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Seaside Activities

Hi Tom and James, Maria and I have finally got the kids to record their holiday activities and we have been very sneaky and made them write out a list of all the items before talking about them. Firstly, this is so they don't forget what to say or leave anything out, and secondly the idea is to make you chaps work really hard. Not only are the kids not going to slow down very much for you, but you are also going to have to write all these unusual items very quickly one after the other, without knowing what is coming next. It seems unlikely that any of the words will have been in your shorthand book lessons. After a week of lazing around, here is your challenge to get your brains and fingers back in harness. Love, Sarah

Dear Uncle James, I hope you are well. We have just been to the sea life centre on the seafront. I have never seen anything like what was in the tanks. Some of them have clownfish, sea anemones, rock pool creatures and seahorses, and lots and lots of jellyfish which were in separate tanks. Did you know jellyfish were living in the world five hundred million years ago? I do not think it is a good idea to step on a jellyfish on the beach because they sting. We saw a Moray eel and an electric eel, and I would not like to meet one when swimming.

We went through the ocean tunnel so we were underneath the turtles, sharks, rays and an enormous octopus. The suckers were all over the glass ceiling and it was looking at us! I will send some photos so you can see how big it was. Then we saw some tanks with fish that are caught for food, such as cod, dogfish, mackerel, plaice and herring. There were even some crabs in another tank. There were several open topped tanks with all the different kinds of seaweed. There was knotted wrack, bladder wrack, egg wrack, sugar kelp and sea lettuce. I have kept a piece of red seaweed from the beach for you as a special gift, but you might need to wet it, as it is getting a bit dry. Bye, see you soon. Jack

Dear Uncle Tom, I just can't wait to tell you all about the transport museum next to Hilltop Station, where we went yesterday. I really liked the trains section and we could go into the old carriages. There were lots of enormous steam locomotives and more modern diesel engines. I like the older ones where you can shovel the coal into the firebox and pull the cord to blow the whistle. I know, because I did it on the virtual screen. I was able to drive it into the yard and reverse it into the shed. We saw lots of really old tractors with very big wheels for pulling heavy loads, and some absolutely ancient old carts from the days when the horses pulled them.

In the second shed was a big collection of old bicycles from the early days. The first ones were called bone shakers because they had no springs or rubber tyres. I saw a dairy milk cart and a model of a horse pulling it, and the big old churns on the back. Next to the old bikes was a collection of scooters and high speed motorbikes, then vintage cars and some racing cars. I had another go on them on the virtual screen which was really good fun. Last of all in the yard was an exhibition of old trams, buses and coaches, and we were allowed to sit in the driver's seat and turn the steering wheel. That's everything we saw. Chris

Dear Uncle James, I am going to tell you all about our day at the sports place on the seafront. Mum and Dad had a go at the crazy golf, but it was too slow for me. I went with Barbara to the beach volleyball area played on sand. The kids club had a tug of war going and we were allowed to join in. After lunch we played squirt ball which was great as the weather was very hot. We tried out our new kites but there was not enough wind. After having our ice creams we went rock pool fishing with our new nets but we did not catch anything. I did find some nice shells, and after that we collected coloured pebbles to make shapes on the sand. In the shops they sell pebbles with little plastic eyes on them.

Seaside Activities

Dad, Jack and I played football on the sandy part of the beach. It was an inflatable ball and the wind blew it into the sea. Dad rescued it when the wave washed it back. When we came back, Mum was lying down on a towel under a big parasol reading a book, and Jack and I made a row of sand castles surrounded by white pebbles. Then we looked for pebbles with shapes, holes or sparkly salt crystals. I have saved one for you, it is very sparkly and glittery. One of them looks like a fossil, you can have a look when we come home and find out what it is. I was glad to come back to the hotel and wash the sand out of my feet. See you later, Helen

Dear Uncle Tom, My favourite part of the holiday was going to the funfair. It is on the seafront promenade near the pier. We bought day tickets so we could go on everything. Dad took me on the swing boats first. We went up on the Ferris wheel where we had a good view of what other rides there were. Dad and I went into the mirror maze where you can get a bit lost, but we were OK. The helter skelter was fun and we came down three times on the special mat. We had lunch in the beer garden where we had fish and chips with plenty of ketchup and vinegar, and after that vanilla ice cream with chocolate fingers in them. It was so hot, I am glad our fruit juices had ice cubes in them. Darren said he would put his ice cubes in his pockets to keep himself cool.

Afterwards we went on the Mexican Hat ride and my favourite, the Dodgems. We had a rest then had some time in the big ball pit and the bouncy castle. We are saving the trampolines for another day when we have got our energy back. Darren will be going on the kiddies Formula One race track. Good job the track is surrounded by big rubber tyres, and they have to wear safety helmets and all that. While he is doing that, I will be going in the roller skating hall, which I am really looking forward to. We are all worn out now so we are having an early night tonight. See you later, Susan

Hi Uncle James, What a surprise it was to meet Helen and Uncle Tom and Auntie Maria. We didn't know they were all on holiday in the same place at the same time as us! Helen and I had a great time playing together, and that is much better for us than playing boys' games, because Helen and I like to go clothes shopping and the boys are not interested in that. We all went on the pier, which is very long and it has a little train for people who don't want to walk. It is very old and the floorboards are a bit creaky and you can see the waves through the cracks. There were seagulls sitting on the railings making a lot of noise. Here is what we bought: some sunhats, flip flop sandals, beach dresses and sunglasses. We also bought buckets and spades, two blow-up rings for when we go in the pool and some fishing nets for the rock pools.

At the end of the pier we went into the restaurant and had fish and chips, mushy peas with dips and lemon juice, then strawberry ice cream with wafers, and after that some grapes. On a separate part of the pier some people were fishing and they had bait boxes full of wriggling maggots. I thought, how awful, but it seems the fishes like to eat them. One man had a whole bucket of fish he had caught. We even saw a shoal of mackerel swimming past the pier. The water looks very deep and the pier legs are rusty and full of barnacles. There are lots of life saving rings on stands, in case anyone falls in. In the evening Helen and I tried on all our new clothes, and I am sending you a photo of us in our sunglasses, we look like film stars. We will visit you next week with our holiday photos. Love from Barbara (1501 words)
