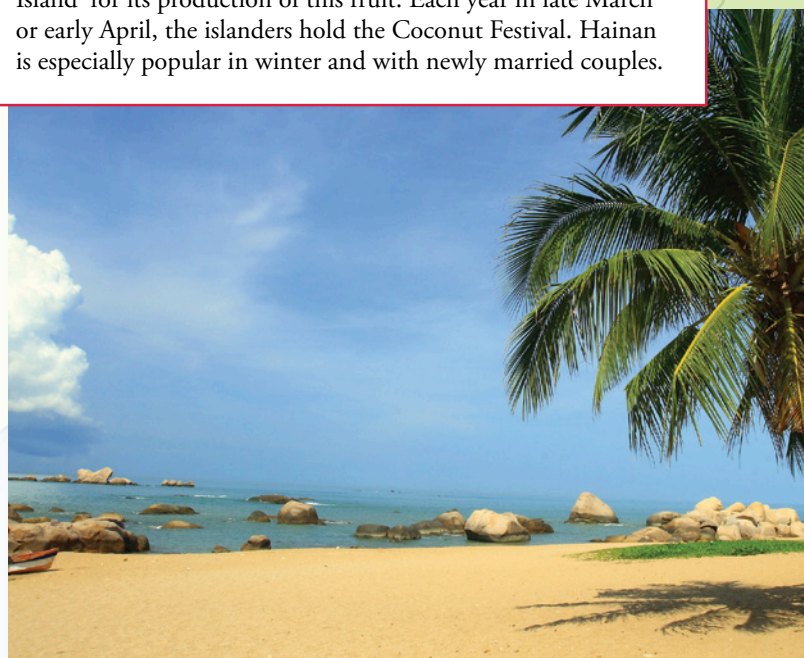
### Chengdu, south-west China

Chengdu is a modern city, full of traffic and high-rise department stores. So why visit? In Chengdu's teahouse culture, you can enjoy tea while people-watching and playing mahjong. It is the best place in the world to see the Giant Panda, with 85% of the world's remaining pandas living in reserves in Sichuan. Beyond the city, you can experience the spectacular Huanglong Valley (Yellow Dragon Valley). Bordered by snow-clad peaks and glaciers, the valley's numerous ponds are strewn with gold-coloured limestone deposits; this means that in sunlight, a golden dragon seems to surge forth from the forest, giving rise to the valley's name.



### Hainan Island, south coast

While northern China is snowy and icebound, in Hainan it is possible to swim in the sea and enjoy warm sunshine all year round. Hainan is a tropical paradise, and is known as the 'Eastern Hawaii'. In addition to stunning golden beaches, it boasts such tropical scenery as the Dongjiao Coconut Plantation. In fact, Hainan Island is also called 'Coconut Island' for its production of this fruit. Each year in late March or early April, the islanders hold the Coconut Festival. Hainan is especially popular in winter and with newly married couples.





## Xi'an, north-west China

Were China a tree, Beijing would be the crown, while Xi'an would be its deep roots. As the saying goes, "Go to Shanghai and you will find a 100-year-old China; go to Beijing and you will find a 1000-year-old China; go to Xi'an and then you will find a 3000-year-old China". Xi'an records the great changes of the country just like a living history book. Home to the Terracotta Army, the city has a historical heritage second to none. Today, despite the searing summer heat and the freezing winters, Xi'an is a joy to visit.



## Beijing, north China

Many people say that the real culture of Beijing, China's capital city, lies in the winding lanes known as *hutong* (meaning 'water well') and the courtyards. The *hutong* originated during the Yuan Dynasty (1271–1368) when people settled around the water wells, leaving a passageway between two courtyards to make entering them more convenient. There are tens of thousands of hutong surrounding the Forbidden City, once home to the emperors. Shut away from the hustle and bustle of the city outside, the *hutong* dwellers enjoy a peaceful existence. Come and wander round these lanes, and you'll get a true taste of Beijing.



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- **Video (Remarkable!)** p125
- **Language Summary 2** p137
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- **Self-study DVD-ROM 2** with Review Video



### Reading and Writing

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- **Reading** a competition about inspirational people
- **Writing** using monolingual dictionaries