**IYOW TASK**

Vicky Allan: Please, Sirs, can we have some more male primary teachers?

WHEN my children were very young and one of the childminders I used was a man, I was surprised to receive comments from other parents which suggested they would feel uncomfortable about employing a male themselves. “I just couldn’t trust a man,” one friend said. “I’d feel too worried.”

Men didn't feature much in the nursery, babysitting or early years of most children, unless the man was their father.

It was the same picture throughout my children's early years. When they started school there were only two male teachers in their primary, one of whom was the head teacher, who rapidly disappeared off to do something important in overseeing how other schools were run. The female deputy head acted up for a while, then eventually a new head teacher came along, also male. But year after year, my boys were being taught by women. It has always struck me that this doesn’t send a good message to children, either about the place of women in the world, or of men.

So, when Scottish Education Minister Shirley Anne Somerville last week announced a drive to get more men into primary education and early years work, I applauded. Only one in 10 primary school teachers is male; in nursery care there are yet fewer men (one in 20). What I see out there, in my own children’s world, is a monoculture in which few men are to be found. Even as fathers are becoming increasingly hands on, in the professional worlds of childcare and teaching, a firm message is being delivered to children – that looking after the young is the job of women, not men.

Since our culture still values male professions more than women’s, we're also signalling that this job isn't that important – the raising of the next generation is too small an issue for men to involve themselves in.

Somerville launched the drive as part of an attempt to counter the current shortage of primary school teachers, and the predicted need for early-years workers when the [**SNP**](http://www.heraldscotland.com/search/?search=SNP&topic_id=8742) [**Government**](http://www.heraldscotland.com/search/?search=Government&topic_id=8816) roll out their plans to extend free childcare. Of course, it’s not necessary that men be targeted in order to meet this shortage – all that’s needed is more people, whatever the gender.

But the fact that there are so very few men in primary and early years education seems increasingly anachronistic, and the situation is fuelled by gender stereotypes. Women are more caring and nurturing. Men are more likely to be paedophiles. The latter may statistically be true but, given the tiny actual percentage of men guilty of such acts, that a whole gender should be tarred with that brush suggests moral panic. Yes, we need to create systems that protect children, but we also need to develop a culture in which the natural urge many men have to care for children is encouraged rather than discouraged.

Many parents, of course, do want to see more men working in early years. A 2011 survey found that 98 per cent of parents were in favour of men caring for three to five-year-olds. Yet, still there is the occasional loud voice of disapproval. Last year, Tory minister Andrea Leadsom made the inflammatory declaration that she thought it not “sensible” to leave a child in the care of a male nanny.

Meanwhile, the problem isn't just that men working in early years are viewed with suspicion, it’s that the sector is simply not attracting many men. In [**Scotland**](http://www.heraldscotland.com/search/?search=Scotland&topic_id=8820), some excellent campaigners are trying to change things – for instance Kenny Spence, the founder of Men In Childcare, runs a scheme to fund and encourage more men to train in early years care. But progress is slow. In Norway the number of male childcare workers has risen from 3 per cent in 1991, to 10 per cent in 2011, with a target now of 20 per cent.

What I find most dispiriting about the lack of men in children’s earlier years, is the story it tells about what’s important in our culture and what is not. That our education system is so gender-stratified, is a microcosmic lesson in how wider society works. Teaching, once a chiefly male profession, has become devalued and disrespected since women entered the workforce at a time when education was one of the few career options open to them. In primaries, where men do appear, it’s often at the top of the tree, as heads.

Meanwhile, though everyone knows the early years are key in laying the bedrock for future lives and society, pay and attitudes don't reflect that. Partly, I suspect, that's because this work has been done, unpaid, by women for centuries. Anything women used to do for nothing is undervalued.

This needs to change if we want to draw more men in. Men will be lured by the same factors that will attract more women – greater status and respect for the profession, more financial reward, better working conditions. We need to pay more than lip service to how important this job is.

**Male Teachers IYOW Qs**

1. In paragraph 3, the writer gives the example of her children’s primary school experience to illustrate the role men are given in the school. Explain in your own words how men are given an elevated position.  **(3 marks)**
2. Why did the writer “applaud” in paragraph 4 when she heard to proposal to encourage more men into primary teaching? Explain in your own words. **(2 marks)**
3. In Paragraph 7, the writer outlines some of the “gender stereotypes” society holds about men and women. In your own words, briefly explain the stereotypes held for each gender. **(2 marks)**
4. The writer describes what’s happening with gender in teaching as “a microcosmic lesson in how wider society works”. Explain in your own words, the reasons she gives for this theory. (Paragraph 10) **(3 marks)**
5. In paragraph 11, the writer gives reasons why she thinks “pay and attitudes don’t reflect” the hard work of childcare. In your own words, outline her reasons for this. **(2 marks)**
6. Explain in your own words the writer’s suggested changes, designed to entice men to the career. (paragraph 12) **(3 marks)**

**15 marks**

**Word Choice Task**

Rosemary Goring: Can anyone halt the relentless destruction of Edinburgh?

IMAGINE you have just bought a flat in Edinburgh’s New Town. Everything looks peachy. Then you hear the scrape of suitcases and stilettos, as braying students settle in upstairs for the new term. Soon the weekend parties begin. When you complain, their parents, who own the flat, call you a killjoy.

Meanwhile, from downstairs comes the drumbeat of Airbnb guests keeping alley-cat hours. The grocer on the corner has long since disappeared, and there is not a butcher or affordable bakery within an easy walk. Welcome to the land of metro shops and Harvey Nichol’s deli counter.

As the Festival approaches, the decibels increase, as do litter, marauding gulls, and the sense of being a stranger in your own city. In October, when you decide to sell, your estate agent recommends mentioning what profitable business neighbouring properties have been doing with short-term lets. The place is under offer in days, and you can start hunting for a cottage on Rannoch Moor.

It is only 250 years since the wealthy began to flee the Old Town for the quiet elegance of the New. Now, the equivalent of New York’s white flight is under way as residents in one of the loveliest capitals in the world pack up. Those who stay do so with gritted teeth. Meet one, and conversation quickly turns to the depredations on St Andrew Square, in the name of so-called art, or the habits of migratory tenants on their once well-maintained stairs.

Ahead of the final decision on turning Edinburgh’s Old Royal High School into a deluxe eye-sore hotel, signatories such as Carol Grigor in a letter to the council make the point that this choice will be “monumental”. It “goes far beyond the redevelopment of a single listed building... This is a red line we should not cross for the sake of narrow commercial interests, not when there is a better option.”

That option is a proposed international music school which Ms Grigor is helping fund. The contrast is stark: one venture continues to turn the city into a cash cow, in so doing undermining its heritage; the other builds on Edinburgh’s reputation as a centre of culture and learning. In other words, of enlightenment. What an old-fashioned concept that now seems.

Essentially, the Old Royal High is the canary in the mine. Already permission has been granted to countless unsympathetic new-builds, from a towering hotel in the Cowgate blocking light to Central Library, to the soulless development in Caltongate. Each was a blow to the heart of the capital, an assault on its architectural integrity. But if the Old Royal High is transformed into yet another hotel, this will be a tipping point, marking the moment when the city’s future is set, possibly irrevocably, in a direction that benefits no-one.

No, not even the hospitality industry which at the moment is revelling in unprecedented numbers of visitors. Because when the very things that make Edinburgh uniquely attractive are eroded, when the quality of life for residents is cynically depleted, sightseers will find themselves in streets richer in hotels and bars than in history or modern cultured life. Soon it will be an oyster without a pearl.

There is nothing wrong with wanting to encourage tourism. Quite the reverse. The problem, however, is that too many dire decisions have been justified in the name of culture, when those signing them off do not understand the meaning of the word. What message will it send when a former school is turned into a hotel where nobody who works or lives in EH7 could afford to spend the night? The council might as well run up a flag on its own horrid headquarters bearing pound and dollar signs.

Even the much-vaunted festivals are losing some of their lustre. How can a £22 ticket to enjoy Alex Salmond making dreadful jokes be called culture? The very notion of art and entertainment has been debased, but to say so brings accusations of elitism. Yet this is not to decry the wilder or crasser events, but to beg merely for regulation. In other words, for some overseeing authority to consider the whole picture, and make strategic plans that will enhance the city.

Sadly, it is pointless even to write this. Edinburgh City Council rarely listens to what citizens say. A friend who has lived in the Grassmarket for more than 40 years complained to a councillor about recent planning decisions. He was told that if he didn’t like living in Edinburgh any more, he should leave.

When long-standing residents are made to feel unwanted, an obstacle to commerce, then all balance – and sanity – has been lost. The New Town’s construction was founded on principles of harmony and proportion. Unless something is done soon to save the capital, those virtues will soon be as historic as the Royal Mile.

**Edinburgh Article-WC MS**

1. How does the writer use word choice to create a negative image of students in paragraph one? Use at least two examples in your answer. **(4 marks)**
2. How does the writer’s use of language in paragraph 3 indicate that during the Festival the city becomes less appealing? Use two examples in your answer.  **(4 marks)**
3. How does the word choice used in paragraph 6 highlight the difference of the writer’s opinions on the two proposed ideas for the Old Royal High School?  **(4 marks)**
4. How does the writer use language to express her distaste at the new building developments in Edinburgh in paragraph 7? **(6 marks)**

**18 marks**

**Sentence Structure Task**

**Taylor Swift is so sick of everyone talking about her that she made a video so everyone will do just that**

Every primary school, every office and every college dorm has a Swift. Your husband dated her in sixth form

Taylor Swift, as Sunday night’s MTV Video Music Awards proved, is possibly not the Queen of Pop, but she is certainly one of pop’s most irritating and therefore watchable courtiers. You have to give her that.

Swift’s video for “Look What You Made Me Do”, her new Right Said Fred “Too Sexy” re-hash rhapsodises how furious, vengeful, yet at the same time not bothered, she is about criticism.

Old Taylor Swift is dead! Or so the message was in the video premiered at one of the pop landscape’s most lauded evenings! Swift appears from the grave, dressed as a zombie, in a three minute video jam-packed laboriously with references to how badly the world has treated her. No frame, no millisecond wasted. The symbolism is so bold one would need to be dead oneself not to pick up on it.

Swift lampoons her celebrity girl squad, her fake “Oh I’ve won an award” face, her label as a “snake”. But just to make it clear, all new Taylor Swift is totally rising above all this tittle-tattle about Katy Perry, Kim Kardashian, Kanye West or Calvin Harris.

Yes, she’s put it to bed by employing video director Joseph Khan to stuff a three minute video with nods to Perry’s lack of Grammy awards, Kim K’s jewellery heist and her not-so secret credit on a Calvin Harris hit. This should sort it Taylor. They won’t be talking about you anymore. Hang on, is it just me, or does new re-born Taylor Swift, seem an awful lot like the old one?

And furthermore, isn’t Taylor Swift so utterly fascinating as a pop phenomenon because every woman, in the Western World at least, knows someone like her. I began toying with this theory circa her girl squad-era which, to my weary vintage gaze, seemed like a pack of flinty-eyed social climbers jostling for Instagram exposure. It was nothing remotely resembling friendship.

Or perhaps it was when that poor git Tom Hiddleston got tangled up with her during her Calvin Harris rebound state-of-mind. Somehow Hiddleston and his mother ended up on a casual “seaside stroll” along Aldeburgh beach with the world’s paparazzi. All completely accidental, probably. The last thing she wanted, I am sure, was all that attention.

Swift is a glorious piece of work. And so, indicative of a genre. Every primary school, every office and every college dorm has a Swift. Your husband dated her in sixth form, but she broke his heart and now he just can’t understand why you don’t like her messaging him on Facebook because, come on honey, she is just so harmless!

Twitter, in particular, is awash with Swift-a-likes. They are generally most active at 1am addressing the self-created problem of “everyone having an opinion” on them by starting a hundred post long “Thread” drawing attention to “backstabbers everywhere”, despite themselves being “only about love and good vibes”, and this being all a bit rum when considering their charity work and their self-diagnosed bi-polar that they rarely talk about.

Swift is the Queen of women like this. It is no coincidence that she spent last week dramatically deleting her Instagram accounts in a scorched earth “Nothing to see here!” manner. Flouncing on and off social media is the modus operandi of the Swift-a-like.

If you don’t know anyone like this: I’m sorry, you are her. Swift’s behaviour over the weekend reminds me of a recent brilliant spoof advice feature on the razor-sharp comedy “woman’s interest” website The Reductress entitled “How to Avoid Negativity Now That You Are Over The Drama You Created”.

The closing moments of “Look What You Made Me Do” feature a cacophony of through-the-years Swift, (country and western Swift, Shake It Off Swift, all-American goddess Swift).

The gang are insulting the new re-born Swift 2.0 with the sorts of things you hear in gossip columns. It’s all very sixth-form and I’m certain Swift hopes this underlines that she is self-aware enough to know and deal with what her detractors say.

Yet having met women like Swifts so, so many times before, this is purely more sympathy-seeking. “Look what they’re saying! Poor me!” she’s actually saying. All I did was dress up as Katy Perry and wave about a Grammy and now everyone's making it look like I’ve wound up Katy Perry!

Taylor Swift’s has made it clear she’s pig sick of everyone talking about her, by ensuring everyone in pop land can talk of nothing else. You have to admire this. She is not the Queen of Pop, but she’s a brilliantly accomplished jester.

**Taylor Swift SS Qs**

1. How does the writer use sentence structure to express her attitude towards Taylor Swift in paragraph 4? **(2 marks)**
2. How does the writer’s use of sentence structure in paragraph 5 express her distaste for Taylor Swift? **(2 marks)**
3. How does the writer’s use of sentence structure cast doubt over Taylor Swift’s intentions in her relationship with Tom Hiddleston? (paragraph 7) **(2 marks)**
4. How does the writer’s sentence construction in paragraph 8 suggest that Swift is not a one-off character? **(2 marks)**
5. How does the writer use sentence structure to mimic Taylor Swift’s victim-playing in paragraph 14? Give two examples in your answer.  **(4 marks)**

**12 marks**

**Imagery Task**

**I used to think social media was a force for good. Now the evidence says I was wrong**

[Matt Haig](https://www.theguardian.com/profile/matt-haig)

More and more, it’s clear these platforms create divisions, exploit our insecurities and risk our health. They’re as bad as the tobacco industry

I used to think social media was essentially a force for good, whether it was to initiate the Arab spring of 2011, or simply as a useful tool for bringing together like-minded people to share videos of ninja cats. Having spent a lot of time thinking about mental health, I even saw social media’s much-maligned potential for anonymity as a good thing, helping people to open up about problems when they might not feel able to do so in that physical space we still quaintly call real life.

I also knew from my own experience that it could sometimes provide a happy distraction from the evil twins of anxiety and depression. I have made friends online. As an author, it’s also been a great way to test new ideas, and has taken storytelling from its castle in the sky back down to the (now hashtag-heavy) campfire. As someone who often finds social situations mentally exhausting, [social media seemed far more solution than problem](https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2017/apr/24/social-media-bad-press-lifeline-young-people).

Yes, I would occasionally feel that maybe staring at my Twitter feed near-continuously for seven hours wasn’t that healthy, especially when I was arguing with an army of Trump fans telling me to jump off a cliff. Yes, I’d see articles warning of the dangers of excessive internet use, but I dismissed these as traditional, reactionary takes. I saw social media naysayers as the first reviewers of Technicolor movies, who felt the colour distracted from the story, or were like the people who [walked out on Bob Dylan at Newport folk festival](https://www.theguardian.com/music/2015/may/27/newport-folk-festival-to-mark-50-years-since-dylan-went-electric) for playing an electric guitar, or like those who warned that radio or TV or video games or miniskirts, or hip-hop or selfies or fidget spinners or whatever, would lead to the end of civilisation.

I remember a Daily Mail headline, “How using [Facebook](https://www.theguardian.com/technology/facebook) could raise your risk of cancer”, which made things even clearer: to be anti-social media was to be hysterically on the wrong side of history.

Then I started the research for a book I am writing on how the external world affects our mental health. I wanted to acknowledge the downsides of social media, but to argue that far from being a force for ill, it offers a safe place where the insanities of life elsewhere can be processed and articulated.

But the deeper into the research I went, the harder it was to sustain this argument. Besides the Daily Mail screeching about the dangers, other people – scientists, psychologists, tech insiders and internet users themselves – were highlighting ways in which social media use was damaging health.

Even the internet activist and former Google employee [Wael Ghonim](https://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/jan/09/wael-ghonim-egypt-regime-targets-secular-activists) – one of the initiators of the Arab spring and one-time poster boy for internet-inspired revolution – who once saw social media as a social cure – now saw it as a negative force. In his eyes it went from being a place for crowdsourcing and sharing, during the initial wave of demonstrations against the Egyptian regime, to a [fractious battleground](https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/jan/25/egypt-5-years-on-was-it-ever-a-social-media-revolution) full of “echo chambers” and “hate speech”: “The same tool that united us to topple dictators eventually tore us apart.” Ghonim saw social media polarising people into angry opposing camps – army supporters and Islamists – leaving centrists such as himself stuck in the middle, powerless.

And this isn’t just politics. It’s health too. A survey conducted by the [Royal Society of Public Health](https://www.rsph.org.uk/our-work/policy/social-media-and-young-people-s-mental-health-and-wellbeing.html) asked 1,500 young people to keep track of their moods while on the five most popular social media sites. Instagram and Snapchat came out worst, often inspiring feelings of inadequacy, anxiety and self-loathing. And according to another survey carried out by the youth charity [Plan International UK](https://plan-uk.org/media-centre/almost-half-of-girls-aged-11-18-have-experienced-harassment-or-bullying-online), half of girls and two-fifths of boys have been the victims of online bullying.

The evidence is growing that social media can be a health risk, particularly for young people who now have all the normal pressures of youth (fitting in, looking good, being popular) being exploited by the multibillion-dollar companies that own the platforms they spend much of their lives on.

Kurt Vonnegut said: “We are what we pretend to be, so we must be careful who we pretend to be.” This seems especially true now we have reached a new stage of marketing where we are not just consumers, but also the thing consumed. If you have friends you only ever talk to on Facebook, your entire relationship with them is framed by commerce. When we willingly choose to become unpaid content providers, we commercialise ourselves. And we are encouraged to be obsessed with numbers (of followers, messages, comments, retweets, favourites), as if operating in a kind of friend economy, an emotional stock market where the stock is ourselves and where we are encouraged to weigh our worth against others.

Of course, humans comparing themselves to others isn’t new. But when the others are every human on the internet, people end up comparing themselves – their looks, their relationships, their wealth, their lives – to the carefully filtered lives of people they would never meet in the real world – and feeling inadequate.

Reading first-hand accounts by people with bulimia and anorexia who are convinced that social media exacerbated or even triggered their illnesses, I began to realise something: this situation is not the equivalent of Bob Dylan’s electric guitar. It is closer to the tobacco or fast-food industries, where vested interests deny the existence of blatant problems that were not there before.

To ignore it, to let companies shape and exploit and steal our lives, would be the ultra-conservative option. The one that says free markets have their own morality. The one that is fine entrusting our future collective health to tech billionaires. The one that believes, totally, in free will; and that mental health problems are either not significant, or are entirely of the individual’s making.

We are traditionally far better at realising risks to physical health than to mental health, even when they are interrelated. If we can accept that our physical health can be shaped by society – by secondhand smoke or a bad diet – then we must accept that our mental health can be too. And as our social spaces increasingly become digital spaces, we need to look seriously and urgently at how these new, business-owned societies are affecting our minds. We must try to see how the rising mental health crisis may be related to the way people are living and interacting.

Facebook’s Mark Zuckerberg says that “by giving people the power to share, we’re making the world more transparent”. But what we really need to do is make social media transparent.

Of course, we won’t stop using it – I certainly won’t – but precisely for that reason we need to know more about what it is doing to us. To our politics, to our health, to the future generation, and to the world around us. We need to ensure we are still the ones using the technology – and that the technology isn’t using us.

**Imagery Questions**

1. How does the writer’s use of imagery help to demonstrate how certain mental illnesses are linked? (Paragraph 2) **(3 marks)**
2. How does the writer’s use of imagery in paragraph 3 demonstrate his former opinion towards critics of social media?  **(3 marks)**
3. How does the writer’s use of imagery in paragraph 6 create a negative view of the Daily Mail? **(3 marks)**
4. How does the writer use imagery to describe the negative place that social media sites have become? (paragraph 7)  **(3 marks)**
5. In paragraph 12, the writer says social media sites are “closer to the tobacco or fast-food industries, where vested interests deny the existence of blatant problems that were not there before.” Why is this comparison effective? What does it suggest about social media?  **(2 marks)**

**14 marks**

**Tone Task**

**Well done, Ryanair - yes, Ryanair! – for shaming the speedy boarders**

[Stuart Heritage](https://www.theguardian.com/profile/stuart-heritage)

Making those who stuff two bags into overhead lockers buy priority boarding has done what would once have been unthinkable: made Ryanair look good

Nobody likes a speedy boarder. That’s just a fact, plain and simple. People who purchase priority boarding upgrades on low-cost airlines are *genuinely* worse than the devil. They’re snooty and snobby, and the only way they can distinguish themselves from the unwashed plebs they’re forced to share a plane with is by spending a fiver for the privilege of sitting in it first. They’re people who go on the internet specifically to pretend not to know who [Kim Kardashian](https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/kim-kardashian) is. They’re people who sneer in Harvesters. They are the absolute living worst.

They’re so bad that they’ve even done the unthinkable and made Ryanair look halfway good. [Ryanair](https://www.theguardian.com/business/ryanair), for crying out loud: a company that’s inherently impossible to like. A company that made its name with unremitting unpleasantness as standard, run by a silent-movie baddie on a gap year from tying women to railway lines, has somehow come out of a policy announcement looking decent. [Ryanair has just announced its intention](https://www.theguardian.com/business/2017/sep/06/ryanair-priority-boarding-carry-on-bags-cabin-luggage) to force everyone who uses a wheelie bag as hand luggage to purchase a priority boarding pass. And, well, hooray.

On the surface, this is simply to address issues of space. On a plane with 189 seats, they say, there is only enough space in the overhead lockers for 90 bags. But lately, people have been exploiting Ryanair’s two-bag hand luggage policy by dragging both a wheelie bag and an oversized rucksack on with them. If every passenger did this, there’d be 380 bags all competing for a microscopic amount of space. Ryanair’s answer is a simple one: if you really want to bring two big bags on board with you, you’re going to have to pay for them.

But really it seems [Ryanair](https://www.theguardian.com/business/ryanair) is simply doing a sterling piece of detective work. Whether intentionally or not, it’s actually helping to weed out secret speedy boarders. The people who are speedy boarders at heart – the sort of people who ignore the homeless and watch illegally streamed films for free, the sort of people who look at you with a dumb I’d-help-if-I-could expression when you ask for them to move their bag from an empty seat on a crowded train – but can’t commit to paying extra to make their monstrousness explicit, are gradually being edged out into the daylight.

And, make no mistake, people who try to cram two big bags into the overhead lockers on planes are the living embodiment of secret speedy boarders. They’re the people who stop the plane taking off on time, causing a bottleneck in the aisle because they’re tutting and wheezing and attempting the aviation equivalent of stuffing a wedding cake into a drainpipe. They could have just placed one of their bags in hold for free like everyone else. But no: that would have taken a maximum of five minutes and the barest trace of consideration for other people, and their convenience isn’t worth that.

But now these people have been forced out into the open. If they want to maintain their selfishness, they’re going to have to pay for it. They’re going to have to let everyone else on the plane know upfront what exactly a swaggering imbecile they are. The bell will ring in the departure gate, and they’ll announce “Can everyone who labours under the woeful apprehension that they’re somehow better than you please come to the front of the line?”, and the rest of us will watch, silently committing their bovine faces to memory.

Honestly, I think Ryanair could have probably gone a little further with this plan. Hopefully its next policy will involve leading the speedy boarders to the plane with a bell-ringing nun who keeps chanting the word “Shame” at them. Or, better yet, special badges for speedy boarders to wear, so that everyone else can single them out and understand the depths of their depravity. Or, you know, slightly bigger overhead lockers. Whichever’s easiest, really.

**Tone Qs**

1. What is the writer’s attitude towards ‘speedy boarders’ on Ryanair flights? Give two pieces of evidence in your answer. (paragraph 1). **(4 marks)**
2. How is language used by the writer in paragraph 2 to indicate how their now contrasting feelings towards Ryanair? Give 2 pieces of evidence in your answer. **(4 marks)**
3. How does the writer’s language in paragraph 4 convey a positive attitude towards Ryanair? Give evidence in your answer.  **(2 marks)**
4. How do the final lines of the passage create a humorous ending to the passage? Use evidence in your answer. **(2 marks)**

**12 marks**

**Link Task**

**Co-parented by popular culture: why celebrity deaths affect us so deeply**

[Michael Hann](https://www.theguardian.com/profile/michaelhann)

If you mourned Prince, Diana or Harry Dean Stanton as deeply as you did your grandparents. That’s because grieving for strangers is now a family matter

Another week, another death of a popular-culture figure – the actor Harry Dean Stanton, made famous in sci-fi classic *Alien* – and another wave of public grief for their loss. Once again my social media feeds have been filled with mourning and heartfelt testimonials to the effect this man had on the lives of so many, through films, TV shows and interviews.

It’s often suggested that the death of Diana, a shade over 20 years ago, is what triggered the public willingness to mourn complete strangers who had never been more than a presence on the screen in the corner of the living room. Perhaps, though, there’s another reason for the grief: people are mourning something closer to home.

The cause of this is modern popular culture: an invention of the 1950s, refined in the 1960s, and expanded in every decade since. Rock’n’roll music and television exploded hand in hand in the 1950s. In January 1956, the first year for which figures are available, 5.7m UK households owned a television; by January 1960 that figure had almost doubled, to 11m. By January 1970 16.9m out of 18.4m UK households owned a television. In the US, 9% of households owned a TV in 1950; by 1960 it had reached 87.1%.

It didn’t take long for television to become not just a presence in the household, but part of household life. As early as 1958, an LSE study led by Hilde Himmelweit found children were watching an average of 11 to 13 hours of TV per week. And it turned out that TV and pop music were made for each other: by 1958 the US pop music show American Bandstand was drawing 40 million viewers a week, and was being serenaded in song: “They’ll be rockin’ on Bandstand, in Philadelphia PA,” sang Chuck Berry on Sweet Little Sixteen.

At the same time, the structure of the home was changing. In 1955, 45.9% of UK women of working age were in the workforce in one way or another, and 38.3% of US women. In 1965 those figures had risen to 51% and 44.4%. Another decade on and they were 55.1% and 53.2%. The parents weren’t at home, but the kids were, and the TV and the radio and the record player were.

In effect, those born in the 1950s and 1960s were the first generations to be co-parented by popular culture. They were the people, who as Bruce Springsteen put it in No Surrender, “learned more from a three-minute record, baby, than we ever learned in school”. They drew life lessons not from fireside chats with parents, but from David Bowie or Bob Dylan or Joni Mitchell. They were entertained not by parlour games, but by The Generation Game. When they wanted to understand why they felt as they did during adolescence, they didn’t speak to their families, they listened to The Smiths, or whoever answered their particular need.

They did so in homes in which, often, both parents were absent much of the time.Millions of kids spent more time with pop stars and film stars and TV stars than with their parents. (Not for nothing were the children’s TV presenters of the 1960s and 1970s usually presented as surrogate parents, like John Noakes, Peter Purves and Lesley Judd on Blue Peter, rather than the matey older siblings of the late 1980s and onwards) They were also the first generations for whom adulthood was deferred, by the expansion of education, by the postponement of marriage. There was no pressure on them to loosen their bonds with the people they had grown up listening to or watching.

Maybe, then, when people seem unusually grief-stricken at the death of an entertainer, they are mourning not that star, but something closer. They are, perhaps, connecting that loss with the death of a parent, or subconsciously preparing for a death yet to come. They have lost part of their family. One friend said of her reaction to Bowie’s death: “I knew it was to do with him really being a strong father/godfather figure, a constant kind, creative voice in my head.”

Another said of Prince: “I felt a bit embarrassed at how Prince’s passing touched me. I really felt that I’d been on a journey with him from my early teens. It made me think of my mum a lot; she really couldn’t stand him.”

And one more: “People of our generation were first to ‘know’ TV celebrities. I grieved for Eric Morecambe as much as I did my grandparents. Sad to report.”

In a celebrity death, I think, what many of us see is not the end of a career, or even a life: we are seeing the impermanence of our own certainties, our own families**.** We are reminded how fragile is the edifice on which our life and identity are built.

**Linking Questions**

1. “The cause of this is modern popular culture: an invention of the 1950s, refined in the 1960s, and expanded in every decade since.” (paragraph 3)

Explain the function of these lines in the development of the writer’s argument. You should make close reference to the passage in your answer. **2 marks**

1. “At the same time, the structure of the home was changing.”(paragraph 5)

Explain the function of these lines in the development of the writer’s argument. You should make close reference to the passage in your answer. **2 marks**

1. “In effect, those born in the 1950s and 1960s were the first generations to be co-parented by popular culture.” (paragraph 6)

Explain the function of these lines in the development of the writer’s argument. You should make close reference to the passage in your answer. **2 marks**

1. “Maybe, then, when people seem unusually grief-stricken at the death of an entertainer, they are mourning not that star, but something closer.” (paragraph 8)

Explain the function of these lines in the development of the writer’s argument. You should make close reference to the passage in your answer. **2 marks**

1. “In a celebrity death, I think, what many of us see is not the end of a career, or even a life: we are seeing the impermanence of our own certainties, our own families.” (paragraph 11).

Explain the function of these lines in the development of the writer’s argument. You should make close reference to the passage in your answer. **2 marks**

**10 marks**

**Comparison Task 1**

**Why I’m so conflicted by zoos**

[Victoria Coren Mitchell](https://www.theguardian.com/profile/victoriacoren)

They fill us full of wonder and awe. And yet, there’s a wrongness at their heart that we can’t deny

The elephant stared balefully down, its eye as big as my head.

“Well, this is terrifying!” I said.

“It’s fine,” said the zookeeper. “Why are you frightened?”

“I thought it would be smaller,” I said.

“It’s an elephant,” he replied.

“Are you sure?” I said. “It’s the size of a stegosaurus.”

“These are the most docile elephants in the world,” said the keeper. “This is London Zoo. They see crowds of people every day. They’ve had their photo taken with the Queen. There is nothing to be worried about.”

“Fine,” I said, picking up the shovel. That dung wasn’t going to clear itself. We swept the enclosure as the elephant looked on.

Area cleared, I edged over to the giant creature. With a trembling hand, I patted its vast, wrinkled neck. Returning the favour, the elephant prodded me all over with its trunk. I felt oddly flattered.

The keeper smiled and nodded encouragement as I nestled close enough to give the elephant a proper cuddle. “Totally fine!” he mouthed.

The following year, it trampled him to death.

There are no elephants at London Zoo any more. The ones I met were moved, I think, to Whipsnade. I remember seeing a sign saying: “The elephants have moved away” and hoping it wasn’t a euphemism.

I have a complicated relationship with the zoo; maybe everyone does. It’s so wonderful and so sad. [The recent story of the gorilla](http://www.cincinnati.com/story/news/2016/05/28/police-child-taken-hospital-after-falling-into-gorilla-pen/85095094/) that was shot dead at Cincinnati Zoo, after a child fell into the enclosure, has shocked and rattled everyone I know. The widespread horror comes, I think, because we all feel culpable.

Why was there relatively so little coverage of last week’s court case, in which [South Lakes Safari Zoo in Cumbria](https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/jun/08/cumbria-south-lakes-safari-zoo-pleads-guilty-death-keeper-mauled-tiger-sarah-mcclay) was fined £297,500 for its culpability in the death of a keeper who was fatally mauled by a tiger? Everyone talked about the instance where the human survived and the animal died, but not the other way around.

It must be because we don’t feel responsible for the human’s death, but we do for the animal’s.

I grew up near London Zoo, with which I was obsessed. I would lie in bed at night, thinking about the lions and tigers and wolves that were prowling only a few miles away. (I assumed they were prowling. God knows, when we visited in the daytime, they were always asleep.)

It wasn’t a frightening thought; it was a wondrous thought. What a strange, magical, Victorian idea: a marvellous menagerie in the park! I knew that in the 19th century the zoo had housed a [quagga](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Quagga): a sort of weird zebra, now extinct. I yearned to see one. I dreamed of growing up and becoming a zookeeper.

Sure enough, I *did* grow up and become a zookeeper, albeit only for a day. I was sent in by the *Radio Times*, to promote a documentary.

I remember my idyllic happiness, that morning, as I prepared the ant-eaters’ breakfast. What do you think an anteater has for breakfast? That’s right: porridge. A porridge of fruit, vegetables, honey and mince. The dish was so sophisticated, I was tempted to pop it on a tray with a napkin and a copy of the *Daily Telegraph*.

I fed locusts to [tamarin monkeys](https://animalcorner.co.uk/animals/tamarin-monkeys/) and chopped apples for [naked mole-rats](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Naked_mole-rat). The reason I went to the elephants’ enclosure was to collect dung for the dung beetles.

I remember, at the end of the day, not wanting to put my trousers in the washing machine because they still bore the muddy imprint of the elephant’s inquisitive trunk – like a crazed fan not wanting to wash her face after a kiss from Mick Jagger.

The memories were ruined, of course, by that keeper’s awful death the following year. But “ruined” is not the right word, because awfulness needs to be part of the picture. Keepers die in zoos quite a lot. Only a few months after Jim died, [a keeper was fatally crushed at Chester Zoo by an elephant](https://www.theguardian.com/uk/2002/mar/19/davidward) that had been volatile following a foot injury and was put down immediately after the incident.

There is never much public conversation after a keeper dies. I imagine people think: “Occupational hazard. Live by the sword, die by the sword.”

This may be harsh but we all, even those who love visiting a zoo, feel guilty about their existence. Whatever they do to promote conservation – and I don’t know about Cincinnati, but London Zoo does an enormous amount – we know those animals don’t want to be in cages. We feel the frustration of the big cats, the terrible sadness of our cousins the gorillas.

What deal did we, humanity, make with Harambe from Cincinnati Zoo? He was bred in captivity. He never knew freedom. We stared at him every day of his life. Our fascination incarcerated him in a place where there was a risk that one of our own species might fall in; when that happened, we killed him.

Witnessing that death, we’re like the audience of *Twelfth Night* who laugh at the tricks of Malvolio: we have to take responsibility for the horror because we’ve all enjoyed the fun bit. We all understand the thrill of seeing these beautiful creatures in the flesh. Perhaps the reason we don’t mourn keepers is that keepers represent us, culpable humanity: their deaths can feel like a balancing sacrifice. Not so the gorilla, which had already given enough.

London Zoo is *amazing*. I want to take my child there, so that she can feel the awe and wonder I felt (and feel) myself. I don’t want zoos to stop. But, if they’re going to continue, perhaps every zoo should have a statue of Harambe the gorilla, right in the middle of everything, to remind us of the central wrong that can never be put right.

**Why zoos are good**

The days of the Victorian menagerie are over, but modern zoos are much more than a collection of animals and more important than ever

I am a lifelong fan of good zoos (note the adjective) and have visited dozens of zoos, safari parks and aquaria around the world. I also spent a number of years working as a volunteer keeper at two zoos in the U.K. and my own interests now span to the history of zoological collections and their design, architecture and research so it is probably fair to say I’m firmly in the pro-zoo camp.

However, I am perfectly willing to recognise that there are bad zoos and bad individual exhibits. Not all animals are kept perfectly, much as I wish it were otherwise, and even in the best examples, there is still be room for improvement. But just as the fact that some police are corrupt does not mean we should not have people to enforce the law, although bad zoos or exhibits persist does not mean they are not worthwhile institutes. It merely means we need to pay more attention to the bad and improve them or close them. In either case, zoos (at least in the U.K. and most of the western world) are generally a poor target for criticism in terms of animal welfare – they have to keep the public onside or go bust and they have to stand up to rigorous inspections or be closed down. While a bad collection should not be ignored, if you are worried the care and treatment of animals in captivity I can point to a great many farms, breeders, dealers and private owners who are in far greater need or inspection, improvement or both.

If you are against animals in captivity full stop then there is perhaps little scope for discussion, but even so I’d maintain that some of the following arguments (not least the threat of extinction) can outweigh arguments against captivity. Moreover, I don’t think anyone would consider putting down a 10000 km long fence around the Masai Mara to really be captivity, even if it restricts the movement of animals across that barrier. But at what point does that become captivity? A 10000 m fence? 1000 m fence? What if veterinary care is provided or extra food as in many reserves or as part of conservation projects?

What I would state with absolute confidence is that for many species (but no, not all) it is perfectly possible to keep them in a zoo or wildlife park and for them to have a quality of life as high or higher than in the wild. Their movement might be restricted (but not necessarily by that much) but they will not suffer from the threat or stress of predators (and nor will they be killed in a grisly manner or eaten alive) or the irritation and pain of parasites, injuries and illnesses will be treated, they won’t suffer or die of drought or starvation and indeed will get a varied and high-quality diet with all the supplements required. They can be spared bullying or social ostracism or even infanticide by others of their kind, or a lack of a suitable home or environment in which to live. A lot of very nasty things happen to truly ‘wild’ animals that simply don’t happen in good zoos and to cast a life that is ‘free’ as one that is ‘good’ is, I think, an error.

So a good zoo will provide great care and protection to animals in their care. These are good things for the individuals concerned, but what do zoos actually bring to the table for the visitors and the wider world? This is, naturally, what I want to focus on, but it is I hope worth having dealt with the more obvious objections and misapprehensions.

[Conservation](https://www.theguardian.com/environment/conservation) – reservoir and return. It’s not an exaggeration to say that colossal numbers of species are going extinct across the world, and many more are increasingly threatened and risk extinction. Moreover, some of these collapses have been sudden, dramatic and unexpected or were simply discovered very late in the day. Zoos protect against a species going extinct. A species protected in captivity provides a reservoir population against a population crash or extinction in the wild. Here they are relatively safe and can be bred up to provide foundation populations. A good number of species only exist in captivity and still more only exist in the wild because they have been reintroduced from zoos, or the wild populations have been boosted by captive bred animals. Quite simply without these efforts there would be fewer species alive today and ecosystems and the world as a whole would be poorer for it.

Education. Many children and adults, especially those in cities will never see a wild animal beyond a fox or pigeon, let alone a lion or giraffe. Sure television documentaries get ever more detailed and impressive, and lots of natural history specimens are on display in museums, but that really does pale next to seeing a living creature in the flesh, hearing it, smelling it, watching what it does and having the time to absorb details. That alone will bring a greater understanding and perspective to many and hopefully give them a greater appreciation for wildlife, conservation efforts and how they can contribute. All of that comes before the actual direct education that can take place through signs, talks and the like that can directly communicate information about the animals they are seeing and their place in the world. This was an area where zoos were previously poor and are now increasingly sophisticated in their communication and outreach work. Many zoos also work directly to educate conservation workers in foreign countries or send keepers abroad to contribute their knowledge and skills to zoos and preserves helping to improve conditions and reintroductions all over the world.

Research. If we are to save many wild species and restore and repair ecosystems we need to know about how key species live, act and react. Being able to study animals in zoos where there is less risk and less variables means real changes can be effected on wild populations with far fewer problems. Things like capturing and moving at-risk or dangerous individuals is bolstered by knowledge in zoos about doses for anaesthetics, and experience at handling and transporting animals. This can make a real difference to conservation efforts and to reduce human-animal conflicts, and collectively provide a knowledge base for helping with the increasing threats of habitat destruction and other problems.

All in all with the ongoing global threats to the environment it’s hard for me to see zoos as anything other than being essential to the long-term survival of numerous species. Not just in terms of protecting them and breeding them for reintroduction, but to learn about them to aid those still in the wild, as well as to educate and inform the public about these animals and their world: to pique their interest so that they can assist or at least accept the need to be more environmentally conscious. Sure there is always scope for improvement, but these benefits are critical to many species and potentially at least, the world as a whole, and the animals so well kept and content, that I think there can be few serious objections to the concept of good zoos what they can do. Without them, the world would be, and would increasingly become, a much poorer place.

**Comparison Question**

Look at **both** passages.

The writers **disagree** about whether animals should be kept in captivity, specifically zoos. Identify **three key areas** on which they disagree.

You should support the points by **referring to important ideas** in both passages.

You may answer this Q in continuous prose or in a **series of developed bullet points.**

**Comparison Task 2**

Star Wars: The Last Jedi review – an explosive thrill-ride of galactic proportions

Director Rian Johnson delivers a tidal wave of energy and emotion in the eighth episode of the saga, as Luke, Leia, Finn and Rey step up to meet their destiny

An old hope. A new realism. An old anxiety. A new feeling that the Force might be used to channel telepathy, and long-distance evil seduction. The excitingly and gigantically proportioned eighth film in the great [Star Wars](https://www.theguardian.com/film/starwars) saga offers all of these, as well as colossal confrontations, towering indecisions and teetering temptations, huge military engagements, and very small disappointments.

The character-driven face-offs are wonderful and the succession crisis about the last Jedi of the title is gripping. But there is a convoluted and slightly unsatisfying parallel plot strand about the Resistance’s strategic military moves as the evil First Order closes in, and an underwritten, under-imagined and eccentrically dressed new character – Vice Admiral Amilyn Holdo, played by Laura Dern.

More successful is a new figure from other ranks: Kelly Marie Tran is terrifically good as Rose Tico, the Resistance soldier who steps up to meet her destiny as a key player in the battle against tyranny. Like [The Force Awakens](https://www.theguardian.com/film/2015/dec/16/star-wars-the-force-awakens-review-a-spectacular-homecoming), The Last Jedi offers variations on the mighty orchestral themes of the original trilogy, switching occasionally to muted tones and minor keys, before cranking the volume back up. This self-reference has become an accepted and exhilarating part of the new Star Wars story.

We left the last movie as Rey, played by [Daisy Ridley](https://www.theguardian.com/film/daisy-ridley), is in the act of handing over a lightsaber to the haunted and monkish figure of Luke Skywalker himself, played of course by a poignantly grizzled [Mark Hamill](https://www.theguardian.com/film/mark-hamill) – a handing-back-of-the-baton moment of inspired paradox. No spoilers, obviously, but what Luke says and does first at the beginning of this film is startlingly unexpected: an upending of the tonal apple cart, that signals writer-director [Rian Johnson](https://www.theguardian.com/film/rian-johnson)’s determination to wrest the lightsaber away from [JJ Abrams](https://www.theguardian.com/film/jjabrams) and put his own mark on the project.

Rey must now ponder her own future and vocation. And, as for Luke, he has to reassess what the third act of his life now means. Hamill comes into his own here with a very intelligent and sympathetic portrayal of his great character. He is potentially the great magician or teacher on this remote island, in a position to induct Rey into the Zen priesthood of the Force, and show her it is not just a matter of silly conjuring tricks and making rocks rise into the air.

But might he not also be sulking in his tent, reluctant to help, for reasons apparently connected with his catastrophically failed mentorship of Kylo Ren, but perhaps for other, more complex reasons?

Which brings us to Kylo Ren himself, superbly played by [Adam Driver](https://www.theguardian.com/film/adam-driver). He is now a wounded, damaged figure and he insinuates himself like a predatory Satan into our consciousness in a series of dreamlike cross-cutting dialogue sequences that are the most successful part of the film.

What does Kylo Ren want? As ever, the closeups on Driver’s face are gorgeous. He is never the Easter Island statue of hardness that it is possible to misremember: he is tremulous, unsure of himself, like an unhappy teenager, and his mouth seems almost on the point of trembling with tears. That breathy, resonant voice is unmistakable even from behind a neo-Vader mask.

This is a villain who seems troubled about the mantle of evil on his shoulders; and, again, there are surprises in store about what Ren has in mind for the future and what his past relationship with his Uncle Luke actually was.

Meanwhile, General Leia, played by the late [Carrie Fisher](https://www.theguardian.com/culture/carrie-fisher), is commanding a complex military manoeuvre in the face of malign incursions from the First Order, represented by General Hux, played more obviously and successfully for laughs by [Domhnall Gleeson](https://www.theguardian.com/film/domhnall-gleeson).

Romantic hothead pilot Poe Dameron ([Oscar Isaac](https://www.theguardian.com/film/oscar-isaac)) is on the point of outright insubordination in his desire to lash out against the First Order but reformed stormtrooper Finn – an excellent, muscular performance from [John Boyega](https://www.theguardian.com/film/john-boyega) – working with Rose (Tran) has a new and subtler scheme in view, which involves finding a codebreaker on a distant Vegas-ish planet offering casino betting and track racing. It is, bafflingly, a pointless plotline that gets tangled up in itself, though not without offering a good deal of entertainment.

The Last Jedi gives you an explosive sugar rush of spectacle. It’s a film that buzzes with belief in itself and its own mythic universe – a euphoric certainty that I think no other movie franchise has. And there is no provisional hesitation or energy dip of the sort that might have been expected between episodes seven and nine.

What there is, admittedly, is an anticlimactic narrative muddle in the military story, but this is not much of a flaw considering the tidal wave of energy and emotion that crashes out of the screen in the final five minutes. It’s impossible not to be swept away.

Review – Star Wars: The Last Jedi

IF JJ Abrams’s The Force Awakens successfully re-established the Star Wars franchise as a force to be reckoned with after the disappointments of the Phantom Menace-led prequels, then Rian Johnson’s The Last Jedi continues the saga even more impressively.

Episode VIII isn’t afraid to ring the changes or, as one character puts it, "let the past die". So, while it’s still very much a Star Wars film capable of sending the core fans home delirious, it also steps out of the shadow of what has come before to confidently do its own thing and set up a future that’s rife with possibility.

Johnson has previous good form for entering a pre-existing universe and laying down his own stamp on proceedings, having directed three of Breaking Bad’s best episodes (including The Fly and standout Ozymandias).

With The Last Jedi, he repeats the trick, striking a near-perfect balance between honouring the old and bringing in the new, while also delivering crowd-pleasing spectacle and finding a satisfying mix between the drama and an unexpected line in comedy.

Picking up pretty much where The Force Awakens left off, the film hits the ground running with a blistering chase sequence between fleeing Resistance vessels and First Order Star Destroyers.

At the centre of this is General Leia (the late Carrie Fisher) and Resistance heroes Poe (Oscar Isaac) and Finn (John Boyega), the latter of whom must embark on a daring mission to try to prevent the imminent destruction of the remaining fleet.

Rey (Daisy Ridley), meanwhile, has found Luke Skywalker (Mark Hamill) and persuaded him, albeit reluctantly, to train her in the ways of The Force – a task that unsettles him once he begins to realise the true extent of her powers.

And leading the chase on behalf of the First Order is Kylo Ren (Adam Driver), who continues to battle his own demons while seeing an unlikely ally in Rey that could tip the balance of power in his favour.

At just over two and a half hours, The Last Jedi is the longest film in the series to date but works hard to ensure that not a moment feels wasted. It seldom sags.

Rather, its set pieces are genuinely massive, and deserving of the biggest screen possible, while the different planets it visits are visually ravishing and alive with fantastic characters. As a self-confessed lifelong Star Wars fan, Johnson has a keen appreciation for what makes the franchise work.

He knows how to use the iconography of the past intelligently but also strives to keep things fresh, taking viewers to new places and introducing them to new creations. A sequence within a gambling den is one particular delight, populated by spectacular characters, while a climactic battle on a landscape infused with reds and whites genuinely dazzles.

And yet for all of the film’s obvious visual panache, Johnson never loses sight of the inner conflicts at the heart of each character and gives his actors plenty to do.

Hamill is particularly beneficial of this, given that his Luke Skywalker is now a shell of his former self – a legend riddled with regret and doubt. It’s perhaps Hamill’s most complete performance.

But Ridley is given plenty to explore as she seeks to understand her character’s growing powers, while Driver excels as Ren, even if there continue to be doubts about the direction of his journey.

A colourful support cast also includes eye-catching work from newcomers such as Benicio del Toro, as an eccentric thief, and Laura Dern, as a rebel commander, as well as returning cast members Isaac, Domhnall Gleeson and Andy Serkis (once again excelling in a performance capture role).

There are flaws. Johnson sometimes allows things to become a little too corny in the way events play out, opting for hope over cynicism in a way that the standard-bearing Empire Strikes Back avoided. And he also teases some revelations that struggle to carry the impact they promise.

But in the main he gets things right and even leaves you with the feeling that you have seen something new. Where many accused The Force Awakens of being content merely to recycle past ideas, The Last Jedi feels fresh and innovative and a proper changing of the guard.

It’s a film that dares to be ambitious and which, ultimately, feels fully deserving of the fan-boy devotion coming its way.

**Comparison Question**

Look at **both** passages.

The writers **agree** about the success of the latest Star Wars film. **Identify three key areas** on which they agree.

You should support the points by **referring to important ideas** in both passages.

You may answer this Q in continuous prose or in a **series of developed bullet points.**