B2-C1 English Worksheet

The Campaign for North Africa: The 30-Year Board Game Challenge

5 November 2026

Article

Two friends from Newcastle have decided to take on a challenge that makes an evening of board games look effortless. James Purcell and Andy Taeger have begun The Campaign for North Africa, a 1979 war game recreating the desert campaign of 1940-43. Its intricate rules require players to keep track of aircraft, supplies and even water lost through evaporation. The game includes a three-metre map, about 1,600 pieces and seven rule books. One absurd detail concerns the additional water Italian troops need to boil pasta. Before beginning, the pair had to read up on military logistics and get to grips with a system so demanding that no completed game is publicly documented.

They bought their copy for £970 and set out to test it with a six-turn practice game. That alone took 18 months. They now reckon the full campaign could last 20 to 30 years, a daunting commitment considering that neither man knows what life will look like decades from now. Their perseverance is also on public display. On their podcast, War With a Mate, they document preparations and progress, hoping listeners will help them stick with the project when enthusiasm fades. Their remarkable plan is less about a quick result than finding the motivation to follow through.

Purcell and Taeger have had to come to terms with the possibility that they may never reach the final turn. A small mistake could have consequences for years, and they know it would be easy to give up if the work became monotonous. Nevertheless, they intend to make time for the game alongside jobs and other responsibilities. Whether or not they finish, their unusual experiment raises a wider question: when does a hobby become an obligation, and can a shared journey be worthwhile even without a finish line?

True/False

Decide if each statement is True (T) or False (F).

No.	Statement	T / F
1	The friends tested a small part of the game before beginning the full campaign.	
2	They expect to finish their ambitious project within five years.	
3	The board game recreates a military campaign from the nineteenth century.	
4	Players must track supplies and the amount of water that evaporates.	
5	Listeners can follow the friends' preparations and progress through a podcast.	
6	The men bought their copy for considerably less than £100.	
7	The pair recognise that reaching the final turn is not guaranteed.	
8	They intend to stop documenting their experience now that the full game has begun.	

Phrase Match

Match each phrase (1-10) to the correct definition (A-J).

Phrases (1-10)	Definitions (A-J)
1. take on	A. gradually accept an uncomfortable reality
2. keep track of	B. learn about something by reading
3. read up on	C. continue an activity despite difficulties
4. get to grips with	D. accept a difficult responsibility or challenge
5. set out to	E. stop trying to do something
6. stick with	F. start with a particular goal in mind
7. follow through	G. arrange time in a busy schedule for something
8. come to terms with	H. monitor details and record what changes
9. give up	I. carry out a plan rather than abandoning it
10. make time for	J. begin to understand and manage something difficult

Synonym Match

Match each word (1-10) to a synonym (A-J).

Words (1-10)	Synonyms (A-J)
1. intricate	A. record
2. absurd	B. repercussions
3. daunting	C. extraordinary
4. commitment	D. persistence
5. perseverance	E. intimidating
6. document	F. repetitive
7. remarkable	G. duty
8. monotonous	H. complex
9. consequences	I. dedication
10. obligation	J. ridiculous

Use the New Language

Choose 5 words or phrases and write your own sentences.

No.	Your sentence
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	

Discussion Questions

Student A	Student B
1. What hobby or activity have you continued for the longest time?	1. Why do some people devote decades to hobbies others consider a waste of time?
2. Have you ever tried a game or activity with rules that were surprisingly difficult to understand?	2. Does completing a long-term project matter more than enjoying the process?
3. Do you prefer hobbies you can enjoy alone or activities you can share with friends?	3. Could a 20- or 30-year project strengthen a friendship, or put too much pressure on it?
4. What's the most difficult skill you've ever learnt simply for enjoyment?	4. Why are some people drawn to complicated activities that demand years of effort?
5. Have you ever spent a lot of money on a hobby and later regretted it?	5. The friends record a podcast. Does making a personal goal public increase motivation or create pressure?
6. Would you rather spend years becoming very good at one activity or regularly try completely new hobbies?	6. After investing ten years in a project they no longer enjoy, should someone carry on or walk away?
7. Have you ever started a personal project but never finished it? What happened?	7. When can a hobby become an unhealthy obsession, especially if it affects relationships or finances?
8. If you could spend an entire day doing any hobby without interruptions or responsibilities, what would you choose?	8. Why do people choose slow, demanding hobbies when entertainment increasingly offers instant satisfaction?

Answer Key

True/False
1=T, 2=F, 3=F, 4=T, 5=T, 6=F, 7=T, 8=F

Phrase Match
1=D, 2=H, 3=B, 4=J, 5=F, 6=C, 7=I, 8=A, 9=E, 10=G

Synonym Match
1=H, 2=J, 3=E, 4=I, 5=D, 6=A, 7=C, 8=F, 9=B, 10=G

Example Sentences With the Phrases

No.	Example sentence
1	The volunteers agreed to take on a demanding project together.
2	We use a spreadsheet to keep track of our spending.
3	I decided to read up on local history before my trip.
4	It took several weeks to get to grips with the new software.
5	The team set out to create a detailed model of the city.
6	She promised to stick with the course until the end.
7	He made detailed plans but failed to follow through.
8	It took her time to come to terms with the unexpected changes.
9	Please do not give up when a skill takes time to develop.
10	I make time for reading even during busy weeks.