# PROVA

## CELEBRITY NEWS

In her quest to meet the rich and famous, Emma has bribed security guards, donned disguises, and even climbed through windows! But she does not think of herself as a criminal. "I'm just doing my job. I only get paid for good stories, so I have to take extreme measures if I want to earn a decent income!'' Emma Worth writes articles about celebrity **gossip** for a famous magazine. She is one of a growing number of journalists who are using their professional skills to hunt and capture the so-called 'glitterati' unawares, each one hoping to score an exclusive, and preferably shocking, scoop. The work is highly lucrative: an interesting snippet might earn between £300 and £500, while a lead story could make a cool £10,000.

Gossip-mongering is nothing new. Indeed, sensationalist stories about the royal family (the A-list of their time) were published only a century after the invention of the printing press – in 1453! However, in recent years, our celebrity obsession seems to have escalated. Last year, *Heat* and *Closer*, the two best-selling UK gossip magazines, sold over a million copies every week, and new celebrity websites and TV programmes appear every month. Even the traditionally more 'serious' **press** are turning to celebrities to boost sales. For example, the broadsheet newspaper *The Telegraph* now has a regular, salacious gossip column called 'The Spy'.

But many people are critical of gossip hunters like Emma, not least the celebrities themselves, who complain that they are being treated without respect, and denied any **privacy**. Celebrity gossip is often very cruel. It seems we love to read about the football players that cheat on their girlfriends, or the Hollywood 'babes' with eating disorders. We love to poke fun too: at photographs of celebrities exposing their cellulite on the beach, or looking the worse for wear after a night out. You would need to be very thick-skinned indeed not to feel a little bit hurt by this type of relentlessly negative reportage. It is sometimes too easy to forget that underneath all the glamour, celebrities are just people like us, whose lives can be made a misery by intrusive press harassment. Do we really have a 'right' to see stars looking tired and unhappy, or to take pleasure in witnessing their **nervous breakdowns**?

Fortunately for the famous, however, it seems that a backlash is beginning. Sales of gossip publications are starting to slow, and industry analysts predict that the public will soon become bored with celebrity news. Part of the problem might be that celebrities have become commonplace. They used to be 'special', our heroes and idols; now they're simply everywhere: from the cover of your magazine to some new advert for trainers or perfume. Whatever the reason, for some journalists, this change of heart cannot come too soon. According to one highly-regarded news reporter, "Our fascination for gossip means that there is less media **coverage** of more important issues, such as politics and the environment. I didn't join the profession to write kiss-and-tell stories. We need to stop taking this trivia so seriously!"

**gossip**: xafardeig /cotilleo
**press**: premsa /prensa
**privacy**: privadesa / privacidad
**nervous breakdown**: crisi nerviosa / crisis nerviosa
**coverage**: cobertura / cobertura

## Part 1: Reading comprehension

Choose the correct answer. Only ONE answer is possible.
[0.5 points for each correct answer. Wrong answers will be penalized by deducting 0.16 points. There is no penalty for unanswered questions.]

1. **Emma wears disguises because**
   ***a)*** she wants to interview celebrities.
   ***b)*** she wants to become rich and famous.
   ***c)*** she is a criminal.
   ***d)*** she is obsessed with her favourite celebrities.
2. **Which of these facts is true about gossip journalists?**
   ***a)*** They only write scoops.
   ***b)*** They can make a lot of money.
   ***c)*** They only write for gossip magazines.
   ***d)*** They earn an average of £10,000 per article.
3. **In the 1500s, people**
   ***a)*** were only interested in gossip about famous people.
   ***b)*** invented the printing press.
   ***c)*** were just as interested in gossip as we are now.
   ***d)*** could read gossip about kings and queens.
4. **The latest gossip is**
   ***a)*** published in different media forms.
   ***b)*** available only in gossip magazines.
   ***c)*** most up-to-date in *Heat* and *Closer.*
   ***d)*** the lead story in *The Telegraph.*
5. **Celebrities complain that**
   ***a)*** no reporters ever respect them.
   ***b)*** they need more privacy than other people.
   ***c)*** they are not always treated respectfully.
   ***d)*** no one should be allowed to know any detail of their private lives.
6. **Celebrity gossip can be unkind because**
   ***a)*** it focuses on celebrities' problems and crises.
   ***b)*** it tells us that celebrities are more interesting than ordinary people.
   ***c)*** it causes many stars to have nervous breakdowns.
   ***d)*** it always treats celebrities' problems as a joke.
7. **People might become tired of celebrity gossip because**
   ***a)*** celebrities are everywhere.
   ***b)*** we do not want to read about heroes.
   ***c)*** most celebrities appear in too many adverts.
   ***d)*** we want to treat celebrities as heroes and idols.
8. **Which of these facts do we know to be true about the 'highly-regarded reporter'?**
   ***a)*** He does not want anyone to know his name.
   ***b)*** He has never written gossip about celebrities.
   ***c)*** He represents the views of most journalists.
   ***d)*** He does not want to write about celebrity news.

## Part 2: Writing

**Choose ONE topic. Write about number 1 or 2. Minimum length: 100 words.** [4 points]

1. You are a gossip writer and you want to write a story on a celebrity (the celebrity can be real or imaginary). You meet the celebrity and ask him or her about his or her experience with the press. The celebrity tells you how he or she feels about the press. Write a dialogue you have with the celebrity.

2. You are a celebrity who is annoyed about the way a journalist chased you to get a story. Write a formal letter complaining to the newspaper the journalist works for.