**CASE STUDY – ADAPTED EXTRACTS FROM BITTER WINDS BY HARRY WU**

**Daily routine**

“By July I had grown used to the daily schedule for prison labour. We assembled outside our barracks each morning at eight o’clock for roll call and then marched to the factory. In the factory we were fed and at nine o’clock we began two hours of group study. At eleven the duty prisoners gathered us together for lunch. At noon we resumed work stopping only once for a rest and a meal until we finished our shift at midnight. Then the guard gathered us together again, gave instructions about our reform and returned us to our barracks for a final roll call. We slept from one o’clock to eight when the routine began again. Seven days a week.”

**On dormitory conditions**

“The dormitory was an abandoned brick kiln. I took a few moments for my eyes to adjust to the dim light inside. Then I could see perhaps forty quilts folded along two kangs, the traditional brick sleeping platforms with heating ducts below that are used throughout north China. Besides the doorway opening, a small window cut through the thick kiln wall provided the only source of daylight. I deposited my bedroll at a designated spot on the kang, placed my mug and towel on the shelf above and tried to imagine how I could live in such surroundings sandwiched into a sleeping space that looked about two feet wide.”

**On the food**

“On national holidays in China the government allows the prisoners one meal of good food.

Everyone in the detention centre received two plump buns made of actual wheat flour. Those buns had a delicious sweet flavour when compared to our regular wotou which were dark in colour and rough in texture made from a bitter mixture of sorghum and chaff. Everyone also got a ladleful of vegetable soup, not just water with a few floating weeds, but a broth made with bean sauce and pieces of pork fat with skin left on.”

VOCAB CHECK

**Brick Kiln** = an insulated building or room that was used to dry out bricks.

**Kang** = a raised platform made by bricks or other earthworks that takes up a large portion of the room. Many people sleep in kangs in cold northern areas of China.

**Wotou** = plain steamed bread eaten in China.

**TASK**

Imagine you were a prisoner in a Laogai alongside Harry Wu. Write a dairy entry explaining what a week inside the camp is like. Use your notes from the documentaries, classwork and Harry Wu’s Bitter Winds extract to help you.

In your diary entry you must include:

* What you were imprisoned for
* Living conditions in the Laogai
* Food in the Laogai
* The work you are forced to complete in the Laogai
* Any other important infromation