**Newspaper Analysis**

Complete the following tasks for each of the newspaper articles in this pack.

Write the date and the title of the article at the top of the page.

1. Write a four point summary of the article using your own words as far as possible.
2. Identify the writer’s attitude to the subject.

Quote three extracts that highlight this attitude.

1. Quote four language techniques used by the writer (word choice, imagery, sentence structure, tone, exaggeration, pun…)

Comment on the effect of each language feature.

1. Copy the vocabulary listed at the end of the article and write definitions of each word.

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Article** | **Date due** | **Completed** |
| 1 | The baking quality on Bake Off is soggy bottoming out |  |  |
| 2 | How driverless cars could change our whole future |  |  |
| 3 | Why cute photos of animals make us happier |  |  |
| 4 | A lazy, vulgar rip-off – it’s time to ban brunch |  |  |
| 5 | Why fiction can help us understand the Syrian refugee crisis |  |  |
| 6 | Why I love Charlie Brown and the Peanuts Cartoons |  |  |

**Article One**

**The baking quality on Bake Off is soggy bottoming out**

In a way – now that the initial anguish has simmered and a statement like this is less likely to result in my immediate decapitation – it’s a good thing that the Great British Bake Off won’t be on the BBC any more.

I’m not saying this because the BBC has taken a stand against Love Productions’ unrepentant thirst for cash, nor because Paul Hollywood – finally unburdened from the loveliness of Mel, Sue and Berry – can now restyle the series. No, it’s down to the quality of the baking itself, which this year has collapsed like an overbeaten souffle.

Just look at the faces of Mary Berry and Paul Hollywood as they judged last week’s tiered botanical showstoppers. Candice’s boiled fruitcake had to be torn apart like a week-old animal carcass. Rav’s blossom cake crumpled like a crying bride. Jane’s orange cake looked like a pair of granny curtains in a mashed potato factory. Benjamina’s floral tea cake, as listing and battered as a condemned building, couldn’t even get it together enough to be cooked properly. By the end of it all, Hollywood seemed actively unsettled by the onslaught of hopelessness laid before him. As a viewer, you couldn’t help but feel his pain.

What has happened to the Bake Off? This all took place during week six, for crying out loud. You expect the chaff to have been neatly removed from proceedings. But this year, things have taken a sharp turn downwards. The meagre quality of the food produced is unlike any series since the very first one, where naive contestants applied to a then-unknown cookery competition and were heartily applauded if they managed to knock out a jam tart without accidentally ramming their fist through it.

This dismal turnout is light years away from more recent Bake Offs. Gradually, over time, the bar has been raised so high that last year’s winner [Nadiya Hussain](https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2016/sep/10/nadiya-hussain-great-british-bake-off-interview) found herself producing miniature art installations called things like Peacock in Nan’s Door just to stay in the running.

You could argue, if you felt like it, that this soggy bottoming-out is actually for the best. Things were getting a bit too polished, a bit too perfect, a bit less fun. The joy of the early Bake Offs were their simplicity; if the viewer wanted to replicate something they’d seen onscreen, it was never too difficult. But over the years, as the prestige of the show has grown and the quality of the contestants ballooned, this element was lost.

But we’re now getting to the point where the main draw of the show is laughing at the untalented, and surely that’s what The Apprentice is for. So, yes, maybe it’s a good thing that the BBC hasn’t got the Great British Bake Off any more. If the downturn had continued, next year’s would have just been about 12 idiots burping at yeast, and that would be heart-breaking.

Stuart Heritage, The Guardian, 04.10.16 (adapted)

**Vocabulary:**

* Anguish
* Unrepentant
* Unburdened
* Onslaught
* ****Chaff

**C:\Users\McGuiganj\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary Internet Files\Content.IE5\UAF5246F\blockpage[1].gifArticle Two**

**How driverless cars could change our whole future**

I’m looking at two photographs of the main street of the small town in which I was born. Both are taken from the same vantage point – looking up the hill to the T-junction at the top. The two photographs are separated by nearly a century: the first was taken in the 1930s, the second sometime in the last few years.

Topographically, the street remains largely unchanged: it’s a straight road with two- or three-storey shops and houses on either side. But the two photographs show completely different streets. The 1930s one shows a spacious thoroughfare, with people walking on the pavements on both sides of the street: here and there, two or three individuals stand in the road, possibly engaged in conversation. The contemporary photograph shows a narrow, congested gorge. The pavements are crowded with pedestrians, but there are no people on the road. In fact, in some places, one cannot even see its surface.

Why the difference between the two photographs? You know the answer: cars, vans and traffic. Both sides of the contemporary street have got lines of parked vehicles, effectively reducing the width of the road by 12ft. And there’s a traffic jam, which means that even the vehicles that aren’t parked are stationary.

This picture is repeated in millions of towns and cities worldwide. A visiting Martian anthropologist would conclude that humans worshipped the automobile. Actually, you don’t have to be a Martian to marvel at it. Just open your front door. “Next time you walk outside,” writes John Zimmer in his essay [The Third Transportation Revolution](https://medium.com/@johnzimmer/the-third-transportation-revolution-27860f05fa91#.bxurjbcbr), “pay really close attention to the space around you. Look at how much land is devoted to cars – and nothing else. How much space parked cars take up lining both sides of the street and how much of our cities goes unused covered by parking lots. It becomes obvious – we’ve built our communities entirely around cars. And for the most part, we’ve built them for cars that aren’t even moving. The average vehicle is used only 4% of the time and parked the other 96%.”

Mr Zimmer is biased – he’s co-founder of [Lyft](https://www.lyft.com/), a ride-sharing outfit that competes with Uber, so the usual caveats apply. Nevertheless, his essay is a thoughtful reflection on how the automobile transformed – and destroyed – our cities and towns. He invites us to imagine “what our world could look like if we found a way to take most of these cars off the road. It would be a world with less traffic and less pollution. A world where we need less parking – where streets can be narrowed and sidewalks widened. It’s a world where we can construct new housing and small businesses on parking lots across the country – or turn them into green spaces and parks. That’s a world built around people, not cars.”

Zimmer thinks that fleets of self-driving cars will be commonplace in the relatively near future and that their availability will give us most of the advantages of private car ownership without the financial and environmental drawbacks. Although some people will always want the status and other satisfactions of owning a car, what most people want is affordable *mobility* without having to purchase, tax, insure, park and fuel a four-wheeled millstone.

This technology will become mainstream much faster than people expected. The US government wants it to happen as soon as possible (nearly 100 people die every day on US roads). Transport planning is about to get really interesting again. And we might even be able to reclaim our streets from all those empty, idle parked cars.

[John Naughton](https://www.theguardian.com/profile/johnnaughton)**,** The Guardian, 25th September 2016 (adapted)

**Vocabulary:**

* Vantage point
* Topographical
* Contemporary
* Anthropologist
* Caveat

**Article Three**

**Why cute photos of animals make us happier**

It might seem frivolous to share photos of cute pets, or photobombing animals, but there is scientific evidence from psychological research that viewing certain pictures can combat stress and make us happier. So why are photos able to evoke our emotions so readily?

We are visual creatures and our brain is biased towards visual information. This emphasis on visual cues is evolutionary – our vision tells us very quickly if the environment is safe (evoking ​happy/positive emotional responses) or risky (evoking more anger or fear based emotional responses).  A significant proportion of our brain and our emotions are attached to processing what we see.

So why is viewing certain types of pictures good for us? Just as research from psychology shows that life’s little stresses (misplacing keys, missing the bus) create the most negative effects on us, we also know that little moments of happiness can bust stress. Coca-Cola’s ‘Choose Happiness’ campaign seeks to recognise this, by demonstrating that simply seeing, or sharing, a cute or funny photo can make us feel good.

Furthermore, sharing these types of photos on social media enhances our social standing. Sharing photos that make others smile or laugh ensures that response is attributed to us (as the people who sent them the picture) and validates our ‘membership’. Making someone smile also inflates our egos, which in turn makes us happy!

Having real photos in the home, especially photos of loved ones, also provides constant psychological positive reinforcement - they remind us who is important (social bond enhancement), what we are busy working for, and what we've achieved together (those lovely family/couple shots). They are different to those on social media, and they can feel more personal and become more valued over a long time period.

The research results from ‘happiest picture’ poll support these psychological reasons for photo sharing.  The people polled were very likely to smile at cute animals, especially if those animals were doing something surprising. Sharing pictures of funny animals is ‘psychologically safe’ in comparison to sharing pictures of our family or our holidays.

The photo most likely to evoke a smile shows a squirrel photobombing a couples’ holiday photo. The cheeky critter pops up in the photograph originally intended as a self-portrait of the couple.  Psychologically the surprise appearance of this cute furry friend causes a *cognitive orienting response*.

There’s an incongruence between what we should be seeing (a holiday photo) and what we are unexpectedly witnessing (a curious squirrel standing in the foreground) that makes us search for meaning. In the case of the squirrel, it’s a pleasant surprise and the unexpected pleasure of seeing something funny when we were expecting something more mundane triggers a positive response (in this case smiling or even laughing).

This is probably why photobombing has become such a popular trend - it results in an unexpected emotional experience. Nice surprises are good as psychologically we feel we have something more than we were expecting. We all love a bargain – even a psychological one!

So don’t under estimate the potential positive power of photos – even small, silly activities can bring big psychological benefits.

[Simon Moore](http://www.independent.co.uk/author/simon-moore), The Independent, Friday 19 June 2015

**Vocabulary:**

* Frivolous
* Incongruence
* Social standing
* Cognitive
* Mundane

**Article Four**

**A lazy, vulgar rip-off – it’s time to ban brunch**

One of the glorious things about food is how it breaks up the day. After a rested night there’s breakfast. The morning – feasibly punctuated by a cup of C:\Users\McGuiganJ\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary Internet Files\Content.IE5\MRN7A5HG\blockpage[2].gifC:\Users\McGuiganJ\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary Internet Files\Content.IE5\ZJJ0N7IW\blockpage[1].gifcoffee, a bite of fruit, a biscuit even – is followed by lunch. The afternoon drifts on with a pause possibly for a cup of tea and, who knows, a stolen moment of bliss with a piece of cake. Then there is dinner. At 8pm. It all sounds so simple. So straightforward. So sensible. Especially if you endeavour to eat the most at the start of the day and decrease the portions as the time moves on; better for body and soul and a good night’s sleep.

There was some interference with this perfect order of things a few years back when some experts, aka lunatics, suggested that it was better if you grazed all day. With your desk a forest of dried apricots, nuts and tiny pieces of ethically garnered high-quality chocolate you would nibble your way to yogic harmony.

Except you wouldn’t. Along would come those meals and you’d eat them, too. So all grazing amounted to was eating between meals. And where I come from we were taught early and often not to eat between meals. So I don’t. And because I am not a non-ruminant herbivore, I am not a horse, it is neither my natural instinct to graze.

Thus my battle to retain the traditional eating timetable appeared to be going my way. That was until brunch came along. This brunch thing that is neither breakfast, nor lunch, but something in between, an idea that mixes the menus between the two concepts and moulds them into a funky, new creation that starts a good while after breakfast finishes, and considerably earlier than when lunch begins. And whose finishing time is beyond definition, or even after 3pm.

I thought I could ignore it. But then every other restaurant in Britain seemed to jump on the bandwagon. And when this week I was invited to join something called a ''Brunch Cocktail Masterclass’’ at the Covent Garden restaurant Balthazar I realised action was needed.

Surely it is the imperative of the intelligent human to get up for breakfast. In which case you’re too full for brunch, the consumption of which would muddle your appetite for lunch. And if you eat brunch, what time do you lunch? 4pm? Then what about dinner? The ordered and sensible timetable of dining collapses. Men and women fail to break bread properly at the table, social interaction dissipates, families then communities fracture, world peace is potentially threatened.

The problem is so many chefs are cashing in on this paean to laziness. Cooks who reckoned they could make a mint out of selling posh burgers now realise that if they throw in an egg and some bacon the uber-trendy brunch-loving foodies will flock.

I’m not alone in calling for a ban on brunch.

The brilliant and fiery US chef Anthony Bourdain says that those who brunch are ''dreaded by all dedicated cooks… We despise hollandaise, home fries, those pathetic fruit garnishes and all the other cliché accompaniments designed to induce a credulous public into paying $12.95 for two eggs.’’

He’s right. It’s time the bedraggled brunchers grew up and then got up for breakfast.

William Sitwell, The Telegraph, 22 Oct 2014 (abridged)

**Vocabulary:**

* Feasibly
* ****Endeavour
* Bandwagon
* Dissipates
* Paean

**Article Five**

**Why fiction can help us understand the Syrian refugee crisis**

Every night, at the moment, we see pictures of people who have risked their lives escaping terrible dangers. Day after day, reporters interview refugees marching through Hungary or arriving in Germany with nothing except what they can carry.

It might seem frivolous to be talking about stories at a time like this. Shouldn’t we be concentrating on the real world? Isn’t fiction soft and sentimental compared with the terrible news we keep hearing about?

No, it’s not. Only bad fiction is soft and sentimental. Good stories help us make sense of the world. They invite us to discover what it’s like being someone completely different. They are explorations - for the writer as well as the reader.

Five or six years ago – before the current crisis began – I spent a lot of time reading about Sudanese refugees in Chad. I had no intention of writing a book about them. I just kept thinking, “Suppose it was me? Would I cope as well as they do?” But I couldn’t really imagine their lives in Chad.

Then one day, instead of thinking, “Suppose it was me?” I thought, “Suppose it was a boy called Matt? An English boy. How would *he* cope?” And that was the beginning of [After Tomorrow](https://bookshop.theguardian.com/after-tomorrow.html), a novel about two English brothers who become refugees in France.

I had to invent a reason for them to become refugees and I decided to make the pound collapse so no one could buy food. Apart from that, everything in the story is as real as I could make it. All the terrible things that happen to Matt and his brother Taco have happened to real refugees, somewhere in the world. People don’t leave their homes for no reason and I didn’t want to trivialise that.

Because the story is set in places I know, I could imagine exactly how Matt and his family felt about leaving home. That’s what real refugees do, after all. They have to leave places they know. That’s part of what we need to understand about the current crisis.

But there’s another side to their experience. Many of the refugees and migrants arriving in Europe at the moment come from countries where the language and culture are very different. It’s important to realise how strange Europe appears to them and how hard it can be to live in a place where everything is unfamiliar and difficult to understand.

Fiction can explore that too. Shaun Tan’s graphic novel [The Arrival](https://bookshop.theguardian.com/arrival-7.html), for example, does it brilliantly, telling the story of a man who goes to work in a distant country where everything is alien and difficult. It’s set in a fantasy city, unlike anywhere on earth, and – without using a single word - it explores what it’s like to be a stranger in a strange land.

Books like that help us to understand people who are different from us - and that’s more vital than ever before. Global media have changed the game in the last 20 years. People across the world are aware of each other as never before – and they can see the appalling inequalities in the global system. As climate change increases, those inequalities are bound to get worse – and that will lead to more migration, of all kinds. More and more, we will find ourselves living alongside people who have different experiences from ours and who come from different cultures. It’s vital, for their future and ours, that we should understand each other and build good communities together.

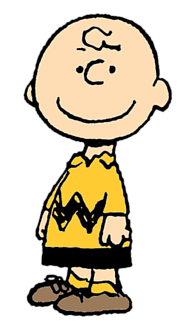
Stories can help us do that, not because they preach, but because they invite us to explore. Whether they are set in real or fantastic worlds, they “take us out of ourselves”, and encourage us to imagine being someone else. The better they are, the more they stretch our minds and our sympathies – and that’s why we enjoy them. We’re programmed to explore everything around us.

As [several pieces of research](https://www.theguardian.com/teacher-network/2015/may/13/reading-teach-children-empathy) have shown recently fiction helps us to understand other people and empathise with them. That empathy will equip us better for life in a world where we have to break down the old ideas of “them” and “us” if human society is to survive at all.

Gillian Cross, The Guardian, Tuesday 8 September 2015

**Vocabulary:**

* Preach
* Sentimental
* Crisis
* Appalling
* Empathy

**Article Six**

**Why I love Charlie Brown and the Peanuts Cartoons**

In frame one, Charlie Brown is shuffling along, baseball cap peak drooping to the ground. “[When you lose the first game of the season](http://www.gocomics.com/peanuts/1997/03/25/),” he says, “it’s a long walk home.” Frame two, he sees a rock: “If anything gets in your way, you just want to kick it!” Frame three, he swipes hopelessly with his foot at the rock, misses and falls over. The moral is in the fourth frame, as Charlie continues his lugubrious shuffle: “Then you discover you can’t even kick good.”

As a child, I loved [Charles M Schulz](http://www.theguardian.com/books/2010/jul/17/charles-schulz-hero-jenny-colgan) for comic strips such as this. In four frames he told truths that every child knows but too often go unrecognised when adults write for kids: namely, that life is difficult, one’s shortcomings feel insuperable and that, when fate has laid you low, it comes along to kick you again.

For adults, the only certainties in life were death and taxes. For kids like me and Charlie Brown there was a third one – our constant companion is, and will always be, worry. “Sometimes you lie in bed and you don’t have a single thing to worry about,” Charlie Brown reflected once. “That always worries me.”

I loved Charlie Brown for his insecurity, for admitting that he was unfit for the game of life, for providing consolation in a literary world of supposed role models. Here, at last, was a kindred spirit, one who served as a rebuke to pretty much every other character in books or TV shows I came across as a kid. [Enid Blyton’s Famous Five](http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2014/nov/25/re-reading-the-famous-five-and-the-biggles-series-is-not-only-disappointing-its-mystifying), for instance, were always overcoming adversity; Charlie Brown was endlessly defeated by it. The Five were forever exposing adult crime rings, taking ludicrous, healthy dips in early springtime ponds and eating seven square meals a day. Charlie Brown was, like me, too full of self-doubt and torment to be part of the Blyton gang.

It took him to show me what I knew already, that childhood involves not only failure but an inability to overcome failure, and for that I shall be eternally grateful.

I have a photo from the early 1970s that has mystified me for decades. It shows me in the Alder Coppice junior school football team which has just won the Dudley under-11s six-a-side trophy. But how could I have been in that team when I kicked like Charlie Brown? Perhaps the trophy – or me – were pasted in using an early version of Photoshop. Those are the only possibilities that make sense. One reason [Peanuts](http://www.theguardian.com/books/peanuts) endured from 1950 to 2000, and was published in more than 2,600 newspapers in 75 countries and 21 languages, reaching a global audience of 355 million, was that all 17,897 of the four-framed comic strips that bore the name were drawn by that rare thing – an adult who didn’t want to systematically airbrush what childhood was really like.

Although Schulz spent much of his life in sunny California, he set Peanuts in the Minnesotan landscape of his youth. For me, that setting added to the melancholy mood, particularly when – as always seemed to be the case when I watched the TV versions – the action unfolded in winter. To my childhood ears, it sounded as though all the voiceover artists had colds, which made the characters seem sadder and made Peanuts seem not so much cartoon as lugubrious dramatic exploration of [seasonal affective disorder](http://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2015/oct/23/how-do-i-deal-with-seasonal-affective-disorder).

I also loved Charlie Brown because he never got the [Little Red-Headed Girl](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Little_Red-Haired_Girl). He always wanted to, but never quite could, make the first move: “I hate myself for not having enough nerve to talk to her,” he said in one strip. “Well, that’s not exactly true … I hate myself for a lot of other reasons too.”

Better yet, he only knew hopeless ways to try to attract her. “I should take this bottle cap over to that Little Red-Headed Girl,” Charlie said once. “If she has a bottle cap collection, she’ll throw her arms around me and say, ‘Thank you! Thank you! Thank you!’” Oh, Charlie! That’s never going to work.

All the foregoing leads me to worry about the [new Peanuts movie](http://www.theguardian.com/film/2015/nov/04/the-peanuts-movie-charlie-brown-review) that will be released here next month. Director Steve Martino recently explained what it will be about. “Here’s where I lean thematically,” he said. “I want to go through this journey … Charlie Brown is that guy who, in the face of repeated failure, picks himself back up and tries again … I think what Charlie Brown is –what I hope to show in this film – is the everyday qualities of perseverance … to pick yourself back up with a positive attitude – that’s every bit as heroic … as having a star on the Walk of Fame or being a star on Broadway.”

[Stuart Jeffries](http://www.theguardian.com/profile/stuartjeffries), The Guardian, Saturday 5 December 2015 (abridged)

**Vocabulary**

* Lugubrious
* Insuperable
* Consolation
* Adversity
* Perseverance