**In Your Own Words Practice**

'Autism doesn't hold me back. I'm moving up the career ladder'

**Driven new generation of people with the condition are showing employers there is no limit to what they can do**

Jonathan Young has big plans for his career. The business analyst at Goldman Sachs is on the autistic spectrum. But this, he says, is not something he allows to hold him back.

"I'm the company's global go-to guy for all the information used in every single one of our internal and external presentations," he says. "I'm moving up the ladder every year in terms of responsibility or promotion. My ambition is to maintain this momentum. In 10 years, I want to be someone fairly big."

He is part of the most visible generation of young people with autism our society has ever known. Diagnosed early, this generation have been educated to expect not just a job when they leave school but a career on a par with their "neuro-typical" contemporaries.

The confidence and determination of these graduates – some of whom are educated to PhD level – are forcing the pace of change in organisations previously inaccessible to those with autism. Businesses, from City law firms and banks to global healthcare companies, have begun to open their doors to young people once thought able only to do lowly jobs.

Young first went to Goldman Sachs as an intern in the National Autistic Society's [specialist employment programme, Prospects](http://www.autism.org.uk/prospects). His time at the investment bank was such a success that the two-month internship swiftly became a full-time, permanent post.

"When I arrived, this role was a part-time job but I built it up into a key, full-time post and made it my own," he said. "Autism doesn't hold me back because I have had the correct support from a young age. It's key to have that support, both in education and in the workplace, but I don't require anything complicated: people just have to understand that I'm different."

For all his confidence, Young admits that he considers himself fortunate. "I never lose sight of the fact that I'm lucky to have a job that allows me to use all my intelligence and stretch my potential," he said.

Prospects has placed young people with autism in companies including Thomson Reuters, the law firms Clifford Chance and Ashurst, the technology and business consultant Cartesian, and John Lewis.

Penny Andrews got her job as a library graduate trainee at Leeds Metropolitan University in August without any help from a charity or specialist employment agency.

Having beaten 200 applicants to the job, she believes she has proved herself to be the best candidate. "Sometimes I feel people think I should be grateful that I have a job but I'm performing a useful task and doing it well, so they should be grateful to me," she said. "After all, they wanted me badly enough to employ me a month before I had finished my degree in IT and communications with the Open University."

Far from feeling that her diagnosis of Asperger's is something to be "got over", Andrews maintains it gave her a lead over the other candidates. "I was completely open about my autism throughout the interview process and even asked for a few special conditions to take account of my Asperger's, such as working from 8.30am to 4.30pm,for example, so I don't have to take the rush-hour bus home, taking extra breaks in a special quiet area if I need quiet, and not having to answer telephones."

They are small adjustments for her employers to make, she said, compared with the advantages her Asperger's gives them. "I'm more focused, intense and honest than a neuro-typical person," she said. "I do things thoroughly and pay proper attention to detail. I'm always switched on: even when I'm not at work, I'll go to events that are relevant. Libraries are one of my autistic specialities and I harness that at work."

Employers' attitudes might be changing but there is a lot of ground to make up. Just 15% of those with autism have full-time jobs, according to research by the National Autistic Society (Nas), while 9% work part-time. These figures compare unfavourably with the 31% of disabled people in full-time work in the UK. More than a quarter of graduates with autism are unemployed, the highest rate of any disability group. Nevertheless, employers are increasingly coming round to the arguments from disability advocates that employing those on the spectrum is not about charity or social responsibility – but the empirical benefit of taking on people with unique skills.

Tom Madders is head of campaigns at the society and responsible for its Undiscovered Workforce campaign to get young people with autism into employment. He talks of a "vast pool of untapped talent" among those with autism.

"When someone has the intellectual ability and ends up doing a job like working in a supermarket, it's heartbreaking. It's such a waste because although everyone with autism is different, the things they bring that are additional to the rest of us include a very high concentration level, very good attention to detail and analytical skills that are key in data analysis and when looking for anomalies in complex spreadsheets," he said. "Why would employers want to miss out on those skills? In addition, those with autism have very specialist areas of exhaustive interest which, if these can coincide with the job in hand, can be extremely useful. They're much more reliable in terms of timeliness and absenteeism and very loyal. Often, they're very happy in jobs other people find boring."

**Questions**

**Rewrite each of the following sentences from the article in your own words. You do not have to change every single word, and you may find that some long sentences can be reworded better as two or even three shorter ones…**

1. “My ambition is to maintain this momentum.”
2. “For all his confidence, Young admits that he considers himself fortunate.”
3. “Having beaten 200 applicants to the job, she believes she has proved herself to be the best candidate.”

**Answer the following questions, using your own words as far as possible, to show your understanding. The number of marks available for each question suggests how many details or ideas you need in each answer.**

1. Penny Andrews “believes she has proved herself to be the best candidate”. In your own words, explain how paragraph ten illustrates this idea. (**2**)
2. What are some of the advantages for companies who hire members of staff with autism? Refer to paragraph twelve in your answer, using your own words. (**4**)
3. In your own words, explain in what ways ‘there is a lot of ground to make up’ for people with autism in the workplace. Give evidence from paragraph thirteen to support your answer. (**3**)

**Summarising Practice**

The following extracts come from an article about Dudley D. Watkins, illustrator of the comic, ‘The Dandy’.

**Extract 1**

*It is worth remembering the man for whose extraordinary talents the company expressly launched ‘The Dandy’ in 1937 after the sensational impact of his new cartoon strips in its ‘Sunday Post’. Even as the clouds of war loomed, ‘The Broons’, and ‘Ooor Wullie’ were already national institutions. Such was the brilliance of Dudley D. Watkins that, of all the publisher’s artists, he was one of only two in its empire allowed to sign their strips.*

**In your own words, briefly summarise three points made by the writer, which illustrates that Watkins’ talent was already recognised as exceptional in 1937.** **3**

**Extract 2**

*And his characters, from Lord Snooty to Desperate Dan and the varied worlds – touching or hilarious or bonkers – they inhabit delight in us still. He is still universally accepted as Scotland’s greatest ever cartoonist. Thanks to his great range and astonishing draughtsmanship he is, even, decades after his death, still remembered by the public. (‘Aye, the guy who did the Broons.’)*

**In your own words, sum up the reasons given by the author for the enduring appeal of Watkins’ work. 3**

**Word Choice Practice**

**The top 10 don’ts of holidaying abroad**

[Andy Dawson](https://www.theguardian.com/profile/andy-dawson)

Italian coastguard officials have finally seen sense and are implementing [a zero-tolerance policy](https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/aug/08/towel-wars-italy-to-fine-tourists-for-saving-a-spot-on-the-beach) for selfish tourists who reserve their patch on the beach overnight or first thing in the morning. Towels and sunbeds will be snatched and on-the-spot fines of €200 (£170) dished out. In the Tuscan port of Livorno, coastguards [have been seizing](http://www.repubblica.it/cronaca/2016/08/08/news/furbetti_ombrelloni-145576825/?ref=HREC1-9) deckchairs, umbrellas and even bathing suits.

Let’s hope this is just the start. There are scores of other holiday crimes committed by tourists once they stagger off the plane, squinting in the sunlight. Here are the rules that really need to be introduced to stop everyone making prize fools of themselves …

**No** [**PG Tips**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/PG_Tips)

Never mind bottles of potentially dangerous liquids or handguns – airport security should start scanning luggage for jumbo-sized boxes of teabags or creme-filled confectionery. If you can’t survive without “a proper cup of tea” or “the king of cakes”, stay at home. You don’t need groceries – you need hypnotherapy or maybe methadone.

**No welcome meetings with reps**

The rep doesn’t want to welcome you anyway. To the rep, you pose a threat – you’re potentially a red-faced complaining machine. The only interaction he or she actually wants with you is the kind where you sign up for a bunch of overpriced, underwhelming local excursions.

**No ‘football friends’**

Thinking of striking up a conversation with that bloke who’s wearing your team’s shirt? Have you completely lost your mind? You wouldn’t do it down your local, so don’t do it in Majorca. Give it an hour, you’ll be three drinks in and the conversation will suddenly turn a bit racist. The rest of your relaxing break will turn into a military-style exercise in idiot avoidance.

**No sneaking to TripAdvisor**

Bothered by that occasional waft from the drains or the broken tile on your hotel bathroom floor? You don’t care enough to complain at reception, but you’ll let fly on TripAdvisor once you’re back home and bored out of your mind, won’t you? If you’re not prepared to pen your review in the hotel foyer with the manager sitting beside you, your grievances are null and void, you weasel.

**No drinking till you drop**

 It’s hot, you’re thirstier than usual and they’re serving larger measures of spirits than you’re used to. Sure, the Blue Lagoon tastes delicious, but each one is packing about half of your regular weekly alcohol intake. Say goodbye to your stomach lining, or if you really lose the plot, your liberty.

**No holiday tattoos**

If “finding yourself” involves getting a load of Sanskrit scrawled across your lower back, you need to understand that you were lost a long time before you unplugged all your electrical goods, closed the blinds and jumped in the taxi to the airport in the first place.

“What does it say, Dave?”

“Think it’s something about my soul being a blossoming lotus flower. Dunno – I was really drunk.”

“Oh. OK.”

**No making the most of every minute**

Look, there’s a reason for the shops all closing down and everyone making for their beds at 2pm, and you’re nothing special just because you’ve jetted in for a week or two. Get some shut-eye and sleep off your boozy lunch. You don’t get an award for staying awake for 17 hours straight – the only thing you’re likely to get is a melanoma.

**No social media**

No one begrudges you your break in the sun, but could you leave it alone with the relentless updates on Facebook please? The hours you spend editing, tagging and uploading those 75 photos you insist on sharing with us each day could be better spent, you know, relaxing. Also, don’t come crying to us because you didn’t get your privacy settings sorted and you come back to a burgled house after advertising your whereabouts to all and sundry.

**No avoiding foreign food**

For crying out loud, try something different for once in your life. There are plenty of places to fill your face that aren’t burger bars.

**No ‘There’s a bomb in my bag!’ airport gag**

Unless you’re into the idea of the full body-cavity search, of course. You might be. It takes all sorts …

Questions

1. **In paragraph 1, how does the writer suggest the Italian coastguards have been acting in a strict and severe way? 2**
2. **How does the writer convey his disapproval for pre-organised trips on holiday? (Paragraph 4) 2**
3. **How does the writer express his distaste for those who complain on TripAdvisor? (Paragraph 6) 2**
4. **How does the writer express his judgement over those who share holiday photos while still on holiday? (Paragraph 13) 2**

**Total /8**

**Imagery Practice**

**Imagery in Songs**

* What technique is being used?
* what is being compared to what?
* What is the similarity or shared quality?
* 

1. “Shine bright like a diamond”



**2.** .“I am a mountain, I am the sea.”



3. “I came in like a wrecking ball”

4. “New York: concrete jungle where dreams are made of, there’s nothing you can’t do”

5. I walk this empty street

On the Boulevard of Broken Dreams

Where the city sleeps

And I’m the only one and I walk alone.

**A moment that changed me: becoming a gym fundamentalist**

I was a big human camembert, oozing out of my once-trim skin. But five months later exercise has become a borderline-religious pursuit

From the inside, [my gym](https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/fitness) looks like an air hangar. The ceiling is triangular, towering 10 metres or so above creaking machines and old free weights that look like they’ve seen better days. The walls are lined with mirrors so that you can be constantly reminded that you are, in the eyes of the world, an imperfect, red-faced, sweaty gummy bear of a human.

Right now it’s 6am, and I am dressed like a mime on a run: black shoes, black shorts, black T-shirt. I’m about to work out: lift weights until my arms or legs enter a fugue state and I have to lie down for a while – like properly, heart-attack-face work out. I feel calm, in control and ready.

I have been going to the [gym](http://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/ng-interactive/2016/jan/09/the-four-week-workout-gym-1-exercises) three days a week for five months. I am addicted. Here’s what happened: I came back from holiday and a slew of photos revealed something I had long feared but refused to confront - the trim kid from university was long gone and had been replaced by a lookalike.

You know how a camembert sort of oozes out of its skin if it’s left out too long? That was me: a big human camembert. I still had the same ingredients but I was no longer fresh and perfectly formed. My chin and my neck had gotten a little too friendly for my liking, and all those clothes I had dismissed for “shrinking” were, in fact, exactly as they always had been.

When I was younger, I dismissed people who went to the gym as either try-hards or meatheads. I didn’t understand what people were doing there when they could be at the pub. I didn’t think you had to try to stay fit – I thought it was something that you just had.

On reflection, this is probably the dumbest thing I’ve ever admitted: I never expected I would suffer from health issues. I just thought I’d continue on. So while all my friends were hitting personal bests and eating salads, I was transitioning into Jabba the Hutt, except with slightly better hair (I know it’s definitely going to fall out at some point).

What was worse, the lifestyle I had chosen – that of a pound-shop weekend warrior – did not make me happy. Rather, it slowly ground me down. I’m 27 now, and earlier in the year I think I simply ran out of energy to do normal, healthy things such as cook or read or work. I was putting on weight, sure, but the marshmallow gut was just one symptom of a more overriding ennui.

Eventually, after a holiday that felt like one long stay at an off licence, I decided I no longer wanted to be the main character in a Hard-Fi song. I did not want to look the way I did; but more importantly, I did not want to feel the way I did.

For me, going to the gym has become not just a simple matter of working out: it is a complex, multilayered, borderline-religious pursuit. Let me explain. From the moment you buy the membership, the gym takes over. Little by little, it replaces the old you. You’re [Nicolas Cage wearing John Travolta’s face](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vlg-VRc6TbY). All of a sudden, “dumbbell” isn’t just your nickname behind your back, but also something you know how to lift. You’re a gym person now.

You wake up in a cold sweat thinking you’ve missed leg day. You Google: “Is a hanging leg lift what I think it is?” You’re on first-term names with the personal trainers, discussing eating regimes and routines. You idly browse protein bars in corner shops. You start buying chicken and cooking it in bulk at home. Your regular meal is almost 99% boiled vegetables and you convince yourself that you adore cottage cheese, that it isn’t some awful gloopy mess. Pain becomes a friend – after a lifetime avoiding it, you’re now embracing it, seeking it out like a fly to a zapper, because pain is the best friend of progress, and progress is what you’re here for, after all. You want to do better, be better, become better.

You exchange notes with your friends, discuss commandments, wonder if you’ve been bad recently and if it will affect your workout. You go the same days every week. You pay your respects to those who are bigger or fitter than you: men and women who are further along the path to redemption. You feel shame when you skip a day, and something builds up inside of you: a suspicion that people know you’ve been slacking, that you’re not a good, gym-fearing person.

“Forgive me, personal trainer, for I have definitely been out on the piss all night.” “You shall not covet your neighbour’s deadlift. You shall not commit adultery with another’s machine. You shall not murder a pizza this evening.” (OK, maybe just one slice – for old times’ sake).

The most wondrous thing about joining a gym hasn’t even been the way it changes the way I look on the outside but how it alters every detail on the inside, almost all of them for the better. It’s not something they sell you while you’re straining under a barbell – rather, it’s an unquantifiable free bonus.

**Questions**

1. In paragraph 1, how does the writer use imagery to describe his gym space? 3
2. In paragraph 4, how does the writer use imagery to describe his former body shape? 3
3. How does the writer use imagery to describe his changing body shape in paragraph 6? 3
4. How does the writer use imagery to describe his attitude towards pain in paragraph 10? 3

Total= /12

**Sentence Structure Practice**

Extract 1

Fiona had never cared for the Festival: traffic, never exactly free-flowing, came to an almost dead stop; tourists seemed to clog up all the pavements; her friends took off for all points of the compass; she could never get into her favourite restaurants; the infernal din of the Tattoo kept her awake for hours; there was always the feeling that she was about to have her pockets picked; and this morning there was a dead man in her front garden.

“I’m not sure how to say this,” she explained to the police when her shock allowed her to get to the phone, “but when I went out this morning, there was…I found…well, he was…dead.”

**a) Show how the writer’s sentence structure adds impact in paragraph one. (2 marks)**

**b) How does the writer use sentence structure to convey the girl’s state of mind in paragraph two? (2 marks)**

Extract 2

Out went the old idea of doing your duty to your country; in came the new idea that the individual should strive for his own satisfaction and happiness.

 **Comment on the effectiveness of the sentence structure in the extract. (2 marks)**

Extract 3

The fitness culture is everywhere. Think about how often we run into sweaty bodies in lycra-some decidedly unappealing in this most unforgiving of materials-when trying to negotiate our way home from work. Think of the number of times fit young men and women look out at us from media advertising exhorting us to buy such and such a health-giving product. Think of the times we look sadly at our expanding waistlines and begin to wonder if perhaps it is not too late to do something about it. In pessimistic moods, such reflections are depressing; in optimistic moods, they’re downright dangerous.

1. **Suggest two ways in which the writer uses sentence structure here to underline the points he is making about what he sees as our obsession with fitness. (4 marks)**
2. **What purpose do the dashes serve in sentence two? (2 marks)**

**Tone Practice**

I just couldn’t believe the nerve of the man, and my face reddens whenever I think about it. How dare he speak to me like that, in such a condescending way? Who gave him the right to treat anyone like that? He really made my blood boil.

1. **What tone is created here? Give a reason for your answer. (2 marks)**

Bring three pieces of identity with you, a letter of recommendation from your head teacher, a full CV, the form filled-in in triplicate and a cheque for £150. You have to admit it, they don’t ask much.

1. **What tone is created here? Give a reason for your answer. (2 marks)**

With more than 75 years in the travel business, we pride ourselves on our standing in the industry. 75 years of returning customers point to a service which is second-to-none. A reputation like ours is hard to come by, that’s why we go the extra mile to ensure that our customers keep coming back. With us, many happy returns are not just for birthdays!

1. **What tone is created here? Give a reason for your answer. (2 marks)**

The last time I saw legs that thin, there was a message tied round them. And talking of pigeons, his chest was so convex I fully expected to see feathers on it.

1. **What tone is created here? Give a reason for your answer. (2 marks)**

**Total=/8**

**Link Practice**

Question 1

Like its predecessors, One Direction has been compared to the Beatles, mostly owing to its remarkable chart success. But the comparison is misleading. IN a way that was not possible fifteen years ago, let alone 5o, tweens had access, via the internet, to the fresh faces of Harry Styles, Louis Tomlinson, Niall Horan, Zayn Malik and Liam Payne for months before their band’s album release. “We have to laugh it off because the Beatles were iconic,” Payne demurred once, slightly too accurately, when asked by Australia’s Sunday Telegraph about the resemblance.

**The internet isn’t the only change.** The nineties cohort of boy bands performed in music that was rooted in American R&B. IN contrast, One Direction and other chart topping bands are evenly spilt between guitar-heavy pop rock and club beats. This makes for a dramatic stylistic shift. ‘We’re five lads in a band,’ Payne said. ‘Boy bands aren’t all about dancing and being structured and wearing the same clothes.’

**With reference to the text, explain the part played by the sentence in bold in the structure of the writer’s argument. (2 marks)**

Question 2

The First Emperor's imprint on the lives of the inhabitants of his far-flung kingdoms was seen further. He unified the script, demanding that all states write the pictographs of ancient Chinese in the same way. So, although the words might be pronounced differently in different parts of the empire, once they were written down everyone who could read could understand each other, a particular advantage for traders.

But for the First Emperor, establishing complete control over his empire was not enough. He wanted to rule forever. If he couldn't have immortality in this world, the next best thing would be to rule in the nether world. We knew about his tomb mound because the ancient sources referred to it, and it has always been there.

**Explain how the sentence “But for the First Emperor, establishing complete control over his empire was not enough” works as a link between paragraphs at this point. (2 marks)**

Question 3

The problem here is political will rather than financial capacity. The pinch will come in other areas, such as health spending. People over 65 consume three times as many prescription items as other age groups. Nearly half of those with some measure of disability are over 70.

But the resource question, meeting the material needs of the old and elderly, is only half the story. The real problem lies elsewhere- in the imagination. What are the old for? Who are they, and do traditional divisions of human life into childhood, youth, middle-age and old-age still fit our experience?

**By referring closely to specific words and phrases, show the first sentence of the second paragraph performs a linking function. (2 marks)**

**Total=/6**

**Evaluation Practice**

The Great 2014 Celebrity Nude Photos Leak is only the beginning

There will always be another leak, because there is always curiosity in the bodies of naked celebrity women. There is always danger in being an Other

Privacy is a privilege. It is rarely enjoyed by women or transgender men and women, queer people or people of color. When you are an Other, you are always in danger of having your body or some other intimate part of yourself exposed in one way or another. A stranger reaches out and touches a pregnant woman’s belly. A man walking down the street offers an opinion on a woman’s appearance or demands her to smile. A group of teenagers driving by as a person of color walks on a sidewalk shout racial slurs, interrupting their quiet.

For most people, privacy is little more than an illusion, one we create so we can feel less vulnerable as we move through the world, so we can believe some parts of ourselves are sacred and free from uninvited judgement. The further away you are from living as a white, heterosexual, middle-class man, the less privacy you enjoy – the more likely your illusions of privacy will be shattered when you least expect it.

For celebrities, privacy is utterly nonexistent. You are asked intrusive questions about your personal life. You can be photographed at any moment. Your family is investigated, photographed or harassed daily – parents, children, sometimes even siblings also losing any idea of privacy simply because you share the same blood or name. Celebrity is, in some ways, an infection that is only slightly beneficial.

We’re not going to cry for celebrities, of course, not really. When you choose that life, you must sacrifice certain dignities for the privilege of fame, of fortune. For the most part, these intrusions on privacy are all in good fun, fodder for gossip magazines and websites – because ... celebrities, they’re just like us! They go to the grocery store! They drink coffee! They wear sweatpants! Celebrities are just like us until they aren’t, until such intrusion involves the celebrity woman’s body, in intimate poses, splayed across the internet for delight and debate.

On Sunday, a user on 4chan made good on a promise made several days ago [and leaked nude and otherwise revealing photos of Jennifer Lawrence, Lea Michele, Kate Upton, Kirsten Dunst, Hope Solo and other famous young women](http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/sep/01/nude-photos-of-jennifer-lawrence-and-others-posted-online-by-alleged-hacker). This leak is likely only the beginning. Because there will always be another leak, because there is a curiosity when it comes to the nude celebrity woman’s body. She puts herself in the public eye and, in turn, we are entitled to see as much of her as we so desire, or so I am sure the excuse goes.

It goes without saying that there aren’t many nude photos of men being released. Men are largely free to bare their bodies as they choose without repercussion, unless, as is the case of Dave Franco with Allison Brie, the man happens to be in a picture with a young woman, caught in the crossfire.

It’s not clear what the people who leak these photos hope to achieve beyond financial gain and a moment of fame. The why of these questions is hardly relevant. These hackers are not revealing anything the general public does not already know. BREAKING: beneath their clothes, celebrities are naked.

What these people are doing is reminding women that, no matter who they are, they are still women. They are forever vulnerable.

This exploitative exposure of women’s naked bodies is not an issue that only famous women must deal with. Celebrities are just like us after all. This practice is so common that it even has its own name – [revenge porn](http://nymag.com/news/features/sex/revenge-porn-2013-7/), nude photos and explicit videos unleashed on the internet, most often by bitter ex-lovers. Lives have been, if not ruined, irreparably harmed, because we are a culture that thrives on the hatred of women, of anyone who is Other in some way, of anyone who dares to threaten the norm.

The Great Celebrity Naked Photo Leak of 2014 – or perhaps we should call it The Great Celebrity Naked Photo Leak of August 2014, given that this happens so often that there won’t be only one this year – is meant to remind women of their place. Don’t get too high and mighty, ladies. Don’t step out of line. Don’t do anything to upset or disappoint men who feel entitled to your time, bodies, affection or attention. Your bared body can always be used as a weapon against you. Your bared body can always be used to shame and humiliate you. Your bared body is at once desired and loathed.

This is what we must remember. Women cannot be sexual in certain ways without consequence. Women cannot pose nude or suggestively, whether for a lover or themselves, without consequence. We are never allowed to forget how the rules are different girls. I suppose we should be grateful for this latest reminder.

Summarising Questions

1. Consider the passage as a whole. Summarise in your own words why the writer thinks women’s bodies are under scrutiny in today’s society. (**3 marks)**

2. a) Who might be interested in reading this article? Consider age, interests, gender, nationality, background. **(2 marks)**

b) What might they enjoy about it?

 **(2 marks)**

c) What is the genre of this text? **(1 mark)**

d) What is the purpose of this text? **(1 mark)**

Effectiveness Questions

Referring in detail to two techniques employed in the passage, how effective is the writer in conveying her disgust for the treatment of women’s bodies by society? **(4 marks)**

Teenage kicks? Today’s young people are too focused on the future

As a teacher, I can see the rise in ‘generation sensible’ – and no wonder with all the pressure young people face

When I tell people that I am a secondary school teacher there is one standard response: disbelief. This is usually followed by comments about how “tough” working with teenagers must be, as I am transformed, before their eyes, from a miniscule 5’2” woman into a drill sergeant. My protests that my students are lovely, hard-working and that I enjoy my work are taken as signs of a saint-like modesty.

It is an almost universal belief that teenagers are trouble. Yet as new figures from the [Department of Health show](http://www.thesundaytimes.co.uk/sto/news/article1459171.ece), the idea of a misspent youth is fast disappearing. Teenagers today are less likely to take drugs, smoke and drink. And over the past 40 years, and especially the past 15, teen pregnancy rates have been in decline, while abortion rates for under-18s have also fallen. Seemingly, anything mum and dad got up to is now considered out-of-date and pathetic-even sex, drugs and rock and roll.

This is the Facebook generation. We pity them for living out every moment of their lives online, a practice that damages their ability to get wasted on cheap cider on a dull Friday night, because they’re worried about the public consequences.

Logging their entire lives on Instagram, Twitter or whatever other web thingy they’re using this week, they’ll be forever stalked by youthful wrongdoings we could once happily leave behind.

Thanks to social media, teenage misbehaviour can exist for eternity for future employers, lovers and in-laws to judge them by.

Teenagers’ good behaviour is also being influenced by increased alcohol and cigarette prices, greater promotion of health risks, better sex education in schools and more readily available contraception.

Generation sensible is on the rise and good luck to them. For them, a great deal is at stake.

QUESTION

Referring in detail to two techniques employed in the passage, how effective is the writer in presenting this generation as more level-headed than previous teenagers?  **(4 marks)**

Educating the East End has changed my life

Channel 4’s series inspired me to become a teacher. I was proud to be part of something that puts to bed tired stereotypes about teachers and teenagers

Nicky Morgan, the new education secretary, said recently [that she thinks teachers have an image problem](http://www.telegraph.co.uk/education/educationnews/11065894/Gove-set-out-the-reforms.-Im-pursuing-them.html). She even suggested that our popularity in the public domain has sunk to the gutter levels occupied by MPs. I have worked in both industries and think the secretary of state should know I receive a vastly different reaction when I tell people I am a teacher compared with when I said I worked anywhere near one of her “respectable” colleagues.

I do agree that the public may not always understand just how challenging work in schools can be. Documentaries about schools are vital as they raise awareness of this in the public eye. Then again, I could be biased. Channel 4’s Educating... series changed my life. There, I’ve said it. I cannot walk down a street in east London without someone shouting “bantaah” or “So what did you get in your observation?” A stranger hugged me outside Sainsbury’s. While these changes have all been great there is one that stands out above all others: the Educating... series is responsible for pointing me in the direction of a career in teaching.

It was back in 2011 when I finally decided to put an end to my short and unsuccessful political career. I realised I needed a change when being interviewed for a job to work for someone I found totally uninspiring. It clearly showed. The interviewer became increasingly annoyed with me. “You don’t want to work with us, do you?” It was shortly after this I came across [Educating Essex](http://www.theguardian.com/tv-and-radio/2011/sep/22/tv-review-educating-essex) and was instantly hooked. As I watched the unrelenting [Mr Drew](http://www.theguardian.com/tv-and-radio/2011/sep/29/educating-essex-teachers-passmores) patrolling the corridors of Passmores Academy, it became clear that I was having an epiphany. Gone were the strict yet spiritless teachers I remembered from school. The staff on my television screen were dedicated, humorous and passionate about improving the lives of the children in their classroom. These were people I could get on board with. These were the people I could see making the difference in our society I was so desperate to make myself. The next day I applied to become a teacher.

The programme sheds light on the daily challenges we face from challenging pupils, outside forces beyond our control and a workload that increases incessantly. Teachers are often seen as an easy target for ministers and politicians to score some quick political points off, causing parental anxieties about children’s futures. They portray us all as liberals who love nothing more than going on strike for a day. The TV series changed all that. Every message of support I’ve received since being on the show is a message for all my dedicated colleagues who want what I want: to allow children to succeed, wherever they come from.

Equally, [Educating the East End](http://www.theguardian.com/tv-and-radio/2014/sep/05/educating-east-end-review-funny-inspirational) has also shone a light on the inspiring ideals of community education. [Frederick Bremer](http://www.bremer.org.uk/) school is not part of an academy chain that champions results on a piece of paper rather than the development of the whole child. The school is a kaleidoscope of races, social groups and religions; 93% of our pupils live within two miles of the school gates. It truly is a school in the heart of the community.

Most of all, viewers get a true view of an east London teenager. The stereotypical “gangsta” isn’t present. The public is able to see what I see on a daily basis: engaging, often well-spoken, sometimes angry teenagers trying to make sense of the world they live in. The wonderfully charismatic Tawny, who wanted to achieve her dream of being an actress or a singer not through instant X Factor-style fame but through learning her craft the old-fashioned way. The eccentric and vulnerable Acacia, who was a pillar of strength even though her home life had been turned upside down. The loveable Halil, the confident Lemar and the quirky Joshua. These young people will go on to shape our society and I, for one, think the future is bright.

What the series shows is that the children at our school, while all incredibly special, are not unique in this regard – fundamentally, these descriptions could be applied to adolescents up and down the UK. We have a wealth of talent and exciting prospects in our schools. The cynics and naysayers, though few in number, will attack teachers, teenagers and community education, but I am proud that I was part of something that puts to bed tired and untrue stereotypes. Besides, as the kids would say, haters gonna hate.

**National 5 Educating East End Questions**

1. In your own words, explain why the writer thinks documentaries about schools are important (paragraph 2). **(1 mark)**
2. How does the writer use word choice to demonstrate his initial reaction to Educating Essex? (Paragraph 3) **(2 marks)**
3. In your own words, explain what the writer thinks the Educating series shows the public (Paragraph 4). **(3 marks)**
4. Explain how the writer uses sentence structure in paragraph 5 to show how important the school is to the surrounding area. **(2 marks)**
5. Explain how the writer uses imagery in paragraph 6 to show his admiration for one of his pupils. **(2 marks)**
6. How does the writer create a more conversational tone in the final lines of the passage? **(2 marks)**
7. Referring in detail to two aspect of style from the passage, how effective is the writer in presenting the Educating series in a positive manner? **(4 marks)**

**Total: 16 marks**