

Exercise 1

Read the blog written by a teenager called Lana Bridges about her hobby, and then answer the questions.

Cosplay

by Lana Bridges

I'm really into cosplay. If you haven't heard of it, don't worry, I'll tell you all about it. After reading this, you might want to take up cosplay too!

So, what exactly is cosplay? It's when people dress up in costume to look like a character from a film, book or video game. The term 'cosplay' comes from two words, 'costume' and 'play', joined together. Although it wasn't called cosplay then, it started in 1939, when fans wore costumes at the first ever world science-fiction conference. The name was actually created in 1984, by a Japanese man who had attended that conference. And since around 1990, there's been a rapid growth in the number of people who, like me, enjoy cosplay. I've made so many friends since I took it up!

Anyway, cosplay isn't all about science fiction. Although I like that, fantasy is what I'd choose before anything else. There are also people who do historical cosplay – dressing up like eighteenth-century soldiers, for example, though that's not really my thing. But whatever type of cosplay people are into, I'm sure they'll all agree that they've gained confidence from doing it. I certainly have!

These days there are cosplay competitions around the world, and even if you can't attend them in person, they're amazing to watch online or read about. There's EuroCosplay, which I've been to in London; the Nordic Cosplay Championship, in Sweden; and the best known of all is the World Cosplay Summit, which takes place in Japan.

Some of the cosplay costumes I've seen are incredible, and can be really complicated. You don't just need the right clothes, but also make-up, hairstyle, and various objects – like a particular ring or a wooden stick. Having to come up with some of my costumes means I've become much more creative! Since I took up cosplay, I've tried a wide range of characters, including an old man with a beard. What I'm preparing for now is a non-human role. I've got one in mind, but I generally keep my plans secret until my costume is ready! I really admire people who make their own costumes themselves. I do that more now that I've learned to sew, which I'm really proud of!

If you look online, you'll find lots of people selling cosplay costumes. Though it can be a good way to make money, I personally can't imagine selling mine – I like the idea of reusing them. Professional cosplayers can earn lots of money too, promoting a particular event or product. Taking photographs at cosplay events is my plan. I'd charge people for them, so I'd be able to attend all the events and make a living at the same time!

Question 4

What type of character is Lana planning to be next in cosplay?

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