

## Part 1: Exercise 3

Read the article below, and then answer the questions on the opposite page.

## On the Rails in India

*Jim Shekhdar, the celebrated adventurer and traveller, explains why he will never forget his first train journey...*

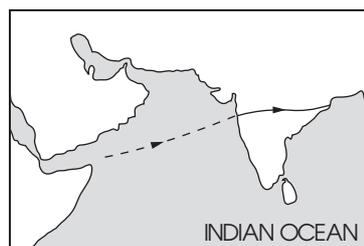
**A**t the age of seven, in 1954, I travelled by train from Mumbai to Kolkata, and I remember it vividly. My family and I had set off for a five-year stay in Jamshedpur. My father, an electrical engineer, was already out there. We first had to travel by boat from England to Egypt. Then travelling through Egypt by jeep, I saw the famous pyramids, which was very exciting for me and my sister and brother. I suppose it was the start of my travelling life.

After seeing the pyramids and leaving the Suez Canal, we then sailed on to Mumbai. From there, we took the train across India, which took three days and two nights. On the journey from Mumbai to Kolkata, the thing I remember best about the journey was the lions running alongside the train as I looked out of my window. We were in our own compartment in a first-class carriage, but the rest of the train was full and people were everywhere.

Every carriage had a balcony at each end so you could jump from one to another. The train resembled one of those American steam trains I was used to seeing in comics and cowboy films. We had a compartment to ourselves and a comfortable sleeping berth for each member of the family. There were stations along the way that we stopped at for as long as an hour, where you could get off and buy things to eat, such as rice and chapattis.

My brother was ten and my sister was thirteen, and we played games for much of the time, but even so we often got bored.

I also felt upset because I lost my favourite pen, which I had been given by my best friend when I left school in England to travel to India.



My first impression of India was that it was teeming with people and the sheer numbers of them overwhelmed me: they seemed to be everywhere, and I was bewildered by the noise, the delicious smells and the bustle.

Mumbai, I remember, was quite lush. There were trees and bush for the first few hours and then it became brownish-grey desert leading across a vast, flat plain. There were no mountains, just one huge, flat landscape. I was disappointed because I had imagined that India would be all jungle.

I suppose the sheer excitement of that journey is why I have spent so much of my life travelling.

(a) Where exactly in India did Jim Shekhdar and his family go to live? And for how long?

..... [1]

(b) What is Jim's best memory of the train journey?

..... [1]

(c) What did the train make Jim Shekhdar think of?

..... [1]

(d) What made the train journey comfortable?

..... [1]

(e) How did Jim's first impressions of India affect him?

..... [1]

(f) Why did the writer feel disappointed by the Indian landscape?

..... [1]

(g) Say why the journey wasn't always exciting.

..... [1]

[Total: 7]