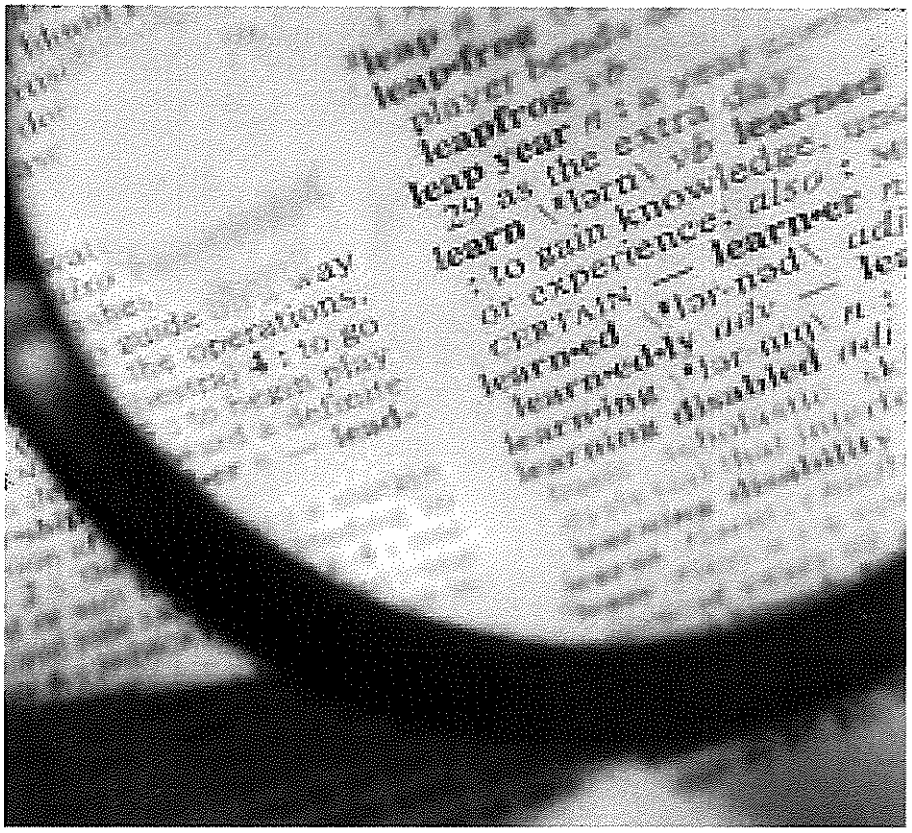
Close Reading: Homework Booklet



Experiences and Outcomes

Through developing my knowledge of context clues, punctuation, grammar and layout, I can read unfamiliar texts with increasing fluency, understanding and expression.
ENG 4-12a

To show my understanding, I can give detailed, evaluative comments, with evidence, on the content and form of short and extended texts, and respond to different kinds of questions and other types of close reading tasks.
ENG 4-17a

Success Criteria

I can read and interpret unfamiliar texts with increasing fluency understanding

I can show an understanding of texts by answering a variety of different types of questions on them.

Close Reading Question Types

Skill	Type of question	How to answer
Understanding	Own words	Show you understand the meaning by explaining the writer's point in a different way. Do not try to 'translate' word for word. Your answer should cover *all* the lines the question specifies.
	Summary	Identify the key points / issues from the relevant section. Change these points into your own words.
	Contrast	This means opposite, roughly speaking. • Explain what the contrast is. • Quote and explain to show *each side* of the contrast. *If you show only one side you earn no marks!*
	Link	• Quote from the *linking sentence* that links back to the paragraph before. • Explain the meaning of this paragraph. **The word(s) '_____' link back to what was discussed in the previous paragraph, which was _____.** • Quote from the *linking sentence* that links on to the following paragraph. • Explain the meaning of this paragraph. **The word(s) '_____' link to what is coming up in the next paragraph, which is _____.**
Analysis	Word choice	Quote individual words and comment on their connotations (what the word makes you think of).
	Imagery	This means simile, metaphor, personification and *nothing else*! • Explain what the image is. • Explain the comparison. • Explain what, therefore, the writer is trying to show. Example from a past paper: 'a tidal wave of immigrants'. A tidal wave is a huge, powerful, destructive body of water. The writer compares the number of immigrants to a 'tidal wave' showing he believes the country is over-run with a large number of immigrants who do not benefit our country.
	Sentence structure	This means how the sentence is put together. This is one of the most difficult types of questions, as there are so many options. • Identify a feature of sentence structure in a specified sentence (ie quote or refer to line numbers). • Comment on the effect. *To merely identify the feature will gain no marks!*
	Tone	To understand tone you need to understand the author's attitude to the subject. • Identify the tone. • Quote individual words and comment on their connotations/identify another technique and explain its effect.
	Language	Language means the techniques the writer has used. • Identify any of the techniques listed above (or any other writing technique) • Answer the question as you would if it asks about that technique. *The easiest thing to comment on is usually word choice.*
Evaluation	Conclusion	A conclusion sums up a passage. You can answer this question by: • Making reference to an important idea in the conclusion (quote) • Explaining how this links to a similar idea earlier in the passage (quote)

Close Reading Extracts

Extract 1

At low tide the rocky beach is silent, apparently deserted by the animals that live there. But life is all around, sitting perfectly still or tucked out of sight – safe from the sun's rays, drying winds and eagle-eyed gulls.

Brightly coloured seaweed and hard-shelled creatures struggle for space, gripping the rocks tightly to avoid being washed away. When the tide is in, marine life need not worry about drying out, but as the tide ebbs, they must be able to adapt or find ways to escape.

1. Write down one word from the first sentence which tells us that the beach only seems to be deserted. (1)
2. What three things can threaten creatures living on the beach at low tide? (3)
3. What does the phrase "struggle for space" tell us about the number of creatures living on the beach? (1)
*4. Explain **in your own words** what the word "ebbs" means. (1)*
5. Write down two single words which tell us how creatures survive when the tide ebbs. (2)

Extract 2

Now there are some situations in which it is difficult for schools to succeed. In cities, for instance, where housing is bad and "problem families" abound, there is probably no purely educational remedy.

1. Quote an expression which shows that the writer himself has no clear solution to the problem. (1)
2. Explain the use of inverted commas in "problem families" (1)
3. What do you think the writer means by the term "problem families"? (1)

Extract 3

Then he saw Laidlaw.

Laidlaw was walking up Turnbull Street towards the station. Harkness had had Laidlaw pointed out to him, although they had never met. He recognised the deceptively tall figure, deceptive because the width of the shoulders acted against the height, making him seem smaller than he was, and the very positive features that gave the face clear definition, even at a distance. The most striking thing about him was something Harkness had noticed every time he had seen him – preoccupation. You never came on him empty. It was hard to think of him walking casually, always towards definite destinations.

1. How does the author make the first sentence stand out? (2)
2. Why does he do this? (1)
3. In what way is Laidlaw "deceptively tall"? (2)
4. How does the writer help you to understand what "preoccupation" means? (1)
5. Quote an expression which suggests that Laidlaw always had a purpose or something to do. (1)

Extract 4

Every evening when Marvin Macy came swaggering into the café, Cousin Lymon was at his heels and, strangely enough, Miss Amelia did not turn Marvin Macy out. She even gave him free drinks and smiled at him in a wild, crooked way.

1. Quote a phrase which makes you aware that Miss Amelia is not acting as expected. (1)
2. Quote another expression which continues this idea. (1)
3. What does the word "swaggering" suggest about Marvin Macy? (1)

Extract 5

Saturday was bitterly cold, and the skies were grey and blurred with the threat of snow. I was dallying home from the store that afternoon, curling up my chilled fingers in my mittens, when I saw a couple of kids playing Chinese Tag out in front of Paula Brown's house.

1. Quote two phrases which build up the image of cold. (2)
2. What does the word "dallying" suggest about the narrator? (1)

Extract 6

He turned his attention to the contents of the cupboard. There were a number of teddy bears and things which he treated with stiff detachment, and quantities of board and counter games.

1. Quote the phrase which shows the narrator's reaction to the teddy bears. (1)
2. Suggest a reason for his reaction. (1)

Extract 7

Sergeant Croft was sweating from the labour of making the stretcher alone. When he was finished, all the difficulties of the patrol were nagging at him again. And deep within him his rage was alive again, flaring. Everything was wrong, and Roth played with a bird, while nearly half of the platoon stood about watching.

1. Croft is in a terrible temper and the above paragraph suggests several reasons for this. ***In your own words****, write down 2 of these reasons. (2)*
2. "His rage was alive again" – Identify this figure of speech and explain its effectiveness. (2)

Extract 8

The fox is probably the most intelligent of all quadrupeds. It is allied to the dog, and closely resembles the wolf, the hyena, the coyote, the dingo and the dhole, or wild dog of India. Its chief points of difference from the others are the sharper muzzle and the shorter legs in proportion to the size of the body. Its tail or "brush" is also larger and its ears more erect.

The fox has eyes which contract in strong light and expand in darkness. This enables the animal to hunt at night. It excavates its own lair by burrowing much like a rabbit, but frequently it is a thief in this respect as it steals burrows from other animals and converts them into its own "earth". The cunning and slyness of the animal is shown by the number of exits to its lair. As many as ten bolt holes from a fox's earth have been counted.

1. Name four differences between the fox and the dog. (4)
2. How do a fox's eyes react to light? (1)
3. Write down two words used to describe a fox's den. (2)
4. Explain what a "bolt hole" is. (1)

Extract 9

So that was it. He had been dumped. Some time ago the humans he loved and trusted had opened their car door, hurled him out into an unknown world and driven merrily away. I began to feel sick – physically sick – and a murderous rage flowed through me. Had they laughed, I wondered, these people, at the idea of the bewildered little creature toiling vainly behind them?

1. What do "hurled" and "merrily" suggest about the dog's owners? (2)
2. What, ***in your own words****, were his reactions when he realised what had happened to the dog? (2)*
3. Quote an expression which creates sympathy for the dog. (1)
4. Explain fully how it does this. (2)
5. Quote an example of a metaphor. (1)
6 Try and explain the effectiveness of the metaphor. (2)
7. The writer uses two dashes around the phrase "- physically sick –". Identify this technique. (1)

Extract 10

Six days after Hurricane Katrina pummelled the Gulf Coast, the American Red Cross has still not reached many who needed them most – 10,000 residents who stayed behind in New Orleans. Following the storm's landfall on Monday 29th August, authorities had barred all traffic into the city; there were reports of looting, arson, and even murder. In the flood zone, rotting bodies, sewage, foodstuffs, household items and an appalling blend of chemicals commingled to create a revolting and dangerous toxic stew.

Most people in Folsom, Louisiana tried to ride out the storm in their homes. Those whose homes had been crushed were left to wonder at the random nature of a disaster that spared neighbours' houses that were only yards away from their own. As the massive clean up began, a CNN helicopter thwupped overhead, filming the gruesome process.

1. What does the word "pummelled" tell us about the effect of Katrina on New Orleans? (1)
2. Which of the following words do you think is closest in meaning to "commingled" in the last sentence of paragraph 1? (1)
spiit blended separated floated evaporated
3. Why is "stew" a good word to describe what was happening in the flood zone? (2)
*4. Explain **in your own words** what is meant by the "random nature" of the disaster. (2)*
5. Why do you think the writer used the word "thwupped" to describe the helicopter? (1)

Extract 11

When I ran onto the field, it was almost dark. A heavy mist hung over the valley and enclosed the ground in a tight grey wall of drizzle. It was bitterly cold. The players ran around in groups, small and unreal beneath the half empty flanks of the terraces – insects released in space. Everything outside the dark wreath was hidden. We were isolated; all that was familiar and encouraging had vanished, leaving us in the shell of the stands.

1. Quote two expressions which make the rugby park seem oppressive. (2)
2. "insects released in space" – Identify and explain the effectiveness of this figure of speech. (3)
3. What do the "half empty flanks of the terraces" suggest? (1)
4. Quote a phrase from later in the extract which continues this idea. (1)

Extract 12

From the day he can walk an aborigine boy is taught the skills of the "throwing stick". A flick of the wrist sends the boomerang spinning into the air when thrown. This spinning, the aerodynamic shape of the boomerang and the method of throwing into the wind are the basic secrets of the art.

Formerly boomerangs were cut from a natural bend in a hard-wooded tree such as the acacia, but even the aborigine has succumbed to the influence of the twenty-first century for most modern boomerangs are made of plastic or steel. Return boomerangs can be anything up to two feet long, but the war boomerang is about five feet long, and requires two hands to throw it.

1. Write down the phrase that suggests that throwing a boomerang requires little effort. (1)
2. What three things are the "secrets" of boomerang throwing? (3)
3. From your reading of the extract, explain what the word "formerly" means. (1)
4. Write down the single word that tells us that the aborigine has given in to modern methods of making boomerangs. (1)

Passage 1

And so to Bournemouth. I arrived at five-thirty in the evening in a driving rain. Night had fallen heavily and the streets were full of swishing cars, their headlights sweeping through bullets of shiny rain. I'd lived in Bournemouth for two years and thought I knew it reasonably well, but the area around the station had been extensively rebuilt, with new roads and office blocks and one of those befuddling networks of pedestrian subways that compel you to surface every few minutes like a gopher to see where you are.

1. What technique is "swishing" cars? Why is it effective in helping you to understand what the weather is like? 2
2. Identify another technique used in line 2/3. What two things are being compared? What does it tell the reader about the rain? Why is it effective? (What does it help you to see?) 4
3. Identify the technique used in line 5/6. What two things are being compared? What does it tell the reader about the pedestrian subways? Why is it effective? (What does it help you to see?) 4
4. From the context of the passage, work out the meaning of the word, "compel". 1

Passage 2

After the delicious curry, I was bloated and sated and with a stomach bubbling away like a heated beaker in a mad-scientist movie.

1. Name the technique used in this description. What two things are being compared? What does it tell you about the person's stomach? Why is it effective? (What does it help you to hear?)

Passage 3

I took a train to Liverpool. They were having a festival of litter when I arrived. Citizens had taken time off from their busy activities to add crisp packets, empty cigarette boxes, and carrier-bags to the otherwise bland and neglected landscape. They fluttered gaily in the bushes and brought colour and texture to pavements and gutters. And to think that elsewhere we stick these objects in rubbish bags.

1. What is the tone of this extract?
2. What does the word, "fluttered" suggest about the litter?

Passage 4

I checked into the Caledonian Hotel, dumped my things in the room, and immediately returned to the streets, eager to be out in the open air and to take in whatever Edinburgh had to offer.

1. What is the tone of this passage?
2. What three words imply this?
3. Explain how they do this?

Passage 5

I trudged up a long, curving back hill to the castle, but the grounds were shut for the night, so I contented myself with a shuffling amble down the Royal Mile, which was nearly empty of life and very handsome in a dour, Scottish sort of way. I passed the time browsing in the windows of the many tourist shops that stand along it, reflecting on what a lot of things the Scots have given the world – kilts, bagpipes, tam-o'-shanters, tins of oatcakes, bright yellow jumpers with big diamond patterns of the sort favoured by Ronnie Corbett, plaster casts of Greyfriars Bobby looking soulful, sacks of haggis – and how little anyone but a Scot would want them.

1. What do the words, "amble" and "browsing" suggest about the actions of the tourist?
2. What is the purpose of the dash in the third last line?
3. What is the tone of the final part of this passage?
4. What is the tourist's attitude to all of these items? Put this **in your own words.**

Passage 6

At Naples, I emerged from the train and was greeted by twenty-seven taxi-drivers, all wanting to take me someplace nice and probably distant, but I waved them away and transferred myself by foot from the squalor of the central station to the squalor of the nearby Circumvesuviana Station, passing through an uninterrupted stretch of squalor en route. All along the sidewalks, people sat at wobbly tables selling packets of cigarettes and cheap novelties. All the cars parked along the street were dirty and battered. All the stores looked gloomy and dusty and their windows were full of items whose packaging had faded, sometimes almost to invisibility, in the brilliant sunshine.

1. What technique is used in lines 2/3?
2. What is its purpose? (What impression does it give of the town?)
3. Pick out two details about Naples, mentioned in the passage, and, **in your own words**, explain how they help to give this impression.

Passage 7

Early in the evening I went for a stroll along the city's curiously uninspiring waterfront: a dull vista of fish-processing factories and industrial cranes. Far away across the still water a ship-repair yard was working late doing something shrill and drastic to a rusted freighter, which defended itself with hideous shrieks and a shower of sparks.

1. What is the purpose of the colon in line 1?
2. Identify the technique used in the underlined section of the passage.
3. What does this suggest about the rusted freighter?

Passage 8

Denmark looks like a plate that has been dropped onto a hard floor: it is fractured into a thousand pieces, forming deep bays and scorpion-tail peninsulas and seas within seas.

1. What technique does the writer employ to describe Denmark?
2. What is the purpose of the colon in this passage?

Passage 9

Brussels has fewer parks than any city I can think of, and almost no other features to commend it – no castle on a hill, no mountainous cathedral, no street of singularly elegant shops, no backdrop of snowy peaks, no fairy-lit seafront. It doesn't even have a river. How can a city not at least have a river?

1. What is the purpose of the dash in line one?
2. Identify the technique used by the author and explain its effectiveness in portraying the author's attitude to the city of Brussels.

Passage 10

So it was with some difficulty and not a little surprise that I managed to pick my way by early afternoon to the Louvre, where I found a long immobile queue curled around the entrance courtyard like an abandoned garden hose.

1. Identify the author's tone in the passage. Supply a reason for your answer.
2. What technique does the writer use to describe the queue?
3. What two things are compared?
4. What does it help the reader to understand about the queue?

Passage 11

The trip to Belgrade took eight hours, and it was even hotter, slower, duller and more crowded than the bus the day before.

1. What two techniques are used by the writer to describe his bus trip to Belgrade?
2. Explain the effectiveness of these techniques in conveying his impression of the bus ride.

Passage 12

The one truly unbearable thing in the city is the Turkish pop music. It is inescapable. It assaults you from every restaurant doorway, from every lemonade stand, from every passing cab. If you can imagine a man having a vasectomy without anaesthetic to a background accompaniment of frantic sitar-playing, you will have some idea of what popular Turkish music is like.

1. Identify the technique used by the author to portray Turkish pop music in line one.
2. What structure technique does he use in line two and what effect does this have?
3. Identify the overall tone of the passage.

Passage 13

Walking round the store, everywhere I went, I was bombarded with festive gift wrap, festive greetings cards, festive soft toys, festive tinsel and festive boxes of sweets, in October!

1. What does the word, "festive" generally imply?
2. What is the writer's tone in the passage?
3. How does the writer employ sentence structure to convey his feelings about the store?
4. What other technique does the writer adopt to convey his feelings?

Passage 14

As I lay awake at 02.30 am in my hotel room, no matter how much cotton wool I stuffed into my ears, no matter how tightly I pulled the blankets about my head, not matter how hard I concentrated on something calm and soothing, I could still hear the faint sounds of the sirens in the distance.

1. What does the word, "faint" tell us about the sounds of the sirens?
2. Taking into account all of the things the writer has done to try to get to sleep, what does this tell us about the sound of the sirens?
3. Explain the writer's use of sentence structure in conveying the atmosphere in the area around the hotel?
4. Identify an example of word choice which helps the reader understand how the writer is feeling.
5. Explain fully how it does this.

Be a 'Bad' Parent and Let Your Children Out

I asked my mother yesterday how much freedom she had as a child. 'Well,' she replied, 'I walked to my nursery school in Cambridge alone, aged three, and by four I was roaming the fields behind my house on my hobby-horse.'

After that, she explained, came the war. 'Your grandfather was away and your grandmother was organising the Women's Voluntary Service; no one knew where the four children were.

'We broke into requisitioned houses and made camps; we spent our afternoons canoeing down the Cam without life-jackets, eating sausages out of tins and, when it rained, we slipped into the cinema to watch unsuitable love stories and horrifying images of the liberation of the concentration camps.

'No one worried about us, they had more important issues on their minds.'

Her childhood sounded idyllic. My mother explained that it wasn't always perfect.

She had once been accosted by a man while bicycling to her friend across the water meadows. 'He tried to force himself on me but I managed to get away. I carried on cycling to my friend's house and ate my tea; it never occurred to me to say anything until I went home.

'The police were called but I was back on my bike the next day.'

My mother took a similar attitude to my childhood.

My younger sister and I were allowed to take the Tube home from school across London every day from the age of five.

My sister was hit by a car once when she crossed a busy road to go to a sweet shop. She broke her leg but, as soon as it had mended, we were walking home alone again.

If we wanted to go to ballet or Brownies, we biked on our Choppers.

It was frightening going under the subways of busy streets when it was dark, but it never occurred to us to ask our parents to drive us to after-school activities.

My brothers took the train to my grandmother's in Suffolk on their own from the age of six and spent all day without adults in the park playing football.

When we moved to the countryside to live we had even more freedom to mess around in boats and with ponies. There was a local flasher, but as long as he didn't scare the ponies, he didn't trouble us.

Now, according to the Good Childhood Inquiry, children have everything – iPods, computer games and designer clothes – except the freedom to play outside on their own.

A poll commissioned as part of the inquiry found that just under half the adults questioned (43 per cent) thought that 14 was the earliest age at which children should be allowed to go out unsupervised.

Two-thirds of 10-year-olds have never been to a shop or the park by themselves.

Fewer than one in 10 eight-year-olds walk to school alone. After the disappearance of Madeleine McCann, we have become even more obsessed with eliminating risk.

I'm just as neurotic as other parents. I walk my three-, four- and six-year-old to school every day, clutching their hands.

Their every moment in London is supervised, with playdates and trips to museums.

I drive them to football and tennis. No wonder they love going to the country where they can spend all day making camps in the garden, pretending to be orphans.

It isn't just because I fear they may be abducted or run over, it's because I'm also worried about being seen as a bad parent.

When I let my eldest son go to the loo on his own on a train, less than 20 foot from where I was seated, the guard lectured me on my irresponsibility.

When we go to the park there are signs in the playground saying that parents may be prosecuted if they leave their children unsupervised, and at the swimming pool (where as children we spent half our holidays dive-bombing each other, without a grown-up in sight) there must now be an adult for every two children.

It is insane. My children still end up in the A & E department as often as we did. The inside of a house can be more dangerous than the street, and sitting at a computer all day, eating crisps, carries more long-term risks than skateboarding alone to a park.

The 'terrifying' outdoors is actually safer than it was 30 years ago. In 1977, 668

now dropped to 100.

The number of children murdered has remained consistent at around 79 murders a year. The number of children who drown in rivers or swimming pools has halved. The only place your child is now more at risk is on a trampoline.

So let your children out: they are less likely to harm themselves bicycling to the swings than they are bouncing up and down in their own back yard.

Alice Thomson: The Daily Telegraph (2007)

Be a 'bad' parent and let your children out

I asked my mother yesterday how much freedom she had as a child. "Well," she replied, "I walked to my nursery school in Cambridge alone, aged three, and by four I was roaming the fields behind my house on my hobby-horse."

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Her childhood sounded idyllic. My mother explained that it wasn't always perfect. She had once been arrested by a man while bicycling to her friend across the water meadows. "He tried to have himself on me but I managed to get away. I carried on cycling to my friend's house and ate my tea; it never occurred to me to say anything until I went home. The police were called but I was back on my bike the next day."

My mother took a similar attitude to my childhood. My younger sister and I were allowed to take the Tube home from school across London every day from the age of five. My sister was hit by a car once when she crossed a busy road to go to a sweet shop. She broke her leg but, as soon as it had mended we were walking home alone again. If we wanted to go to ballet or Brownies, we hiked on our Choppers. It was frightening going under the subways of busy streets when it was dark. But it never occurred to us to ask our parents to drive us to after-school activities.

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Alice Thomson

mess around in boats and with ponies. There was a local faction, but as long as he didn't scare the ponies, he didn't trouble us.

Now, according to the Good Childhood Inquiry, children have everything – iPods, computer games and designer clothes – except the freedom to play outside on their own. A poll commissioned as part of the inquiry found that just under half the adults questioned (43 per cent) thought that 14 was the earliest age at which children should be allowed to go out unsupervised. Two-thirds of 10-year-olds have never been to a shop or the park by themselves. Fewer than one in 10 eight-year-olds walk to school alone. After the disappearance of Madeleine McCann, we have become even more obsessed with eliminating risk.

I'm just as neurotic as other parents. I walk my three-year-old and six-year-old to school every day, clutching their hands. Their every moment in London is supervised, with playdates and trips to museums. I drive them to football and tennis. No wonder they love going to the country where they can spend all day making camps in the garden, pretending to be orphans.

It isn't just because I fear they may be abducted or run over. It's because I'm also worried about being seen as a bad parent. When I let my eldest son go to the loo on his own on a train, less than 20 ft from where I was seated, the guard lectured me on my irresponsibility. When we go to the park there are signs in the playground saying that parents may be prosecuted if they leave their children unsupervised, and of the swimming pool (where as children we spent half our holidays dive-bombing each other, without a grown-up in sight) there must now be an adult for every two children.

It is insane. My children still end up in the A & E department as often as we did. The inside of a house can be more dangerous than the street, and sitting at a computer all day, eating crisps, carries more long-term risks than skateboarding alone to a park.

The "terrifying" statistics is actually safer than it was 20 years ago. In 1977, 860 children were killed on the roads, either in cars or as pedestrians. That number has now dropped to 186. The number of children murdered has remained consistent at around 79 murders a year. The number of children who drown in rivers or swimming pools has halved. The only place your child is now more at risk is on a trampoline.

So let your children out: they are less likely to harm themselves bicycling to the swings than they are bouncing up and down in their own back yard.

Be a 'Bad' Parent and Let Your Children Out

1. Read the headline, the first paragraph and the last paragraph.
What can you tell about: the purpose, audience and genre of this text? How do you know? (U/E)

2. What is the main contrast explored in the article? (U)

3. Quote an expression from **paragraph 2** which is an example of being a "Bad Parent". (U)

4. Identify the technique used in **paragraph 3** to illustrate the freedom these children were allowed. Explain why it is effective. (A)

5. How does **paragraph 10** develop the writer's argument?(U)

6. Summarise the **4** main aspects of the article. (U)

7. Think about the structure of the article. Explain why the writer does not include any facts and statistics until halfway through the article. What effect might this structure have on the reader? (A/E)

8. The facts and statistics Alice Thomson has used are from a survey. What facts and statistics could she have included from another source? (U)

9. Identify 2 techniques Alice Thomson uses to try to persuade you to her point of view? (A)

10. Considering the article **as a whole**, is she successful in persuading you that parents should give their children more freedom? Give reasons for your answer. (E)

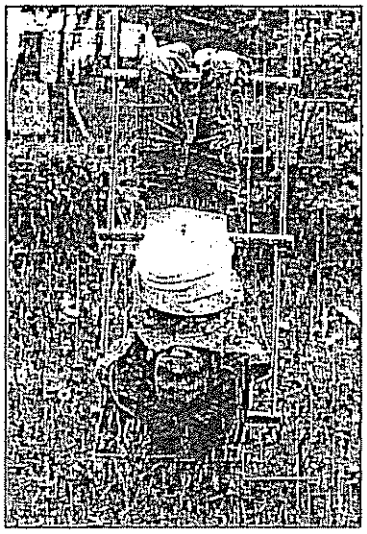
11. Why is the **last paragraph** an effective conclusion to the passage? (E)

Playday

This text is a leaflet designed to publicise Playday 2008. Playday is an annual celebration of children's right to play.

1 Playday 2008 – Give us a go!

Playday is the annual celebration of children's right to play - a national campaign, which this year reaches its climax on Wednesday 6 August. On Playday and throughout the summer of 2008, thousands of children, young people and communities will get out and play at hundreds of locally organised events across the UK. Whether this is your first Playday or your twenty-first, what better way to celebrate than by giving children and young people the chance to play at your very own Playday event?



Through play, children learn about themselves and the world around them

Playday: Give us a go!
As well as being a great opportunity for children and young people to get out and play, Playday provides an opportunity to raise awareness about some serious issues affecting children's play.

This year's Playday theme is *Give us a go!* The campaign promotes the benefits of allowing children to manage their own risks whilst playing and aims to counter the risk-averse 'cotton wool' culture that can limit children's play. We will be calling for children and young people to be allowed challenging and adventurous play opportunities as enjoyed by previous generations before them.

Although Playday reaches its peak on Wednesday 6 August this year, children and young people should benefit from being able to play freely all year round. To ensure this can happen, consider planning a longer-term campaign to follow on from your Playday event. Refer to the section *Developing a campaign* in this guide to give you ideas about developing a local campaign.

Through play, children can learn how to manage challenge and risk for themselves in everyday situations

What happens on Playday?
On Playday, and throughout the summer, hundreds of events will take place to celebrate Playday. Celebrations range from small neighbourhood gatherings to large public events organised by local authorities and national organisations. In previous years children have taken over Trafalgar Square, attended jubilee style street parties, and enjoyed large-scale mud pie and den building in parks and village greens.

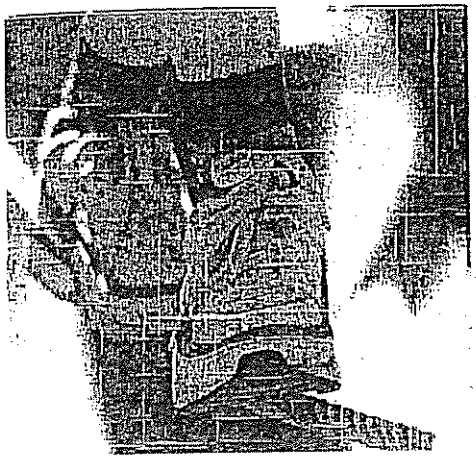
Play England coordinates the campaign in consultation with a national steering group, which includes representatives from Play Wales, Play Scotland and PlayBoard Northern Ireland as well as other national and regional representatives.

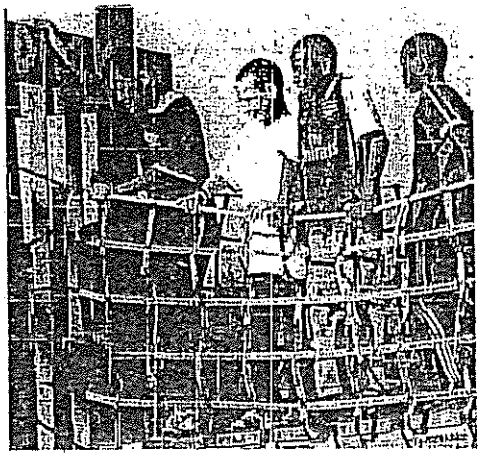
A comprehensive body of research is published to support the Playday campaign; this is available on the Playday website closer to the time. As well as informing the national campaign, the research programme helps to generate interest from both national and local media, which raises the profile of play.

Who can organise a Playday event?
Anyone can organise a Playday event. Big or small, there are lots of different ways to celebrate Playday. Whether it's a large community-wide event or a get-together with friends and family – find the way that suits you!

Playday events are often organised by play associations, local authorities, holiday play schemes, extended schools, children's centres, nurseries, preschool playgroups, residents' associations, community development workers, childminders, or simply someone who lives in locally and wants to give children and young people the opportunity to play there for the day.

The Playday campaign team provide Playday event organisers with lots of resources and advice on delivering a successful day including: this guide, seminars, a dedicated website, telephone helpline, and further materials to help with your event, including posters, promotional items and a template news release. So go on, what's stopping you?





Anyone can organise a Playday event. So go on, what's stopping you?

This year's theme

This year's Playday campaign is promoting the benefits of allowing children to manage their own risks whilst playing and aims to counter the risk-averse 'cotton wool' culture that can limit children's play.

Under the theme of *Give us a go!* there are some important messages to think about:

- All children need opportunities to take their own risks when playing; they need and want challenge, excitement and uncertainty in play.
- Through play, children can learn how to manage challenge and risk for themselves in everyday situations.
- Opportunities for children to take risks while playing are reducing, as increasingly health and safety considerations are impacting on children's play.
- Adults should provide for children and young people to have adventurous play opportunities.

'Playday'

1. Read paragraph 1 (above the photograph). Identify the genre of this text and give an example of a genre marker within the paragraph.

2. The writer uses the phrase "cotton wool culture" in paragraph 2. Explain what is meant by this.

3. Consider the layout of the text. Explain why it is effective in conveying the purpose of the text.

Comparison

1. Compare both texts. What idea do both writer's support?

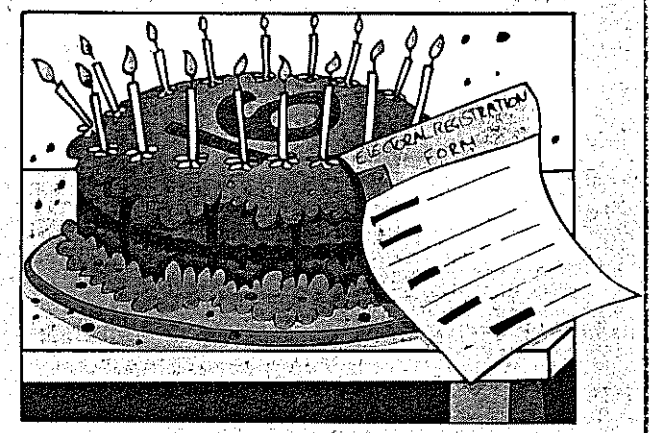
2. What are the similarities between each text? Are there any differences? Consider: tone, audience and purpose.

3. Which text do you consider to be more effective in conveying the writer's purpose? Give reasons for your answer.

NOW TRY THIS

In the following newspaper article from the *Sunday Herald*, note how the linking words *but* and *however* help you to follow the argument, especially in the section called 'The debate'. Read the passage carefully and then answer all the questions, using your own words where asked to do so. Remember to use the skills you have learned so far in this chapter, as well as those you learned in Chapter 1.

Should the Voting Age be Lowered to 16?



Politicians from all sides worry that fewer people are turning out to vote, and about who's voting for who and why. So now is a good time to think about who gets to vote and who doesn't. In fact, all over Europe, different groups are asking why 16-year-olds shouldn't be allowed to have their say in politics.

The debate

Here in Scotland, the Scottish Youth Parliament wants young people's voices to be heard more in politics. 'It's a fundamental part of our manifesto to lower the voting age to 16,' says Youth Parliament Chair, Paul Kane. 'Turning 16 gives you enormous responsibilities – you can even get married. The government has a huge impact on your life, yet you can't vote for who represents you.' Political parties, such as The Scottish Greens, The Scottish Socialists, and the Scottish National Party, are among those who have been campaigning (separately, of course) for years to reduce the voting age to 16 from the current 18. They all argue that since at age 16 a person is considered to be old enough to pay taxes, join the army to fight for their country or leave full-time education, then surely they are old enough to vote.

While the line has to be drawn somewhere, why is 18 currently the magic number? Well, it's the age at which the UN define adulthood, and in most countries the voting age is 18. Other aspects of adulthood, such as being legally independent from your parents, and borrowing money, also happen at 18.

But in the 2001 General Election only 59.4% of possible voters turned out to have their say. Allowing 16-year-olds to vote might send a message to younger voters that the government is worth taking an interest in. But does that mean it's the right move? The Scottish Conservatives are more interested in getting those who can already vote

to do so. According to a spokesperson: 'We don't believe that the case for a lowering of the age has been made and are content for it to remain at 18. It is more important for all politicians to give those who can vote a real reason for doing so.'

But Robin Harper MSP, a former teacher and leader of the Green Party in Scotland, believes the people who suggest that teenagers wouldn't use their vote just aren't communicating with young people.

'Of course 16-year-olds would use their vote,' he says. 'Right now, we're teaching children that democracy doesn't work, that their voices don't count. If they had more input, they would learn that they can make a difference.' Harper also supports getting teenagers involved at a local council level. 'These teenagers are affected more than anyone by local council issues, such as youth projects, or sales of playing fields.'

However, many teenagers feel that they aren't ready to vote. Owen, studying Modern Studies Higher at Glasgow's St Aloysius' College, says: 'We do understand the processes of politics, but not the policies of the parties.' His classmate Harriet agrees. 'It's just that we don't have the life experience,' she says.

A Nestlé Family Monitor/MORI poll in 2003 showed that 11 to 18-year-olds are interested in their local communities, but haven't much faith in the processes of national politics. So moving the voting age to 16 might force government to consider policies affecting that age group more seriously.

However, there are other ways to get involved. Former youth parliament member, Holly, 17, from Ayr says 'The youth parliament is listened to in Holyrood. It's actually a better way to represent your age group than to have one vote.'

The result

There seems to be an attitude of 'if it ain't broke, don't fix it' among the British public – around 60% of people support leaving the voting age at 18, in line with other rights of adulthood. But in parts of Germany and Austria, where a similar debate has been going on, 16 and 17-year-olds have been given the right to vote in local elections, although not in national ones. So hold on to your voting slips, perhaps the rest of the EU will follow suit.

Rosie Brown, *Sunday Herald*

Should the Voting Age be Lowered to 16? – Close Reading questions

Look again at lines 9–13.

1. **Explain in your own words** why Paul Kane thinks you should be able to vote at 16. 2 U

2. Quote the words which show how strongly Paul Kane feels about this, and explain how these words show the strength of his feelings. 2 A

3. Name two political parties that agree with him about this. 2 U

4. *'They all argue that since at age 16 a person is considered to be old enough to pay taxes, join the army to fight for their country or leave full-time education, then surely they are old enough to vote.'* (lines 16–18)

   How does the **sentence structure** here emphasise the strength of the argument? 2 A

5. Why is the question in line 19 a good way to start the paragraph? 2 A

6. **Using your own words as far as possible**, write down two things mentioned that young people can legally do at 18. 2 U

Look again at lines 23–29.

7. What point does the writer make in the first sentence of this paragraph? 2 U

8. How does the word *'But'* help to make clear the line of thought at this point? 2 A

9. According to the passage, which political party does *not* agree with the lowering of the voting age to 16? 1 U

10. **Using your own words as far as possible**, say what this party believes is the most important point. 2 U

11. Which word from lines 30–32 suggests that another point is going to be made in the argument? 1 A

12. Explain **in your own words** one point Robin Harper makes in lines 33–37. 2 U

13. What is surprising about the viewpoint of the teenagers in lines 38–41? Which word prepares you for this viewpoint? 2 U

Look at lines 49–54: **The result**

14. Explain **in your own words** what do most people in Britain feel about the issue. 2 U

15. What on the other hand, has happened in Germany and Austria? 2 U

16. Why is the last sentence a good way to finish the argument? 2 E

TOTAL – 30 marks

'Roald Dahl and the darkness within'

Tom de Castella
BBC News Magazine

1. James and the Giant Peach is 50 years old. In the story his parents die a violent death and James escapes abusive relatives. Why was Roald Dahl so dark?

2. There's a perception that children's literature involves endless picnics where the strawberry jam and lashings of ginger beer never run out. But Roald Dahl pursued a different path, satisfying children's appetite for the violent, greedy and disgusting.

3. Today, 50 years after the publication of James and the Giant Peach, Dahl is a towering figure. It was his first children's book and has now sold 5.1 million copies in the UK as well as being translated into 34 languages. But for years it struggled to find a British publisher.

4. The surreal plot emerged from bedtime stories Dahl told to daughters Tessa and Olivia. The hero, four-year-old James, is orphaned after his parents are killed by a rhinoceros. James is sent to live with his wicked aunts, the start of a traditional Dahl theme – the solitary child at the mercy of cruel adults. He is bullied and beaten until one day an old man gives him a bag of crocodile tongues. James drops them by mistake on the peach tree, causing a giant peach to sprout, which James ends up living inside with various friendly insects. 'There's the isolated central child who is then propelled into a fantastical landscape inside the peach,' says Donald Sturrock, whose authorised biography of Dahl – Storyteller – has just been published in paperback. What follows is a child taking revenge against adults. Backed up by some unlikely friends – in this case a centipede, earthworm and grasshopper – James squashes the aunts with the peach and floats away.

5. Dahl's books are full of the grotesque, from Mrs Twit substituting worms for her husband's spaghetti, to child-eating giants in The BFG, and the hero of Danny the Champion of the World drugging pheasants so that they're easier to poach. Greed and its punishment is everywhere, whether it's Violet Beauregarde swelling up into a blueberry in Charlie and The Chocolate Factory or the child in Matilda who is forced to eat a whole chocolate cake. For The Times newspaper's children's book critic Amanda Craig, there's also a 'streak of rather unpleasant misogyny'. In a Freudian sense, female characters are either warm and loving like the 'supportive, luscious peach' or evil like the wicked aunts. It's a simple duality that children are used to, she argues. 'Dahl is picking up the baton of the evil stepmother and the fairy godmother.'

6. James and the Giant Peach was published in the US in 1961. But it was considered too 'dark, brutal and vulgar' for the British publishing establishment, says Sturrock. At the time, Dahl was seen as a writer of macabre short stories for adults. The book was eventually published in the UK in 1967 after Dahl agreed to pay half of the publishing costs in return for the same proportion of sales income. As it went on to sell millions it turned out to be spectacularly good business, his first of many best-sellers as a children's author.

7. There's always been darkness in fairy tales. In the 19th century Hansel and Gretel involved a witch wanting to cook children in her oven, while Charles Dickens's Oliver Twist featured an orphan living out a miserable childhood. But Dahl took things beyond masochism to sadism, says former children's laureate Michael Rosen. 'In Hansel and Gretel the father is poor and only gets rid of the children against his better wishes. But in Dahl the parents are often sadists like in Matilda. There's a persistent nastiness and brutality in Dahl and he lingers over their horrible appearances and habits.'

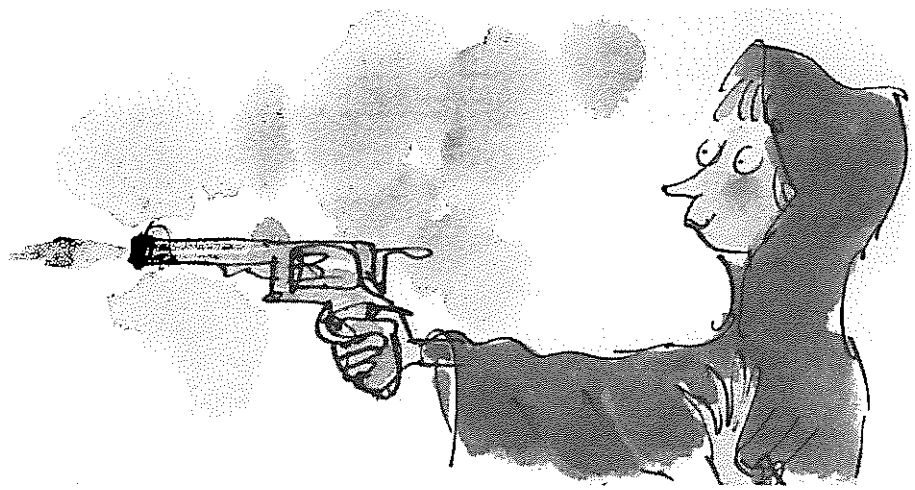
8. The darkness came from his own life. His father and sister died when he was three years old and a few years later he was sent to boarding school, a period he wrote about later in his book Boy. 'He lost his father young. Then his mother sent him away to boarding school where he was viciously beaten. Those sadistic parents in his fiction are a reframing of his own experience,' says Rosen. Then there was his wartime experience. 'Very few people have quite that fierceness,' says Craig. 'He's one of the few children's authors who's actually killed people. That is going to have an effect on how you see people and the world.'

9. But others argue the darkness came from within his character. The book reviewer Kathryn Hughes recently wrote of him in the Guardian: 'No matter how you spin it...Roald Dahl was an absolute sod. Crashing through life like a big, bad child he managed to alienate pretty much everyone he ever met.' Like many other children's writers such as Beatrix Potter, C S Lewis and Lewis Carroll, he had an ambiguous relationship with children. Sturrock argues he loved them but accepts he lost interest when they grew up. 'Once his own kids turned adolescent he switched off and packed them off to boarding school,' he says.

10. Whatever his failings, Dahl succeeded because he understood a child's dark side, says Rosen. 'Dahl knew that what children want in literature is the opposite of what they want in life. He believed that children love and hate their parents in equal measure. He lifts the lid and allows a child to have that hate feeling to adult carers.'

11. Comedian Tim Minchin says Dahl's plots sound 'terrifying'. And while it's true they 'scared him witless' as a child, it is an abstract fear free of the gruesome 'baggage' that adults bring to the stories. 'When adults see child abuse in Matilda they think of Baby P. But kids don't see it that way,' says Minchin, whose Matilda the Musical opens in London next month. 'For children it looks dirty and fun.'

12. And the books always end happily, says Craig. It's not so much a righting of the moral universe as the triumph of the child, she argues. 'He was unequivocal that it is the good, young and kind who triumph over the old, greedy and the wicked.' And the old shouldn't object, she says. For when we read Dahl we all become children again.



Questions

1. What is the purpose of this passage? Make close reference to the text in your answer. **IDENTIFY, QUOTE AND EXPLAIN** (2)

2. Look at paragraph 2. In your own words, explain what made Roald Dahl different to other childrens' writers. **OWN WORDS** (2)
3. Look at paragraph 4. Summarise the plot of 'James and the Giant Peach', using your own words. **OWN WORDS** (4)

4. From paragraph 5, identify two ways in which Roald Dahl's books are 'grotesque', making use of your own words as far as possible. **OWN WORDS** (2)

5. Re-read paragraphs 8 and 9. What are the two possible explanations for where the 'darkness' in Roald Dahl's writing came from? Answer in your own words. **OWN WORDS** (2)

6. The final three paragraphs express the opinions of three different critics – Michael Rosen, Tim Minchin and Amanda Craig, In your own words, summarise the view that each of these critics takes of Dahl's work. **SUMMARISE** (6)

Total marks : 18