



Practice questions

Key points to remember:

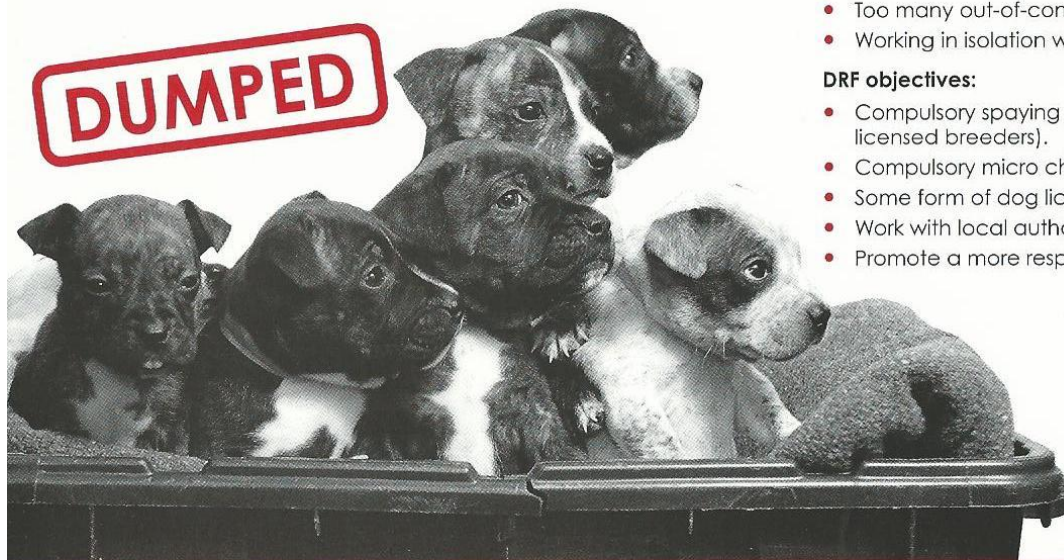
- ✓ Highlight what is asked for in question;
- ✓ Comment on what is said and explain how the quote/ language works/ answer the question is the most important element of this response.
- ✓ Systematically work through – evidence /effect
- ✓ Integrate technique reference into answer... the choice of emotive language here...'quote'..... Persuades.....
- ✓ Consider **title/ tone/ language choices/ images/ presentational devices and structure** in the text and respond to these ideas in your answer. (consider the whole text)
- ✓ **Time and marks:**
 - * **5 marks = 7-8 minutes reading and answering the question;**
 - * **10 marks = 15 minutes reading and answering the question;**
- ✓ Use terms such as: 'the writer/ author' and 'the reader'

Q: How does the Dog Rescue Federation try to persuade support them?

(10 marks)

127,000 REASONS TO CHANGE THE LAW

That's how many stray and abandoned dogs local authorities in the UK rounded up last year. In the same period at least 11,000 perfectly innocent dogs were put to sleep for no other reason than they were not wanted.



The Dog Rescue Federation is made up entirely of voluntary dog rescue groups operating in different parts of the UK.

These groups have joined together as a Federation because they all face the same problems:

- Unregulated back street breeders churning out puppies for profit.
- Unsold puppies being given away to unchecked and unsuitable homes.
- A constant flow of unwanted and abandoned dogs into pounds.
- Dog owners not spaying or neutering their dogs.
- Dogs not micro-chipped or microchip information not being kept up-to-date.
- Too many out-of-control dogs in local communities.
- Working in isolation without a voice and with no support.

DRF objectives:

- Compulsory spaying and neutering (except those dogs registered to licensed breeders).
- Compulsory micro chipping of all dogs.
- Some form of dog licensing or registration.
- Work with local authorities to introduce policies that will improve dog welfare.
- Promote a more responsible attitude towards dog ownership and welfare.

Dog lovers want to help?

Please join our federation and support our aims to alleviate the terrible suffering caused by un-licensed breeding of dogs.

Now, to find out more about us visit our website:

www.dogrescuefederation.org



REPRESENTING VOLUNTARY DOG RESCUERS ACROSS THE UK

Q: How does John Humphrys persuade the reader he hates noise?

(10 marks)

Text E is an extract from a newspaper article by John Humphrys

I present the Today programme and have become obsessed with noise. The first question strangers ask is always: "What time do you get up?" (Answer: the middle of the night.) The second is: "What time do you go to bed?" (Answer: absurdly early – long before the average 10-year-old.) And the third is: "How do you manage to sleep?"

Which is where noise comes in. Because it depends. If it is quiet, I sleep like a contented baby. If it is noisy, I sleep like a fractious baby with a particularly nasty teething problem. The difference is that if I am kept awake, I do not scream for attention but lie still, cursing all those selfish souls who think it acceptable to walk past my house at nine in the evening without lowering their voices to a whisper.

I happen to be on the extreme end of the spectrum for obvious reasons, but you, dear reader, you may be on it, too. Do you not dread the approach of Christmas with the certain knowledge that every shop you enter will welcome you with canned Christmas carols? Or the hotels who believe you cannot make it through a meal without music in the background? Even at breakfast, for God's sake! Do you not want to take a large hammer to the small jet engine your neighbour insists on using to blow away the tiny handful of leaves that have settled in his front garden, smash it into even tinier pieces and hand him a broom that would do the job in a fraction of the time (and quietly)?

Do you not nod in (silent) agreement at the result of the survey last week that asked office workers what most annoyed them about the behaviour of their colleagues and found that they put eating noisily at the top of the list by a large majority? Do you not applaud the hotel chain that has installed noise meters in its corridors that flash a warning light if people are talking too loudly and offer a refund to guests who failed to get a good night's sleep because of noise? We can even – just – forgive the company for calling them "ssshhh-o-meters".

Q: How does Gerardo Arias Camacho convince the reader of the benefits of Fairtrade? (10 marks)

Text D is taken from The Guardian newspaper.

The story of a coffee farmer

Gerardo Arias Camacho is a coffee farmer in Costa Rica. He is a board member on his village co-operative, which is a member of the Fairtrade consortium COOCAFE. He is married with three children.

In the 1980s, the price of coffee was so low that it didn't cover the cost of production. Many farmers abandoned their land and some even left the country to find work. In the mid-90s, I went to America to make money and support my family. After eight years, I had earned enough to buy the family farm so that my parents could retire. But coffee prices were still so low that I was forced to return to America for another two years.

Then the coffee business was unstable. We did not have a local school, good roads or bridges. Now that we are Fairtrade-certified, prices are stable and we receive a guaranteed amount for our coffee. We spend the money on education, environmental protection, roads and bridges, and improving the processing plant. We have a scholarship programme so that our kids can stay in school. I believe that my farm would be out of business if it wasn't for Fairtrade. Free trade is not responsible trade. When prices go down, farmers produce more and prices drop further. Fairtrade is the way trade should be: fair, responsible and sustainable.

My oldest son is in college, my ten-year-old has already had as much education as me, and my little girl is in her second year at school. With the help of Fairtrade, they might all be able to go to university and get a degree. They won't have to jump the border from Mexico to America, like me. They can decide what they want in life.

Since Fairtrade, our farms have become more environmentally-friendly. Our coffee is now produced in a sustainable way. We plant trees and have reduced the use of pesticides by 80% in 10 years. We used to cut 50 acres of forest down every year to fuel the ovens at our processing plant. Now we have a new oven which is fuelled by coffee waste products and the skins of macadamia nuts that we buy from farmers on the other side of Costa Rica. It is a win-win business.

Fairtrade is not a closed system. It is open to everyone but we need more and more people to buy Fairtrade so other farmers can become certified. We already educate other producers around us about market prices so that buyers have to offer them a competitive rate and this benefits the wider community. When there was a hurricane, the main road became blocked and the bridge came down. We could afford to open the road and fix the bridge.

When you are shopping, look for the Fairtrade label – you can be sure that the money is going straight to the producers. It will help us, and it will help people around the world, because the benefits of protecting the environment are for everyone. It is a matter of helping each other.

As a Fairtrade farmer, I finally feel competitive. It has given me knowledge so that I am more able to defend myself and my people. I feel there is a future in front of us because we can stay in our own country and make a living growing coffee. Fairtrade is not charity. Just by going shopping, you can make a difference.

Q: How does the writer try to show the nastiness and cruelty of the dog owner? (10 marks)

Read carefully the passage below. Then answer all the questions which follow.

Jackson and the Dog

Jackson was in Bradshaw Park, which seemed full of people who were anxious to get a good day out of the English climate. As he strolled around he came across an unexpected picture of happiness. A dog, a small scruffy one, was racing around the park, yapping excitedly as if it had just been released from prison. It seemed as if the dog didn't belong to anyone but then a man lumbered up, barking orders at it, "Get here. Get here when I call you!" He was a big ugly guy, with a mean expression on his face, barrel-chested like a Rottweiler dog. He had a shaved head, bulging, weight-lifting muscles and a half-naked woman tattooed into his right forearm.

The dog was wearing a collar but instead of a lead the man was carrying a rope, thin like a washing-line, with a noose at one end. Without warning he grabbed the dog by the scruff and lassoed it. Then he hitched the dog up in the air so that it started to choke, its small legs paddling helplessly. Just as suddenly the dog was dropped to the ground and the man aimed a kick that connected with the dog's back legs. The dog cringed and started to tremble in a way that made Jackson's heart go out to it. The man yanked on the rope leash and pulled the dog along, shouting, "Going to put you down, should have done it before".

A commotion was growing quickly, agitated people protesting loudly at the man's behaviour, a jumble and hum of angry-sounding words – "poor little thing" – "pick on someone your own size" – "watch it, mate". Mobile phones came out and people started to photograph the man. Jackson took his own phone and shot off a couple of pictures of the man hitting the dog. Photographic evidence, you never knew when you were going to need it.

A woman's voice rose shrilly above the others, "I'm calling the police," and the man snarled, "Mind yer own bloody business," and he continued to drag the dog along the path. He was pulling it so fast that a couple of times it tumbled head over heels and scraped and bounced along the hard surface of the path.

Jackson followed the man out of the park. The man's car was parked nearby and he opened the boot, grabbed the dog and flung it brutally inside where it cowered, shivering and whimpering.

"You just wait, you're dead," the man said. He already had his mobile phone open, holding it to one ear as he raised a warning finger to the dog in case it made a move to escape. "Hey, babe, it's Colin," he said, his voice turning softer.

Q: How does Angela Epstein try to show that 'life is not easy for a working mother'?

(10 marks)

Wash up? That'll cost you £5, Mum.

Should you really have to pay your children to help around the house?

My boss had told me I had to phone him at 6:30 pm – right in the middle of crisis hour, that time of the day when tired, hungry children collide with irritable parents and edge the household towards complete and utter meltdown. However, this evening my little girl was having an especially spectacular tantrum because, she alleged, someone had taken her blue plastic pony.

"Sophie, stop that noise. I need to make a phone call," I thundered, as if that would somehow make my crimson-faced daughter pipe down.

She simply cranked up her howling. In desperation, I turned to Max, my 15-year-old son, and asked him to take his sister into the garden. I uttered the magic words, "I'll pay you." Lifting an eyebrow, but not turning from his Xbox, he started negotiations. It was 6:26 pm. Time was trickling away fast.

"How much?" he opened.

I offered a pound.

He wrinkled his nose and said, "Ten."

I told him I was only going to be five minutes, and this was extortion.

I gave this boy life – and it was particularly painful. However, he sensed the urgency of the situation. We settled at a fiver and so he led his sister outside and gave her a half-hearted push on the swing.

I know. You don't have to tell me. I shouldn't have to pay my children to help me. But I do. And frequently. I'm not talking about chores such as unloading the dishwasher (it was cheaper to employ a cleaner). But it seems that I've found myself in the grip of their money-making manipulation, resorting to cash bribes whenever I need something doing at any given moment. Life is not easy for a working mother.

How did it come to this? My husband, Martin, may be to blame for making my children so mercenary. When my eldest son sat his GCSEs last year, Martin promised him a cash reward for every A* he could achieve.

"I was brought up to believe that achievement should be its own reward," I argued when he told me his plan. "He should want those grades for his own self-respect and because he wants to get on in the world."

"Nah," replied Martin. "Money talks. That'll get him going."

Let's just say that when my son netted 10 A*s, he earned more than me that month. And so my children are aware they can get large amounts of cash by taking advantage of me.

Please tidy the playroom, we've got visitors coming. Going rate a fiver. Move a load of cardboard boxes out of the garage. Negotiable, depending on the size of the boxes. Get the suitcases down from the attic and dust them ready for our holiday. Each case is £3. I meekly suggested a family discount – maybe a fiver for two – and received a withering look for having the nerve to suggest such a proposition.

It's not that I have reared a brood of merciless youngsters who know the price of everything and the value of nothing. They're actually a very loving, friendly bunch. They are simply taking their cue from me.



You see, the way I live my life has been my undoing. Every day is a demented juggle between running a home and doing a job. My downfall was raising children who are sharp enough to realise that in my desperation to get everything done, there is money to be made.

I don't always give in. The other day I asked Max to answer the door.

"I answered it last week," he murmured.

"Just do it," I ordered.

"How much?" he ventured, although he was joking (I think) and shot me a knowing smile before strolling off to let my visitor in.

Don't get me wrong. There are times when children should have incentives. They can learn a lot by being paid to wash the car or do the garden. It's honest work and I'd have to pay someone to do it – so why shouldn't they make a few quid?

It teaches them early on in life that there is great dignity in being rewarded for hard work. But I can't seem to resist the temptation to cough up whenever I need to buy another pair of hands or ten minutes of silence. Anything for an easy life.

When I finally made my call to my boss, he couldn't speak to me. His grandchildren had just arrived and he wanted to rearrange our conversation. "Children come first," he chuckled. "I'm sure you understand."

*Remember to join the HWB class – see your teacher for further details

Q: How does the writer try to show that Agbo is “not a good place to live”? (10 marks)

‘This is not a good place to live’: inside Ghana’s dump for electronic waste

Agbo is Ghana’s vast dumping site for electronic waste. In this bleak landscape, young people scavenge for scrap metal amid the smoke from plastics fires. The health risks are obvious – but the money is too good to ignore.



The appliances at Agbo are dismantled for their tiny nuggets of precious metals such as copper. Old video players, cassette recorders, sewing machines and computers lie randomly on large mounds in the dump, which stretches as far as the eye can see.

“Electric waste comes here from all over the world – but especially from Europe,” says Karim, 29, who has been salvaging, buying and selling

at the dump for 10 years. “We get a lot of health problems here. Many workers here have died from cancers but we manage, because we need the money.”

Last week, the United Nations warned that the global amount of such rubbish is set to grow by 33% over the next four years. Much of it will be dumped in sites such as those in Agbo, poisoning the land with lead, mercury, and other dangerous materials.

Agbo seems chaotic in places, but there is an order to the large, desolate, rubbish-strewn site. At one side, boys and young men gather in groups, picking their way through piles of old hard drives, untangling wires, and breaking up old air-conditioning units.

Abdoullaye, 19, and a group of other teenage boys sit under flimsy shelters on the upturned cases of old PC monitors, working at a pile of e-waste with chisels and pliers and by hand. The boys are surrounded by rows of rusty chest freezers, each with a heavy padlock. Inside them, they store what they have collected – piles of copper and aluminium – until the metal is bought by traders.

“I came here five years ago,” said Abdoullaye. “I make between 50p and £1.30 each day, and each month I send £13 back to my family in the north. I would like to go back home, but my family needs the money, so I stay. We get many problems here. Sometimes I have to go to the hospital when I have breathing problems. It’s not good for us.”

Deeper into the heart of Agbo, huge plumes of foul-smelling smoke rise up from three large fires, where the dismantled items are burned to remove traces of plastic, leaving the metal behind. The fumes are head-pounding, but the men, women and children weaving in and out of the fires don’t seem to notice. The death rate for babies is high here.

Roles are divided at Agbo. Women and girls wander the sprawling site, selling peeled oranges, water and cooked food. Many have tiny babies wrapped in cloth tied tightly to their backs, all inhaling the poisonous fumes. There are special jobs for children, who trawl the site with magnets tied on to the end of a piece of string, picking up any tiny scraps of metal such as tin left behind in the dirt.

In the centre of the dump, a clearing has been turned into a football pitch, and two teams are in the middle of a game. Agbo is not just a site for trading, burning and dumping electrical waste; it’s also home to thousands of people, who carry on their lives and raise their children in the midst of its filth and fumes. Families live in the shacks dotted throughout the central area of the dump.

“This is not a good place to live. But we don’t want the people in Europe and all those places to stop sending the waste,” said Karim. “This is a business centre, and we are using the money we make here to help our families to have a better life.”

By Afua Hirsch



*Remember to join the HWB class – see your teacher for further details

Q: How does the writer make these lines interesting and dramatic? [10 marks]

- 55 Later that morning our mother walked us to school. Down by the school gates she went on one knee, put her arms around us and kissed us one after the other. When she stood up, her gaze was caught by a dark form wrapped in a red blanket on the other side of the road by the railings of the church. The man raised a hand in salute. Corrigan waved back.
There were plenty of drunks around Dublin but my mother seemed taken by the sight, and for a
- 60 moment it struck me that there might be a secret there.
'Who's that, Mum?' I asked.
'Run along,' she said.
My brother walked beside me, silent.
'Who is it, Corr?' I thumped him. 'Who is it?'
- 65 He disappeared towards his classroom.
All day I sat at my wooden desk, gnawing my pencil, wondering – visions of a forgotten uncle, or our father somehow returned, broken. In those days, nothing was beyond the realm of the possible. The clock was at the rear of the room but there was an old freckled mirror over the classroom sink and I could watch the hands crawl backwards. When the bell went I was out of
- 70 the gate but Corrigan took the long road home, taking short steps through the housing estate and along the sea wall.
There was a soft brown paper package waiting for Corrigan on the top bunk. I shoved it at him. He shrugged and ran his finger along the string, pulled it tentatively. Inside was a soft blue blanket. He unfolded it, looked at our mother and nodded.
- 75 She touched his face with the back of her fingers and said, 'Never again, understand?'
Nothing else was mentioned, until two years later he gave that blanket away too, to another homeless drunk, on another freezing night, up by the canal on one of his late-night walks, when he tiptoed down the stairs and went out into the dark. It was a simple equation to him – others needed the blankets more than him, and he was prepared to take the punishment if it came his
- 80 way.
It was my earliest suggestion of what my brother would become.

Q: How does the writer, Emma Cowing, show the dangers and problems faced by Fogle and Cracknell during the race? [10 marks]

Telephone interview with James Cracknell

In 2005, Olympic gold medal winner James Cracknell and television presenter Ben Fogle were rowing in the Atlantic Rowing Race towards Antigua in the West Indies. Their blisters and other injuries were so bad that Fogle, with a swollen finger, wasn't sure how much longer he would be able to carry on. But their main worry was the hurricane bearing down on the 23ft boat that could blow them back towards their starting point, the Canary Islands. This is what James Cracknell said in a telephone interview during the race:

Since last Saturday, we have hardly made any progress – just 100 miles in almost a week. We've experienced the worst weather they've ever had in the race and it looks as if it will continue until next Tuesday.

The hurricane itself didn't hit us, but we got caught by strong winds blowing in exactly the wrong direction so we had to put down the sea anchor. For two and a half days we were stuck in our cabin, which is like being shut in a car boot. When the wind eased off, we were able to set off at midnight and row for seven hours, which took us over the 2,000 miles-to-go mark. We celebrated with a chocolate bar. But we keep having to stop because of the weather. We've lost so many days that we are starting having to ration our food. We wanted to do the race in forty days, and took enough food for fifty, but that looks optimistic now, so we've cut our daily ration of 8,000 calories by 600. By the time we get to the last few days, we will be having a horrible time because we've left all the food we don't like until then.

We've been thirsty as well as hungry. Earlier in the week, the machine which removes salt from seawater broke and we nearly had to break into the fresh water we carry as ballast. We could only drink five to six litres a day, instead of ten.

We haven't seen another boat since the day we set off so we don't know our position in the race. The weather has brought out the differences in our competitive attitudes, so there has been a bit of tension. I mind about being overtaken and I'm keener to row in the rain than Ben is; he just wants to get to the end. The race is a battle with your mind and little things can become really annoying.

I'm not looking forward to the next four days because we're going to be stuck in the cabin again. We're bored with talking to each other, we've only got one pack of cards, and we've played all the games we know. We need to sleep as much as we can, but it gets really hot in the cabin because the wind is so strong that we have to keep the windows and hatch shut. Out of a twelve-hour night we probably sleep for only two hours and spend the rest of the night trying to get comfortable. We sleep head to toe on a shelf that is only the width of a shoulder and, just as I am dozing off, I find Ben's foot in my mouth. It has been such a hard slog that both of us are struggling to find the excitement in this adventure.

Q: How does Professor Stephen Harris try to prove that the urban fox has found 'a place in our hearts'? [10 marks]

3

Fantastic Mr *Urban* Fox: The reason why our so-called pests are so at home in our cities. By Professor Stephen Harris

Whisper it – but deep down, we city dwellers love our urban foxes.

We may curse them when we find the contents of a ripped bin-bag strewn across the road, or when their barking has disturbed our suburban slumbers. But all this hostility is just an act. Secretly, we adore these red-coated invaders – as you can tell from our typical response to spotting one, maybe as it trots across the road or saunters casually along a garden wall. We stop for a moment and stare, marvelling at the sight of such a resourceful, intelligent and quite large wild animal so thoroughly at home in our human habitat. It's like a little bit of the countryside has suddenly come to town.

Which may be why so many of us feed them. Yes, that's right, feed them. Half of an urban fox's diet comes courtesy of us humans. I'm not talking about waste food they scavenge from our bins. (I find that nuisance is generally caused by stray dogs or greedy cats). I'm talking about food that is deliberately left out for them. As many as one in ten households regularly feed local foxes; sometimes with unexpected results.

The wife of a friend in Bristol was startled when she came into the kitchen one evening to find that a fox had calmly climbed through her cat flap and was busy eating the cat's food. But she didn't panic and nor did the fox. The animal fell into the habit of returning every night, knowing that not only would he find his special bowl of food but that, once he had finished, he could climb up onto the lady of the house's lap for a nap and to have his head stroked. This cosy arrangement continued happily for some time until the fox was caught one night by my survey team. We attached some tracking technology and the fox took it all in his stride and returned the next night for his dinner as usual. However, it was a rather frosty-sounding woman who rang me the next morning to complain that their after-dinner cuddle hadn't been the same now that the object of her affections had a plastic tag in each ear.

Stories like this show how totally at home foxes are in our cities. Unlike their country cousins, who are hunted and shot at daily, the foxes who live in towns have little to fear from humans, apart from our cars and our more ferocious breeds of dogs. This lack of fear is readily apparent – look how relaxed they are when you do spot them.

That's why I wasn't surprised to see the wonderful pictures of an urban fox riding up and down the escalators at an underground station in London.

However, it would be wrong to say that urban foxes cause no problems. Their barking can disturb a night's sleep, and to the normal diet of worms, insects and rats, I'm afraid must be added the occasional small pet – a rabbit, guinea-pig, even a kitten – that has been inadequately protected in a back garden. There is evidence of them very occasionally taking a curious nip at a baby left sleeping in a garden. But, as far as I know, no serious injuries have ever been recorded, and it pales into insignificance compared to the far more serious attacks on infants carried out by dogs. I see no reason why our love affair with the urban fox should not continue. They have found a place in our cities, and in our hearts.

Q: How does Max Davidson try to prove that Manchester is 'a perfect place for a city break'? [10 marks]



MANCHESTER: Another Angel of the North

Manchester doesn't blow its own trumpet, but it's a perfect place for a city break, says Max Davidson.

The people of Manchester are not slow to laugh at themselves, and a lack of pomposity is pure Manchester – a great city, but also an oddly shy city, not quite sure of itself in company. It would rather play the down than give itself airs and graces.

Because Manchester has never blown its own trumpet, it has never really figured on the tourist map of Europe. But make no mistake, it belongs on that map. If Manchester were in France or Germany, we would visit it in droves. In fact, in many ways it is the perfect city-break destination: accessible, reasonably compact, but blessed with a bewildering variety of attractions, including a clutch of superb free museums such as the People's History Museum. At Easter a new indoor attraction for families, the Legoland Discovery Centre, is due to open in the city. Throw in the Metrolink, a tram system that would delight Londoners, and you have the complete package.

The bad news about Manchester should be got out of the way first. The weather is unpredictable, which is being kind to it, and if you are visiting it is best to pack thermals and an umbrella. But what is a drop of rain between friends – particularly when there is so much to do indoors?

Every year, Manchester seems to throw up something new, whether it is a state-of-the-art museum, a funky restaurant, or a seriously cool hotel. The Light, where I am staying, is so new you can almost smell the paint dry. But what a brilliant place. It is in the fashionable Northern Quarter, a cluster of wacky boutiques and vegan cafes and dusty record shops. I have dinner in a super-stylish restaurant, packed with young people, and then move on to Matt and Phred's, a Manchester institution, famed for its live jazz. Couples canoodle in dark corners to the strains of a saxophone. Outside, the rain is coming down in stair-rods, but somehow that only adds to the cosiness of the setting.

Architecturally, Manchester is a mess, but a glorious mess. It is hard to find an area in which each building blends harmoniously with its neighbours. Everything is higgledy-piggledy: a crumbling Victorian pile here, a shiny new office block there. Architectural masterpieces stand alongside buildings that should never have got planning permission.

Of the older buildings, the real gem is the John Rylands Library, a little Victorian masterpiece nestling in a forest of shops and offices. However, if that is not your bag, then head for The Lowry, a gallery and performing arts centre at Salford Quays. It is ten years old but still seems intoxicatingly new, a riot of modern culture in a once derelict canalside setting. Centre stage, inevitably, are the paintings of L.S. Lowry, but there is so much more to The Lowry than the paintings of Lowry.

Take a bridge across the Ship Canal from The Lowry and you come to the superb Imperial War Museum. It is not just a thrilling space, architecturally, but the perfect museum for an age sceptical about war. The exhibits do not celebrate deeds of bravery, but document the human cost of war, from civilian casualties to mass migration.

Elsewhere in the city, Urbis, the once cutting-edge exhibition centre, is due to close temporarily and open again as the National Football Museum. The Museum of Science and Industry is also being refurbished.

(17/10/17)

*Remember to join the HWB class – see your teacher for further details

Q: How does Deborah Moggach try to prove that 'anyone with any sense' cycles in London? [10 marks]

3

The Pleasures of London Cycling Deborah Moggach

I've biked in London all my life. My children bike; everyone I know, with any sense, bikes. How else does one get around the place? Nothing beats weaving through the rush-hour traffic or whizzing past the eternal gridlock that is the Strand. Cycling is the only way to free ourselves from the misery of the tube, the wall-to-wall buses that line Oxford Street, the hopelessness of even thinking about driving. It's the only way you can get where you want to go, on time, fast.

We all know the advantages of cycling. It's free, it's non-polluting and it's a wonderful way to keep fit. Isn't it weird that people take the tube to work and then spend their lunch hour sweating away on an exercise bike? What is less recognised, however, is its efficiency. You know exactly when you'll arrive at your destination. It takes me 25 minutes from my front door to the West End. Any other form of transport entails allowing for delays – endless waits, traffic jams. What a waste of life!

Not only that. I can do errands en route. Drop off a parcel, do a bit of shopping here and there, pick up some tickets, stop for a coffee. And I do these things on impulse. Once you start cycling, the city opens up for you. No longer are you fighting it, hot and frustrated. No longer are you at the mercy of bus drivers, roadworks, decisions made by others and over which you have no control. Believe me, once you've tasted this freedom, you're hooked.

More and more of us are taking up cycling. Side streets are less polluted, and more interesting anyway. Besides, the more of us who cycle the safer it is. Traffic has to accommodate us. We also make the streets safer. For a lone woman, walking home at night, a passing cyclist is a reassuring presence. We give the city a human scale.

Some people find the notion of confronting London's aggressive car drivers scary, especially in places like Hyde Park Corner, but if you're spooked you can always get off and walk. And as long as you treat all drivers as idiots who are just about to fling open the door of their parked car, or cut you up with their horrible 4x4, or squash you with their ghastly bendy bus, you'll be okay. Of course there are other disadvantages, like arriving at your destination sodden with sweat and with hideous 'helmet hair'. Sexy clothes and biking don't go together, so one has to pop into an alleyway to change, hopping about on one foot and looking a bit of a twit. And of course, cycling is no fun in torrential rain. Drivers can be aggressive, but I've met with a lot of politeness. Perhaps it's because I look harmless tootling along with my basket of shopping.

That said, how friendly is London to cyclists? There is still a scandalous lack of facilities. Ever noticed how few cycle racks adorn our streets? So we have to lock our bikes to a parking meter or a lamppost. The bike then falls over and gets damaged, or trips up a pedestrian. Worse still, many railings have a sign saying 'Bikes will be removed' – railings of offices whose bosses arrive each day in chauffeur-driven cars and, best of all, railings at a heart hospital! Isn't that lunatic?

Still, if you love London there's no better way to see it. On a bike, it's you who owns the city, instead of the city owning you.

Q: How does the writer show the suffering of the deer? [10 marks]

35 And then it seemed as if there was another voice. He listened, puzzled. There it was again. It was a kind of shortened scream, as if someone, something, had no breath to scream. His heart beating fast, because of that frightened screaming, he stepped carefully off the rock and went towards a belt of trees. There, between the trees, was a strange beast, with ragged tufts of fur standing up all over it, with patches of raw flesh beneath. The creature screamed, in small gasping screams, and leaped drunkenly from side to side, as if it were blind. Then the boy understood: it was a deer. He ran closer and was stopped by a
40 new fear. The grass was whispering and alive. The ground was black with ants, great energetic ants that hurried towards the fighting shape.

The beast fell and it came into his mind that he should shoot it and end its pain. He raised the gun, then lowered it again. The deer could no longer feel; its fighting was a protest of the nerves.

Q: How does the writer show that Mike is frightened in these lines? [10 marks]

30 Then suddenly Mike was free. He saw the bus returning, and in its headlights he could see the shape of a man close to him. He was facing death and for a moment he was filled with the injustice of life: why should he have to die like this when he had always been hardworking and honest? He lifted the heavy stick and brought it down on the head of his pursuer, so that the man crumpled to the ground, moaning and groaning as the life drained out of him.

35 Mike turned and began to run wildly again, but in the darkness ran into the side of an old lorry which sent him reeling. He lay there for a moment expecting the blow that would kill him, but even then his wits came back to him, and he turned over twice and rolled under the lorry. His stomach seemed to be coming into his mouth, and his lips could taste sweat and blood. His heart thumped wildly in his chest, and seemed to lift his whole body each time that it beat. He tried to calm it down, thinking it might be heard, and tried to control the noise of his gasping breath, but
40 he could not do either of these things.

Q: How does the writer show that the policemen's behaviour is unpleasant and threatening? [10 marks]

Then a squad car pulled up and a short cop got out. He looked real hard at me, then at Manny.

"What are you two doing?"

"He's practising shots. I'm watching. Ain't it obvious?" I said with my smart self.

The cop just stood there and finally turned to the other one who was just getting out of the car.

35 "Who unlocked the park gate?" the big one snarled.

"It's always unlocked," I said. Then we three just stood there watching Manny go at it.

"Is that true?" the big guy asked, tilting his hat back with the thumb the way tough guys do in the movies. "Hey you," he said, walking over to Manny. "I'm talking to you." He finally grabbed the ball to get Manny's attention. But that didn't work. Manny just stood there with his arms out

40 waiting for the pass. He wasn't paying no attention to the cop. So, quite naturally, when the cop slapped his head it was a surprise.

"Gimme the ball, man." Manny's face was all tightened up and ready to pop.

"Did you hear what I said, black boy?"

45 Now, when somebody says that word like that, I gets warm. And crazy or no crazy, Manny became like my brother at that moment and the cop became the enemy.

"You better give him back his ball," I said. "Manny don't take no mess from no cops. He ain't bothering nobody. He's gonna be Mister Basketball when he grows up. Just trying to get a little practice in."

"Look here, sister, we'll run you in too," the short cop said.

50 "I sure can't be your sister seeing as how I'm a black girl and you're a white cop. Boy, I sure will be glad when you run me in so I can tell everybody about that. You're just picking on us because we're black, mister."

The big guy screwed his mouth up and let out one of them hard-day sighs. "The park's closed, little girl, so why don't you and your boyfriend go on home."

55 That really got me. The 'little girl' was bad enough but that 'boyfriend' was too much. I kept cool, mostly because Manny looked so pitiful waiting there for the ball. But I kept my cool mostly cause there's no telling how frantic things can get what with a big-mouth like me, a couple of wise-guy cops, and a crazy boy too.

60 "The gates are open," I said real quiet-like, "and this here's a free country. So why don't you give him back his ball?"

Q: How does the writer of this article try to convince you that seagulls have become a serious problem?

3

The rise of the urban seagull

Seagulls are thriving in cities – attacking people, deafening residents, damaging buildings, spreading panic and disease. By 2014 there could be as many as 6 million of them, a new urban menace.

Herring gulls are huge birds, each one a kilo in weight, with a wingspan of 4½ ft. A thousand of them in the air together are a tonne of hardened muscle, and they possess vicious beaks and claws. The way things are heading, Britain's town centres are going to be overrun by an army of greedy and aggressive birds that will defend the rooftops against all-comers. They have already made headlines with their attacks on humans, whose heads they slash with their claws at 40mph. They are notorious for the way their cries keep people awake, and their droppings also cause damage to buildings and cars.

What began as a nuisance is becoming a much more serious problem. Fifty breeding pairs of herring gulls in a town are all it takes to make a huge impact, and many towns already have way beyond that. Because gulls now also live longer – 20-plus years is normal – it means populations are rocketing by 25% annually.

The RSPB argues that gulls do not attack people but only 'protect their nests'. The problem is that their nests are on the people's roofs. It is also untrue that gulls are only aggressive around their nesting sites. Any people with food in their hands – sandwiches, pasties, hamburgers, chips, ice creams – are targets for seagulls' beaks.

The NHS does not keep records of minor injuries, so it is impossible to know how many people have needed treatment after gull attacks. Local newspapers often have stories of postmen knocked from bicycles, householders terrorised, and scaffolders forced down their ladders. There has been at least one well-publicised death, of an 80-year-old man who was attacked and fell while trying to remove a gull's nest from his garage roof. He died of a heart attack. Last summer a woman was taken to hospital after being savaged at Burnham-on-Sea and, if reports are to be believed, at least one dog has been pecked to death.

Yet violence is not necessarily the worst problem. Gulls can start their noise as early as 4 a.m., and the slow torture of lack of sleep can affect people even more than the fear of a bloody head. Roofs and windows are plastered with droppings so alkaline that they eat through the paintwork of cars. Seagulls damage roof insulation, block gutters with their nests, and attack the contents of bins with the kind of wild energy that makes foxes look tidy. They are also blamed for spreading disease. The gull problem is not confined to Britain. From Norway to Portugal, every coastal country in Europe now reports an increase in roof-nesting gulls, as well as the USA, Canada and Australia.

Q: How does Ben Fogle show the problems he had coping with the extreme conditions of the expedition?
[10 marks]

Extract from: 'Race to the Pole' by Ben Fogle

A fierce wind scoured our faces, and ice snapped at our heels. The inside of my nose had frozen and icicles were beginning to form on my eyelashes. The cold cut through to the core, and my bones ached from the chill.

On we trudged. I'd long lost all feeling in my fingers, and my toes felt like ice cubes. I shook my arms furiously in an effort to get the blood flowing again. Every breath stung as the freezing air burnt my throat, while the moisture from my breath formed ice crystals on my unshaven chin. I bowed my head into the wind, gritted my teeth and pushed on, straining into my harness.

It was -40°C , a temperature at which the body is pushed to its limit, even in polar clothing. I knew that my fingertips had dropped below freezing; the moisture in the skin had frozen and if I didn't do something about it soon, I would be in danger of losing them to frostbite. Even my eyelids were beginning to stick together in the bitter conditions.

I looked across at James. His hair was tangled with ice, his balaclava was covered in a thick layer of frost and his legs were buckling with tiredness. We had been going for twelve hours and it was time to admit defeat, get inside and warm up.

Minutes later, we clambered into the tent and collapsed with exhaustion. Unzipping the door with my frozen hands had been like buttoning a shirt with an oven glove. The thin fabric gave us some protection from the wind chill, but even inside, as I struggled to light the stove, it was still -25°C .

The lighter had frozen. I fumbled with a box of matches, but the stove was too cold to ignite. I started to feel the pressure of the situation. We had to get the stove alight, or we'd freeze. We were hungry and dehydrated, but above all we needed heat.

Not a moment too soon, the match flared into life. I held it to the shallow pool of fuel on the freezing metal, and there was a small puff as a green flame engulfed the petrol. Slowly the flame grew into a flickering orange and then a thunderous blue as the metal sighed with relief.

Lying on my back as the freezing air was replaced by a warm glow, I peeled the balaclava from my face and removed the gloves from my icy, white fingers.

Needing water, and food, we scooped some snow into the small pan and placed it above the flame. The pan had a greedy appetite for snow as it disappeared in a plume of steam. I longed for the warmth of my sleeping bag.

I was worried about my fingers, though. They had been numb for too long. If I didn't warm them up fast, would I lose them? I shook them violently, but they remained frozen like a claw. I squeezed them back into the thin inner gloves, then the outer gloves, and the thick mitts. I pulled my hat low over my ears and pulled the damp balaclava back across my face.

Q: How does Outward Bound try to persuade readers that their courses will help to develop important skills and abilities in young people? [10 marks]

LIFE'S A JOURNEY. ENJOY THE RIDE! ADVENTURE & CHALLENGE



THE ONE AND ONLY

The Outward Bound Trust is an educational charity that uses outdoor experiences and challenges to help and develop young people. For over 65 years we've been inspiring thousands of young people to unlock their potential, raise their self-esteem, and prepare them to face their future with confidence.

We are famous for providing challenging outdoor adventure in the UK. We're proud that we've set the highest standards for safety while giving over a million people an experience that showed them the meaning of the greatest sentence in the English language, "I can."

Our expert instructors provide the chance to practise and refine new skills to help young people take more responsibility for themselves. Finally those skills are tested in the mountains or at sea as young people take control of their own expedition - and ultimately, of their own lives.

As Kurt Hahn, the Co-founder of Outward Bound, said more than 65 years ago, "We are all better than we know. If only we can be brought to realise this, we may never be prepared to settle for anything less".

"If you face your fears, your life will be better for it; and if you set your mind to it you can do things you had only dreamt of."
DAVID SHUTT

If we told you we could take a young person on an adventure, spend some quality time with them in an inspiring location, have lots of fun, and send them home and back into school or college with increased self-awareness, improved concentration, more enthusiasm to learn, more determination to succeed, and a greater sense of respect and compassion for others and the environment ... we guess you'd say, "Yes, please!"

HOW IT WORKS

What we do at The Outward Bound Trust is simple. We take young people on a journey - both physical and mental. We introduce them to new people and activities; we encourage them to review their progress; we help them to try new things in a safe and controlled environment; and we support them in finding out just how special they are.

Our impact is phenomenal.

Every young person discovers something personal to them, especially on expedition. All gain confidence and self-reliance and are exposed to life's most valuable lessons - taking responsibility for their choices, making personal judgements, and working together.

"If I ever come across something I think I can't do, I will just remember the course and how many things I have achieved here. It has set me up mentally for life."
ANYA DIABU

"Outward Bound gave me a chance to be really good at something for the first time."
JESSICA TARPOR

"I had a go at everything; that's good enough for me."

ADAM BANNERSTOCK



"With most of the young people, the first thing they shed is their isolation; the fear of not being in school groups soon gives way to strong bonds within their new groups. Confidence increases, friendships develop and they begin to open up more to other people's opinions."

EDWARD GRIESL

[Teacher, Cardinal Newman High School]

Our courses are about young people pushing themselves beyond their expectations, achieving things that they never thought possible, and working together to meet new challenges. Trying things like canoeing, rock climbing and abseiling, or the high ropes course, helps them to better understand themselves, their abilities and how they can take advantage of the opportunities in their lives.



OUTWARD BOUND OFFERS:

- Personal challenge
- Genuine adventure
- The chance to develop effective team skills
- The chance to gain confidence to overcome new challenges
- The chance to increase self-awareness and personal responsibility
- Skills and experience for action-planning and goal-setting
- Lots of fun!

"I learnt to have confidence in everything I do, trusting my abilities and friends and overcoming my fears. I also learnt never to put myself down; I am strong, I am worth it!"

SHYLA SOHAIL



Pushing the boundaries

*Remember to join the HWB class – see your teacher for further details

Q: How does the writer try to show that Mike Perham's voyage was really tough? [10 marks]

Cabin boy conqueror of the world

After nine months, teenager Mike Perham is set to become the youngest person to sail solo around the globe when he returns to Britain this week.



Mike Perham crossing the North Atlantic

While most teenagers may have been losing sleep over their exam results during the past few days, Mike Perham has had bigger things keeping him awake – battling the waves of the North Atlantic.

This week, nine months after leaving Portsmouth harbour, the 17-year-old Briton should become the youngest person to sail solo around the world. Perham is expected to complete the gruelling voyage on Thursday – and also secure a place in the Guinness Book of World Records – having covered 30,000 miles cooped up in a 50ft boat, surviving at times on just 10-minute intervals of sleep. He also had to cope with damage to the boat's autopilot system.

This morning the teenager will be about 300 miles off Britain's Atlantic coast as he races towards the finishing line near Ushant in France.

Speaking via satellite phone from his yacht, as it was buffeted by 45mph winds, Perham said, "I'm beginning to realise what I've done and I'm feeling very proud of myself and the people who have helped me make this happen. I'm very much looking forward to being back. I'm really looking forward to being in my own room and having a fridge in the house and little luxuries like home cooking."

"It does get lonely – no doubt about it. But that's just one of the big challenges. I'm probably used to it now and I'm in regular contact with my friends via e-mail. I just always look forward. You've got to have confidence in yourself that you will make it."

His father, Peter, said, "He's done incredibly well. He has shown that with determination and bravery, you can succeed even in the most difficult circumstances."

Perham said the worst moment of his voyage and one of his biggest challenges came late one night as he confronted 50ft waves and his boat nearly capsized in the Southern Ocean while he was heading towards Tasmania. One of the waves caught the boat with tremendous force and damaged the rudder.

Wedge behind a chart table inside his cabin, the teenager was flung upside down and was forced to brace himself against the ceiling as the yacht spun more than 90 degrees on its side at the crest of a wave. "It went berserk," said Perham. "I felt absolutely tiny out there at that moment and I wondered what on earth I was doing there. But then you get through it and you're on a high and you carry on."

The near capsizing disabled the electricity systems on board, but Perham escaped any serious problems and was able to cope until the worst of the storms passed 24 hours later.

Another big challenge came as he was travelling in the South Atlantic, where there were huge seas and monstrous storms which damaged the yacht's mast. "That was really tough," he said. "There's nothing there to stop the wind. It's just whirling round and round from Antarctica. One really powerful gust ripped one of the sails."

Craig Glenday, of Guinness World Records, said, "Even the most experienced of sailors would be tested by the mental and physical stamina required to achieve a record of this magnitude. The fact that Mike will have achieved it at such a young age is a testament to his courage."

© The Sunday Times (08 2009)



Image © Francesco Kangaris

*Remember to join the HWB class – see your teacher for further details

QHow has the writer tried to make this newspaper article interesting? [10 marks]

Boy of 15 who eats nothing but jam sandwiches



His daily bread: Craig Flatman with a week's supply of meals

Fussy baby turns into a towering teenager who still can't face his greens

At 6ft 2in and with a flashing white smile and a thick shock of hair, Craig Flatman appears the picture of health and enjoys nothing more than a game of football with his mates.

But the strapping 15-year-old exists solely on a diet of jam sandwiches. He has refused to eat any meat, fish, fresh fruit or vegetables since he was tiny. So while his family sit down to fresh, nutritious meals, he has sandwiches made from white sliced bread and margarine with strawberry, raspberry or blackcurrant jam (without bits).

He also drinks two pints of semi-skimmed milk a day. His mother, Almira, 42, buys four loaves of bread and a 1kg jar of jam every week to make the five rounds of sandwiches Craig gets through for breakfast, lunch and dinner. He supplements these with a bowl of chocolate cereal and a slice of chocolate cake every day.

Over the years, he has managed to vary his diet marginally, sometimes spreading his jam into rolls instead of bread.

Craig said, "I never get bored of jam because I like the taste so much. My mum and dad have tried everything to get me eating other things but nothing seems to work. I begin to feel sick if I put anything else into my mouth. It is a shame because I would love to eat things like burgers and chips."

His worried parents went to a dietician who examined Craig's eating habits but said he was receiving enough protein and sufficient vitamins and minerals in his unusual diet to remain healthy. They also arranged for him to go to the Nuffield Hospital in Ipswich to have tests to see if there had been any long-term damage to his body. Consultants there were surprised to see that the tests showed him to be in excellent health.

At a healthy 11 stone, his bizarre diet has certainly not affected his weight. However, for the sake of his long-term health, one doctor suggested he take vitamin supplements and see a psychologist to encourage variety in his diet.

His mother and father Alan, 41, eat a normal diet with plenty of meat and vegetables. His 13-year-old sister Amy, however, has declared herself a vegetarian. Mrs Flatman first became concerned about Craig when he was sick after she introduced him to solid foods as a baby.

Doctors told her to persevere but he rejected everything until his grandfather made him a sugar sandwich when he was nine months old. Mrs Flatman fed him these for a month until he started eating chocolate spread sandwiches instead. She constantly tried to give him proper food but he refused everything. By the time he was four, Craig had tired of chocolate spread and asked to try jam. Seventy thousand jam sandwiches later, he has never looked back.

At seven, his parents sent him on a six-month course for youngsters with eating disorders at Great Ormond Street Children's Hospital in London. But they stopped the treatment because he kept being sick.

Mrs Flatman said at the family home in Stowmarket, Suffolk, "He would gag on anything they tried to give him, even things children usually enjoy like chips or baked beans. I've virtually given up trying to change him now. His diet does not seem to have done him any harm and has not affected his growth. He has perfect teeth with no fillings and has never been ill apart from childhood things like chickenpox."

A spokesman for Great Ormond Street Children's Hospital said, "We believe his problem could be due to a fear of food, probably going back to when he first started eating solids as a baby and gagged on some lumps."

Q: How does the writer try to persuade the reader to support the charity? [10 marks]

Beaten. Neglected. Starved.

Will you help feed a dog like Archie until we can find him a home?

When we found Archie, he weighed 3.2kg – just half what he should have. He hadn't been fed for two weeks and was so close to death that his temperature didn't register on the vet's thermometer.

Thankfully, he was brought to one of our rescue centres. And here, he was given the food and care he so desperately needed to survive. But there are many more neglected, abused dogs like Archie – and many more hungry mouths to feed.

Text FEED to 70099 to give £3
to feed and care for a dog like Archie.



Image used for illustrative purposes. The RSPCA brings private prosecutions where appropriate. Your gift will be used to further our work where it's needed most. You will be charged £3 plus one message at your standard network rate. RSPCA will receive 100% of your donation, excluding O2 customers where £2.96 will be received. By using this service, you agree that we may contact you in the future. If you'd rather we didn't, text OPTOUT to 70099.

The RSPCA helps animals in England and Wales. Registered charity no. 239099



*Remember to join the HWB class – see your teacher for further details

Q: How does Liz Jones try to show that the village and mine at Santa Filomena are examples of the benefits of Fairtrade? [10 marks]

Going for Gold?

Just make sure it's Fairtrade

Often I have nights when I complain that I'm so tired I feel as though I've been working down a mine all day. Like most people, I have no concept of how hard some people – mostly in developing countries and mostly female – work to bring us luxury goods. But now that I am in a gold-mining village called San Luis in the middle of the desert in Peru, I'm beginning to get the idea.

Mine shafts are given female names but it's forbidden for women to enter them, which is why women are relegated to the back-breaking work of grading rubble on the surface. When I get permission to enter one of the mine shafts – called 'Diana' – I have no idea how anyone could work there. Dark, dusty and sometimes wet, it keeps making me think of the Chilean gold miners who were trapped for 89 days. The only light is from my helmet, and there are steep, dark drops to seams below us in the mountain. I suffer both vertigo and claustrophobia.

Over the past few years, we have become familiar with the term 'blood diamonds', gems mined by workers in terrible conditions that are sold to fund the arms trade. But we know little about where the rest of our jewellery comes from. There are no big chunks of gold in these mines, just gold dust that has to be extracted by crushing rock into powder before it is treated with mercury and cyanide. In San Luis, there are opencast mines next to where children play. Houses are made of old sacks. The miners are on desperately low wages, there is no crèche and there are no safety rules for the handling of chemicals and dynamite. Child labour is common. 'My children are thin and small,' says Yessica, the wife of a miner and a mother of two. I find it hard to believe that anyone involved in this industry is poverty stricken when gold sells for over £1,000 an ounce. But of course, these miners receive just a fraction of the price the gold brings in the West.



However, I am also in Peru to see the first Fairtrade gold extracted from the Peruvian mines. The village of Santa Filomena, home to 3,000 people and situated in a remote mountain area, is one of only nine places in the world producing Fairtrade gold, and it is almost too good to be true.

The difference between Santa Filomena and the neighbouring village of San Luis, which is not Fairtrade, is enormous. Fairtrade miners earn £250 a month and an extra 5% for being environmentally-friendly. Santa Filomena straddles a river and this means the mine is wet, which can be hazardous, causing rock falls. However, while the big mining companies will blow up a mountainside, the Fairtrade miners respect the environment. To be rated 'Fairtrade', the dangerous chemicals used to treat the gold in the mines are not allowed to enter the eco-system.

In Santa Filomena, there are shops, a health clinic, sick pay, maternity leave and rapidly improving sanitation. There is no running water but there are proper wooden houses instead of slums. There is a crèche and a school.

I speak to Paulina, 25, who toils sorting rubble and who has invited me to her home to meet her children, Jennifer, nearly 3, and Shamel, 5. Her husband is also a miner. Paulina came here to find work and her house is two rooms, with a tiny stove and a coop of chickens outside. What does she want her children to be when they grow up? 'I don't want them to be miners. But now there is a way out – at least they get to go to school,' she says.

Each week, the gold is carried up the mountain by the miners and then driven to La Paz where it is refined and exported. A lump is placed in my hands. It's big and heavy and worth about £30,000. Fairtrade gold means some of the poorest people in the world, working in a very dangerous industry, have protection and a future.

Liz Jones

*Remember to join the HWB class – see your teacher for further details

Q: How does the writer try to make the story of Jessica Stilwell's strike interesting?? [10 marks]

Mother goes on strike to teach messy children a tough lesson

Jessica Stilwell, a Canadian mother, has become an internet sensation after going on strike for six days, refusing to tidy up after her three daughters, and setting up a blog called 'Striking Mum' that documented the chaos. Her 'strike' struck a chord with parents globally, many of whom praised her as their hero.



When Jessica Stilwell came home tired at the end of a long working day and saw the clutter left by her three daughters, she decided enough was enough. Her children knew they were expected to do simple household chores such as keeping their own belongings tidy and clearing their own breakfast and dinner plates and putting them in the dishwasher but they had got used to leaving it for her to do. At first she felt frustrated that her children had left everything to her but then became determined to make them understand the family had to work together and help each other.

On her blog Mrs Stilwell wrote, "This working mum has officially gone on STRIKE! I looked around my house at the mess but instead of becoming angry, I laughed and thought this would be funny to write about. I just decided I was done nagging."

She let her husband, Dylan, in on the plan but didn't tell the girls. She also posted photos of the mess on the site and said she enjoyed responding to all the parents who posted comments on her site saying she was an inspiration to them.

She stopped doing all the chores and tasks that her girls should have been doing for themselves and her blog recorded how her house became a chaotic pigsty. Mrs Stilwell did not tell her twin daughters Olivia and Peyton (12) and their sister Quinn (10) about her experiment, because she wanted to see how long it would take for them to begin cleaning up after themselves.

On day one she wrote on her blog, "The breakfast dishes and dinner plates are still on the table, crusty by now. The dishwasher is overflowing and shoes and schoolbags are in the middle of the hallway."

By day two she had become aware that milk sitting in a cereal bowl for a day, "begins to stink much sooner than one would expect" and that takeaway food sets "like superglue". Mrs Stilwell added: "If you leave the dishwasher open all day long with dirty dishes, the dog will eventually lick the entire thing clean."



By the third day, as the dirty dishes piled up in the sink, she resorted to using paper plates. One of the jobs the children were expected to do was to clean the lunch boxes they used for school. When they didn't even do that, their school meals were packed in the only other containers they had – 'poo bags' intended for clearing up after the dog.

Mrs Stilwell explained because she was normally house proud, she had to really fight the urge to give in and clean up. On day four, Olivia told her a total of 17 times that the kitchen was "disgusting," but still did nothing about it. She added, "They all kept saying, 'Why aren't we cleaning up?' And then they'd push their dirty cereal bowl from yesterday towards me and ask why it was still here. It was fun to keep telling them I was just too busy to clean up – just like they had done to me before all this started."



By day six the girls had had enough, with one of them breaking down in tears and begging for help to clean up. Mrs Stilwell wrote, "They actually began turning on each other. It got ugly. Each one blamed the others for the mess." After she told them she had gone on strike, one of her daughters said angrily, "Kids have parents for a reason: to clean up after them."

However, they apologised and agreed to clean up, which took two days during which Mrs Stilwell felt she should not lift a finger to help and instead sat on her settee drinking coffee that her daughters made for her. The girls gagged and bickered as they cleaned up, using two bottles of detergent and half a bottle of bleach before the whole house was nearly perfect. A week later, Mrs Stilwell said the girls are doing much better at cleaning up after themselves.

Mrs Stilwell said she had "great kids" but had decided to strike because, "I realised I was not doing my own children any favours. These were things that they should be doing on their own. I worry that we are raising a generation of young people who expect to be waited on hand and foot by their parents."

By Nick Allen

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*Remember to join the HWB class – see your teacher for further details

Q: How does Rebecca Armstrong's article try to persuade people to take up, and continue with, exercise? [10 marks]

Silver Sprinters



The footballer aged 72, the marathon runner in his 70s – what's their secret?

Rebecca Armstrong finds out how these senior sportsmen keep running.

Anyone who finds doing regular exercise something of a chore could do worse than following Dickie Borthwick's example. Known as Dixie to his friends, Borthwick plays football once a week, eats porridge for energy, takes vitamins every day, and gave up smoking to improve his health. Couch potatoes should also take note that Borthwick is 72 years old and played his first match aged 12. 'I don't feel like I'm in my

60th season,' he says. 'I still feel young at heart and feel like I can go on for a few years yet.'

Borthwick isn't the only older athlete putting people half his age to shame. John Starbrook, 76, competed in his first triathlon earlier this year 'for a bit of a challenge'. This gruelling event would be enough of a challenge to most people, but Starbrook also runs two marathons a year. 'I've done about 40 marathons in total. As I do two marathons every year, I basically train all year round – it's New York in November and London in April,' he says. 'In between I've started doing triathlons for a bit of fun.'

According to NHS guidelines, everyone, regardless of age, should aim to do at least 30 minutes of moderate physical

activity five times a week to improve mobility and reduce the risk of heart disease. But while it can be all too easy to find excuses to avoid starting an exercise routine, Borthwick and Starbrook prove that age shouldn't stand in the way of fitness.

So what are their secrets? Borthwick is a fan of supplements and takes vitamins, but Starbrook eats a normal diet and doesn't believe in pills of any kind. He says, 'I don't eat much rubbish food – no burgers or any of that. Just good stuff. I don't take any vitamins. I don't even like taking an aspirin.'

As we age, our bodies start to change. 'The first thing is that you get a reduction in muscle strength and an increase in body fat,' says Lorenzo Masci, a sports physician. 'The second thing is that you get a reduction in heart rate and in your body's ability to take in oxygen.' Masci also warns that older people have a reduced capacity to recover from injuries. But it is not all bad news. 'A lot of these changes can be helped by exercise,' he says. According to Help the Aged, we can't store the benefits of exercise. If you were sporty until your thirties, it won't help in your seventies. But if you had an active lifestyle like Borthwick and Starbrook, you are more likely to continue exercise as you get older.

So what tips can they offer? Starbrook says, 'Running is a natural thing to do and it's free. You've just got to put your mind to it. Don't over-train, just do enough.'

But if you're out of condition – whatever your age – it's important to start slowly. The NHS recommends that anyone who has been inactive for a long period of time should try to build up to 30 minutes a day – which can include activities like walking or gardening – and avoid high impact exercises that involve hard jolts to the body. 'It's never too late to start exercising,' says Masci.

However, it's important to speak to your doctor before embarking on a fitness kick. 'The important thing is to do things you enjoy. People who do activities they enjoy are more likely to stick with them,' says Masci.

And just remember – it's never too late to try something new. Just ask Starbrook. 'At the moment I'm hoping to try skydiving. I've never done anything like that but I'm just going to go up, shut my eyes, and shout "Geronimo" as I jump out of the plane.'

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*Remember to join the HWB class – see your teacher for further details