



FORM 1 ENGLISH COMPREHENSION TEXT

SECTION B: READING COMPREHENSION

Read the following text and then answer the questions on the Language Paper.

Las Fallas

- 1 As midnight strikes on St Joseph's Day in the central Plaza del Ayuntamiento of Valencia the smiling giant face of an enormous sculpture bursts into flames. Finally, it collapses in a
5 spectacular explosion of fireworks. As the coloured fire falls over the city, winter is officially, at an end.



- This** explosive end to the season is an annual event in Spain's largest city, Valencia, where, the little-known Fallas Fiesta, has become a thriving industry
10 employing about 5,000 people throughout the year. The event generates 20 million dollars a year and is a major source of revenue for the city.

- The tradition of Las Fallas began in the eighteen century. At that time, craftsmen used wooden oil lamps to light up their workshops. To celebrate the end of winter, **they** burnt the scraps of wood from their workshops and the oil lamps they had used during the long
15 winter nights. Later, they had a party. Legend has it that in the 18th century one carpenter had the original idea of making fun of his neighbour by dressing up his lamp like him before he burnt it. This is one explanation for the birth of Las Fallas. Later they made the oil lamps into lifelike statues, and dressed **them** up to look like unpopular but well-known politicians and local characters.

- 20 The Fallas are cardboard sculptures; you will find over 350 of them in the streets on 19th March and they will all be burnt. Some of them are over thirty metres high and are worth 200,000 euros. Artists give **their** designs a year beforehand; they are assessed by various Fallas committees. The statues are kept secret until the festival. Then they are put up in the street at night. There is an official competition for the best sculpture
25 but they all go up in flames before the end of the festival.

- The two-day celebrations begin at 14.00 hours on St. Joseph's Day with a display of fireworks. There are paella competitions in the street – Valencia is the home of this typically Spanish dish – and the men dress up as the Moors who occupied the city for four centuries until the 13th century.

- 30 For many of the locals, the highlight of the festival is the flower parade. A huge procession of girls and boys wearing traditional dress, march into the city centre, bringing flowers to decorate the giant statue of the Virgin Mary. This shows the religious aspect of this festival.