Unit 3

C1.3

Exercise 1

Complete each sentence with a suitable *-ever* word (*whatever, whichever, whoever, whomever, whenever, wherever, however*). You may need to use some words more than once.

1. The committee has agreed to back _____ proposal proves to be the most cost-effective in the long run.
2. _____ much sympathy I may have for his situation; I cannot condone his breach of company policy.
3. The scholarship will be awarded to _____ the selection panel deems most deserving of financial support.
4. _____ on earth possessed you to resign without having another job lined up?
5. Feel free to consult _____ specialist you consider best qualified to handle such a delicate case.
6. _____ the truth eventually emerges; it is bound to cause considerable embarrassment to the administration.
7. She has an uncanny ability to command the attention of the room, _____ she happens to be speaking to.
8. _____ remote the destination might be; modern logistics make it possible to deliver supplies within days.

Exercise 2

Fill the gaps using the verb in brackets with one of the forms given in the box. In some cases, there could be more than one correct answer. Pay close attention to nuances such as unfulfilled obligations, missed deadlines, or hypothetical outcomes.

1. Little did we know when we signed the contract that the merger _____ (**collapse**) within six months, rendering all our negotiations pointless.

2. Had the board anticipated the regulatory hurdles, they _____ (**postpone**) the product launch until the following fiscal year.

3. The CEO _____ (**resign**), but a last-minute compromise with the shareholders persuaded him to stay on for another year.

4. We were under the impression that the audit report _____ (**publish**) by Friday, but the PR team delayed its release indefinitely.

5. She admitted during the cross-examination that she _____ (**leak**) the confidential documents to the press, had her initial demands been met.

6. The diplomatic delegation _____ (**fly**) out to Geneva on Monday, but the sudden airspace closure grounded all commercial flights.

7. I knew deep down that the partnership _____ (**end**) in disaster, given their completely incompatible corporate cultures.

8. He later confessed that at the time he accepted the bribe, he _____ (**hand**) his resignation in the very next morning anyway.

Exercise 3

You are going to read four reviews of online shopping experiences written by people who have different perspectives on the subject. For questions 1–6, choose from the reviews (A–D). The reviews may be chosen more than once.

Which reviewer:

1. suggests that the convenience of online shopping may encourage people to purchase things they do not actually need?
2. admits that their initial negative attitude towards online shopping has changed?
3. believes that online retailers should take greater responsibility for the environmental consequences of their business model?
4. points out that the ability to compare prices does not necessarily mean that customers make better purchasing decisions?
5. feels that online shopping has made it harder for consumers to appreciate the value of the products they buy?
6. argues that the development of online shopping has had an unexpected positive effect on traditional shops?

Text A – The environmental price of convenience

I have nothing against technology, and I appreciate that being able to order almost anything from the comfort of your home is undeniably useful. However, I am increasingly concerned about the environmental implications of this apparently harmless activity. The problem is not simply the amount of packaging used, although that is certainly an issue. It is also the expectation that deliveries should arrive almost immediately, often regardless of the distance involved. The resulting pressure on transport networks is considerable.

What particularly frustrates me is that companies seem reluctant to acknowledge their part in the problem. They advertise fast delivery as though it were an entirely positive achievement, without giving customers much information about its environmental cost. Surely retailers should be doing more than simply offering customers the option of selecting a supposedly greener delivery method. They need to rethink the entire system, rather than leaving individuals to feel responsible for making ethical choices within an unsustainable framework.

Text B – A reluctant convert

For years, I regarded online shopping as something to be avoided. I preferred going into shops, examining products carefully and speaking to someone who could answer my questions. Ordering something without seeing it first seemed like an unnecessary risk. Then, during a particularly busy period at work, I reluctantly decided to buy a few household items online. To my surprise, the experience was considerably more straightforward than I had expected.

I now regularly purchase certain things online, particularly products I have bought before and therefore know exactly what to expect from. Nevertheless, I have not abandoned traditional shops altogether. In fact, I have noticed that some retailers have become much more creative in the way they attract customers. Rather than simply competing with websites on price, they are placing greater emphasis on personal service, product demonstrations and the overall shopping experience. In a strange way, online competition may have encouraged physical shops to improve what they offer.

Text C – Too much choice?

One of the main advantages of online shopping is supposed to be the opportunity to compare prices across different websites. In theory, this should enable consumers to make informed decisions and get the best possible deal. Yet I am not convinced that it works quite so well in practice. When faced with dozens of similar products, customers can easily become overwhelmed. Furthermore, the constant appearance of special offers and limited-time discounts can encourage people to focus on saving money rather than considering whether they actually need the item.

There is another issue worth considering. Online retailers collect enormous amounts of information about their customers' browsing habits, using sophisticated algorithms to recommend products they are likely to buy. Although this can make shopping more convenient, it also means that consumers are constantly exposed to carefully targeted suggestions. The result may be that people end up buying things they would never have considered purchasing if they had not been prompted to do so.

Text D – The disappearing shopping experience

I recently bought a pair of headphones online. They were delivered the following morning, worked perfectly and cost less than they would have in my local electronics shop. By any practical measure, it was an excellent purchase. And yet, oddly enough, I found the whole experience rather unsatisfying.

When I buy something in a physical shop, I can handle it, examine its details and perhaps even try it out. There is a certain pleasure in choosing an object and taking it home. Online, however, the product exists mainly as a photograph, a description and a price. The transaction is completed with a few clicks, and the item arrives almost as an afterthought. I sometimes wonder whether this makes us less appreciative of what we own. We have become accustomed to acquiring things so effortlessly that the process of buying itself has lost much of its significance.