"Truth and lies"

A. Read and match the given themes to the paragraphs.

Can you believe what you read?

1 When Mike Scott, a singer, read the page about himself on Wikipedia.com, he noticed several facts were wrong. So he started correcting them online. When he got to the end of the page, he looked up and saw that the information at the top of the page was changing back again. He couldn't believe his eyes. He wrote about it in his blog and minutes later, he got a message from a complete stranger. The person explained that he was a big fan of Mike Scott and maintained the Mike Scott Wikipedia page. He checked the page regularly and if any facts changed, he immediately changed them back.

2 Today, anyone can write a blog or an article online. Wikipedia, where anyone can post or change an entry, has become a popular way to do research. But is it a good place to get reliable facts? In recent years, many people, like Mike Scott, have found that their online biographies contain inaccurate information. Terry Millstone, a web-based journalist, says, 'Wikipedia seems like a really great idea but actually it's quite a dangerous website. People call this the great internet age, but there's never been a worse time to get accurate information.' Not everyone agrees with this view. Pete Morley, another journalist, says, 'People criticise Wikipedia because they're afraid of it. There's no other source of information which is so up-to-date and free.'

3 So, is it a better idea to place our trust in what we read in magazines, newspapers and books? There have been a number of scandals in the publishing world over the years, but one of the most extreme was the story of Stephen Glass. At only 25, he was a celebrated journalist working for the highly respected US political magazine, *The New Republic.* All that ended in May 1998 when it was discovered that one of Glass's biggest articles was a fake. Later, it was found that Glass had made up facts in 27 of the 41 articles he wrote for the magazine.

4 So, how do we know what to believe? Words have always had the power to influence people and, rightly or wrongly, we tend to trust the printed word. But with the rise of the Internet, that trust is at greater risk than ever.

A. Can we believe what we read on the Internet?   Paragraph _____

B. Can we believe what we read on paper?   Paragraph _____

C. The difficulty of knowing what to believe   Paragraph _____

D. A surprise online discovery   Paragraph _____

B. Complete the questions with words and expressions in the passage.

inaccurate / trust / scandals / a fake / accurate / made up / reliable

1 How often do you think information in advertisements or magazines is _____?

2 Would you buy a designer T-shirt or DVD which was _____?

3 Do you _____ what politicians say? Why? Why not?

4 Have there been any _____ about famous people in your country recently?

5 Do you think it's more important for newspapers to be entertaining or _____ and _____?

6 Have you ever _____ something on your CV?

C. Read the text and complete the blank below with the phrases given.

FOUR OF THE MOST MISLEADING ADVERTS OF ALL TIME

1 Cigarettes are not harmful to your health

Hard to believe, but there was a time when tobacco companies actually tried to make us believe that doctors approved of smoking, or that certain brands were better for your throat than others. This advert for Lucky Strike from the 1920s is just one of dozens of ads featuring doctors recommending or 'preferring' one brand over another. Tobacco companies continued to use doctors to convince the public to smoke until the 1950s when evidence showing the link between smoking and lung cancer became too strong to ignore.

2 The thinner the better

In 2009 fashion retailer Ralph Lauren made a series of advertisements using a model who was so heavily airbrushed that her waist appeared to be smaller than her head. The ads were widely criticized in the press and experts warned of the negative effect these kinds of images might have on young girls. Lauren threatened to sue a blogger, who was the first person to publish and comment on the image online. But later he made a statement apologizing and admitting that we are responsible for the poor imaging and retouching that resulted in a very distorted image of a woman's body. However, he later fired the model in the advert, Fillipa Hamilton, because she was 'overweight' (she weighed 54 kilos).

3 Vitamins prevent cancer

In 2010 the pharmaceutical company Bayer was sued by the Center for Science in the Public Interest for running TV and radio commercials that suggested one of the ingredients in its One A Day vitamin supplement brand prevented prostate cancer. In fact, there is no scientific evidence that vitamins fight cancer in any way, Bayer eventually paid a fine and signed a legal agreement which banned it from claiming that vitamins can cure cancer.

4 You can lose weight without dieting or doing exercise

During the 1990s Enforma, a US Fitness company, ran an advertising campaign using TV commercials in which baseball player Steve Garvey promoted two diet supplements, a 'Fat Trapper' that supposedly blocked the absorption of fat, and a product named 'Exercise In A Bottle'. These two products together, according to the ad, would allow you to lose weight without dieting or exercise and promised consumers that they would never have to diet again. The Federal Trade Commission* (the FTC) took Garvey to court for making false claims about the product. So began an epic legal battle which the FTC ultimately lost when a federal court ruled that celebrity endorsers were not responsible for misleading statements in ads. However, this ruling eventually led to the passing of new regulations making it illegal for celebrities to make false statements of fact in advertisements.

1 **In spite of** _____, its price was really included in the magazine subscription.

2 **Even though** _____, and maybe don't even like them, we immediately want to be among the lucky few who have them.

3 **So as to** _____, they use expressions like, 'It's a must-have'..

4 ... and they combine this with a photograph of a large group of people, **so that** _____.

5 The photo has been airbrushed **in order to** _____, with perfect skin, and even more attractive than they are in real life.

6 **Although** _____,do you really think she colours her hair with it at home?

7 It was probably produced **for** _____, and paid for by them, too.

(A) the company itself
(B) the actress is holding the product in the photo
(C) we can't fail to get the message

(D) make us believe it
(E) we don't really need the products
(F) what the advert said
(G) make the models look even slimmer