

Department of English and Literacy

Higher RfUAE Understanding and Analysis Practice

**Activity Instructions:**

1. Read through each text
2. In your own words, summarise the writer’s main points
3. Identify the tone of the article and explain how it is created
4. Identify the writer’s attitude towards the subject
5. Find, quote and explain 3 - 5 examples of the writer’s language techniques
6. Find 3 - 5 words you don’t know and find out the meaning

**Text 1: Tuition fees are just one of the financial hurdles facing young people**

Letting kids leave school with no financial skills is unacceptable.

THE depth of feeling in Scotland over tuition fee rises south of the Border highlights the anger among school leavers and students fearing a future blighted by debt.

Proposed tuition fee rises for students in England have sparked protests in Edinburgh, Glasgow and elsewhere in Scotland that have caught many off guard, even with doubts hanging over the future of university funding north of the Border. But the only surprise is that it's taken this long for a simmering anger at having to clear up the mess created by older generations to manifest itself.

Tuition fees lit the touch-paper, but the anger comes from the obstacles facing young people denied the opportunities that older generations have taken for granted, whether it's employment, free education, housing or financial security in general.

It all comes down to the bottom line - the burdensome debt that threatens to undermine the hopes and prospects of millions in their teens and early twenties who are bearing the brunt of the crunch. Research last week by Royal Bank of Scotland and the Prince's Trust found that the number of 16 to 24-year-olds claiming unemployment benefit has jumped fourfold from 5,840 in 2008 to more than 25,800 this year.

In all there are an estimated 36,200 unemployed Scots between 20 and 24, a 12-year high.

Nearly 750,000 under-25s went to Citizens Advice for help last year, a record figure that has doubtless been eclipsed in 2010. About 80 per cent of inquiries concerned debt, benefits, housing and employment problems.

This is just the tip of the iceberg when it comes to young people needing help and guidance on financial matters. There is still too little support for those leaving school or higher education and having to make their way at a time of growing unemployment, benefit cuts and rising housing costs.

One welcome initiative is being rolled out this weekend by youth charity Young Scot, which is opening a number of "Crossroads Cafes" offering young people access to free advice from experts on a range of issues.

The first cafe will be open today in Edinburgh's Ocean Terminal, where experts will be on hand to discuss issues including finance, employment and housing. It's the kind of simple, practical service that is needed but in desperately short supply.

The need exists partly because of a continued failure to provide the basic financial education in schools that equips every single school leaver with the tools needed to negotiate the financial minefield on to which they are stepping.

Letting kids leave school without a basic understanding of finance - whether it's the way credit cards work, how interest rolls up, saving money or just general financial management - is no longer acceptable.

There is a view that these skills should be taught only in the university of life; not only has that approach clearly failed, however, but as the challenges facing young people become more daunting and complex, it's entirely outdated.

Access to financial guidance and information has never been more important. The adult generation that enjoyed free education, generous pensions, a genuine welfare safety net and affordable housing are denying young people the same privileges and bequeathing an almighty mess.

The least they can do is equip the school leavers and students of today with the tools they need to surmount the obstacles they face.

**Text 2: Snowbound Scotland: What emotions come to the fore in a prolonged cold-snap?**

The prolonged cold snap prompts us to wonder about the range of emotions, from delight to dread, snow evokes

The snow may paint a pretty picture but how does it appeal to us in the long run?

THE FIRST fall of snow is not only an event, it is a magical event.

You go to bed in one kind of world and wake up in another quite different, and if that is not enchantment then where is it to be found?" The words of JB Priestley, author of An Inspector Calls, is as good a place as any to start an investigation into the transcendental qualities of snow.

Of course, for many people this week the billions of ice crystals that have tumbled from the sky have been less an enchantment than a curse.

So in a bid to disarm them of the ice-packed snowballs, no doubt patiently pitted with bits of grit and tiny stones, which they would choose to hurl at those of us who still see the snow and smile instead of frown, we'll deal with their complaints first then usher them shivering on their way.

For who cannot have sympathy for those thousands of drivers trapped in a seemingly endless column of cars on the M8 and surrounding roads for 12 hours or more? Or parents such as Natalie Singer who was separated from her children when they had to bed down in Hamilton College in South Lanarkshire after becoming trapped by snow and gridlock. But traffic chaos shouldn't define what for hundreds of thousands if not millions of us has been a wintery delight.

Our gardens have been draped in a blanket of white, the last of the ugly autumn leaves now tucked out of sight. The trees, previously bare, are now finely dressed with frost and ice. The grey stone of our towns and cities has been given a fresh lick of colour, or, indeed, the absence of colour. For it is just one of the magical properties of snow that it is clear, but appears white because of the manner in which the whole spectrum of light is reflected by each crystal.

Another of its enchanted properties is that freshly fallen snow brings a stillness, an intense silence to a spot, caused by the manner in which the air between the flakes traps sound waves and stills vibration. Since all it takes is two centimetres of snow to alter the acoustics of a landscape, the effect of the 20 centimetres (more than 7½in) that fell on Monday has been to turn Scotland into a softer, quieter nation. A brighter one too, for as snow reflects light, our days now glow, while each night the sky appears as if illuminated by a spectral backlight.

From my office window in Glasgow I can see out towards the Campsie Hills, which seem to pulse with light, while the Kilpatrick Hills in the further distance do the same magical shimmer.

Edinburgh, meanwhile, has been rendered even more beautiful with its statues cloaked in white and the regal Castle now snow-crowned. I only wish I could see the mini-icebergs clinking in Canna Bay in the Inner Hebrides. What is it about white that cleans up the world? Imagine if snow were black and shudder, the satellite picture of our nation wouldn't look nearly as good.

While snow may grind certain forms of transport (cars, trains, planes etc) to a halt, it gives licence to a few others, most popular of which is the sledge. In an age of pixilated pleasures derived almost solely from the sofa and its devilish partner the computer or television screen, there is something to be said for the Luddite thrill of whizzing down a hill with nothing more separating you from friction burns and frost-bite than an over-sized plastic shovel or a wooden board.

On route to work each morning I pass a steep hill from which so many shouts of delight echo out that I'm tempted to shove the little critters off and hijack the sled for my own amusement. Snow is an opportunity to return to the pursuits of Our Wullie and The Broons.

So why when it's minus ten degrees and treacherous underfoot do we actively want to go for a walk in the park? It's simply we have been given an opportunity to see the world anew. There is a beauty in the landscape and a pleasurable sensation in the walk. Each breath is sharp and cold and reminds you of what it is to be alive. The fact that you have to be cautious with each step forces you out of that frantic and endless mental sprint between the past and future and forces us to appreciate the present. In another of its enchanted qualities snow gives us the gift of "now". It also reintroduces us to our homes, which are never so warm and toasty as upon a return from a cold hard tramp.

Yet for a property so cold and wet, snow has an uncanny ability to rekindle qualities such as camaraderie and a sense of community. Surely, I'm not alone in noticing that smiles are more frequent even if they are accompanied by theatrical shivers from neighbours and passers-by. We may stop and complain about the cold, but we stop and talk too. When cars skid to a halt we all lend a hand to push them on their way, unless, of course they happen to be the driver of an Audi 4X4 who, having found himself in difficulty outside Morrisons sought assistance by angrily shouting to passers-by: "Haw you, gie's a hand." Regardless of the weather, manners still count.

So the snow has given us the opportunity to carry out countless small acts of kindness, fetching a neighbour's shopping, collecting a friend's children from school and no few acts of heroism such as those of Robert Steele, who when he encountered a boy crying in a stranded car after his mother had a stroke at the wheel, managed to circumvent the gridlock and drive them to Glasgow's Stobhill Hospital, saving her life. Then there was Christine Dryden who managed to knock out 125 fish dinners on her own stranded teachers and pupils in Hamilton.

Each of us have our own response to this world of white. On one hand, you can’t help but picture those old and alone who risk shattered hips to pick their way across a sheet of ice to collect their weekly shopping. For that is the dark side to our winter wonderland. Pensioners wondering if they can afford to heat their homes or make it to the corner shop, wondering – as a few did yesterday – whether upon eventual arrival they would find any milk.

On the southside of Glasgow, on errands for my mother-in-law, I tried five shops before discovering the last three small cartons of milk at Greggs. When corner shops start to have a few shelves reminiscent of Communist Russia, the public start to curse the weather.

Yet one thing is for certain, this too shall pass. Snow can be what you make of it, an inconvenience or a delight, a scraped path or a snowman, but later if not sooner it will disappear and we may miss it yet, for as Sir Walter Scott said: "We build statues out of snow, and weep to see them melt."

**Text 3: Women mean business**

THE dollar is falling, the markets are crashing and the Spice Girls have cancelled the rest of their world tour. As the effects of the American sub-prime mortgage crisis continue to be felt around the globe, it seems as if only a superhero could rescue us from the horrors of full-blown recession in the UK. But what if that superhero was a woman, or indeed an entire female workforce? Could women save the world from recession?

This is one of the many questions that co-authors Avivah Wittenberg-Cox and Alison Maitland set out to discover in their new book, Why Women Mean Business: Understanding the Emergence of Our Next Economic Revolution. Women, they argue, are an integral part of today's business world, they are its economic future.

"Women are now driving growth across the developed world and they're the engine of growth," says Maitland, who formerly wrote for the Financial Times and who is a senior visiting fellow in the faculty of management at Cass Business School at London's City University.

"There really is a compelling business case now for why women have become the most talented pool in the workforce. Don't forget, 59 per cent of our graduates now are female."

Maitland and Wittenberg-Cox call this "womenomics". They point to statistics such as the fact that women make 80 per cent of consumer purchasing decisions, and a recent UK government report that suggested the country could gain £23 billion by better harnessing women's skills.

They argue that no business, large or small, can afford to ignore the growing economic power and potential of women in the 21st century. While such ideas may have some traditionalists up in arms, the book is littered with ringing endorsements from senior British business figures – and yes, they are mainly men.

Larry Hirst, chief executive of IBM UK, is quoted as saying: "The emerging force of women in the 21st century is part of major social and economic change, which has to be acknowledged by any organisation looking for a competitive edge."

Wittenberg-Cox, who is the chief executive of consultancy 20-First, adds: "Womenomics isn't just a women's issue, it's an economic and political issue. It's an issue for every business, and companies who are waking up to this notion are realising it gives them an enormous competitive advantage. Women have for too long been dismissed as a minority, which they have never been."

And yet women remain a minority at the higher levels of the business world, particularly in the boardroom. There are still only three FTSE-100 companies with female chief executives (Marjorie Scardino at publishing group Pearson, Clara Furse at the London Stock Exchange and Cynthia Carroll at mining conglomerate Anglo American) and only 11 Fortune 500 companies with female managers in the US. Improvements may be taking place, but they are happening at an extremely sluggish pace. The book predicts that, unless things change radically, by 2016 no more than 6 per cent of the managers of the Fortune 1000 – the list of America's largest companies – will be women.

"It's what we call 'gender asbestos'," says Wittenberg-Cox. "Rather than the glass ceiling, we believe that it's something that gets into the walls and the structures and the systems and the processes of companies. They're built on 20th-century male-dominated models, and while many companies are actively anti-discrimination, there still remains a lot of unintended bias against women."

It's an issue that's gathering pace. Prowess, the women's enterprise organisation, will this week hold its international conference, where one of the subjects under discussion will be the impact of a 2003 Norwegian law that made it compulsory for the boards of publicly listed companies to be 40 per cent female. Could such legislation work here?

Jackie Brierton, director of policy at Prowess, says: "Ideally (legislating is] not what you want to do, but when you look at how things are panning out in the UK and how long it takes to get change, you think, 'We can't wait that long.'

"There's a whole generation of women coming up now who have much higher expectations about the workplace, but if they're going to find the door barred in the same way women have for the past 30 years, that's a really frightening prospect. It's getting to the stage where we do need to look at a legislative framework around the equality issue. It's not just about female representation, but about equal pay as well. But no-one wants to be in a position where we have to do it."

So if the answer is to be less dramatic than legislation, then what needs to happen, say Maitland and Wittenberg-Cox, is a change in the entire way companies do business.

"One example you might take is the way companies deal with high-flyers. Often they're being put forward for leadership training and really being pushed to achieve during an incredibly narrow age band of 28 to 35," says Maitland. "By doing that, companies are unintentionally working against women, because often that is absolutely the point where they're starting a family, their child-bearing years, so they're juggling having a family with their next big career move.

"So one of our suggestions is to widen that narrow age band. There are many people who, towards the end of their career, are able to travel more, have better leadership skills, more experience. Their fifties is a great decade for women. Companies should be exploiting that. It will help them in the long run."

So, can women save the world from recession?

"The best answer to that is another question," says Wittenberg-Cox. "If there were more women in the financial services industry, and had been over the past ten years, would we be in the mess we're in today? We don't know the answer, but I would hazard a guess that we wouldn't be."

**Text 4: William and Kate: reason to be cheerful?**

At least for one day next year the only thing the nation will think about cutting is a wedding cake. But will a marriage of two royal sweethearts really manage to lift the mood of austerity Britain?

As we contemplate the blasted wasteland of Britain in recession, with the prospect of 500,000 public sector job cuts looming, where exactly in the shrinking list of reasons to be cheerful should we fit the Royal Wedding? Ardent fans, already unfurling their Union flags and polishing the obligatory red, white and blue plastic bowler hat, would hoist it to the top of the happiness totaliser. Critics, meanwhile, view it as a dark cloud rather than a ray of sunshine, one whose imminent downpour will wash away more public money.

What of the rest of us, will we take pleasure in the young couple's happiness? Or merely view them as we would any other couple who met at university and to whose wedding we are not invited, – that is to say, with indifference? According to Boris Johnson, the Mayor of London: "Everybody is pleased. In a weird way, a royal wedding cheers everyone up." Precedence says he has a point and that we will care, but not quite as much as in the past.

When the Queen married Prince Philip in 1947, it was against a backdrop of austerity today's generation could only imagine, one subject to strict rationing, but then the Royal Wedding was a reason to celebrate – a burst of colour in a grey world. Few begrudged the young princess the extra ration coupons required to obtain the material from which Norman Hartnell created her dress. After all, two years previously men were giving their lives for King and Country, now in peace all that was required was a garment, and patriotism remained high.

At the time Charles and Diana wed in 1981 there were riots in the streets and unemployment had risen to 2.5 million – sound familiar? Then again, Royalty remained firmly on its pedestal, although the divorce of Princess Margaret had wobbled it a little. Since then divorce, tapped phone calls, and long-lens photographs by the press have soundly knocked Royalty off its perch. No longer are they viewed as our betters, merely richer. For many the soap opera of William and Kate's will-they-won't-they is merely an extension of our obsession with celebrity culture, granted one played out in grander homes.

Yet it is this appetite for escaping our lives by focusing on those of others that might drive us to take refuge from reality in the nuptials. Peter York, social commentator and author of Peter York's Eighties and The Official Sloane Ranger Handbook, believes there is currently a public appetite for escapism mirroring that of the early 1980s. "There's a lot of it around right now – Downton Abbey is about all that," he says of the hit ITV1 drama, recently shown in England and Wales. "In 1981 you had something similar with Brideshead Revisited."

Nonetheless, York suspects the Palace will be keen not to overdo the ostentatious bling lest it prove too much for hard-up subjects. "I think they'll be careful about how they do it," he says. "They'll be taking soundings about how far to go." After enduring a deep economic recession followed by painful spending cuts, surely it's about time Britain had a reason to be cheerful. Phillip Hodson, Fellow of the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy, comments that while "cynics" will say the announcement is well-timed, we'll all inevitably feel more cheerful. "The Royal Family are a soap opera: a multigenerational dysfunctional unit, which we all recognise in ourselves – even if we do occasionally feel jealous of their wealth," he says.

For the same reason that a global television audience of 750 million tuned in to see Charles and Diana get married in 1981, a staggering number will doubtless gather around their TV sets on one as-yet-to-be-named day in spring/summer 2011. "This announcement makes us think of our children, our friends, and everyone we know who's in love. The emotion surrounding this event will be like Strictly Come Dancing and X Factor multiplied by 100. It will be a joy - a pageant, party, and show wrapped into one," says Hodson. "And since we're an ageing nation, there will be huge sentimentality among older people towards it."

But how deep do such sentiments go? According to Oliver Burkeman, author of How to Become Slightly Happier and Get a Bit More Done, it's hard to measure. He even suggests that a major royal wedding could actually have a negative consequence on the nation's mood. "Happiness is largely based on comparing ourselves with other people. Among people who aren't huge fans of the monarchy to start with, a lavish and expensive wedding could quite easily make people feel worse about their own situation." He believes there could even be anger. "There will be resentment towards Kate about her inherited wealth from her family, and her husband. It's fine when we're all feeling OK about our lives, but when people are choosing between the car and the kids, so to speak, it's tricky to feel joy for others."

Yet hard facts and cold cash point to the national benefit of a royal wedding. When Charles and Diana wed the public were given an extra bank holiday, and while business leaders may groan if, as is more than likely, one is given next year, even critics enjoy an extra lie-in.

Tourism is expected to receive an extra boost. Sandie Dawe, head of VisitBritain says: ''The Royal Wedding is set to deliver a welcome boost not just to the tourism industry in London but across Britain. It will give VisitBritain a wonderful opportunity to showcase Britain in the lead up to the 2012 Games.

"We are already talking to the rights-holding broadcasters and the marriage in 2011 gives a further unparalleled chance to tell the world what we have to offer as a tourism destination." William and Kate are a modern couple. They go to nightclubs and they are outdoor people which gives us the chance to talk about these activities on offer to overseas visitors. Kate seems to shop on the high street which is very accessible. "The wedding dress will give us a chance to highlight our designers while the wedding gifts will showcase our outstanding craftspeople, potters, glass and textiles. All of this helps us tell the story of contemporary Britain. It is the most wonderful publicity boost for the country.''

And then when it’s over, when the streamers are swept up, the bowler hats put away and the prince and his newly acquired princess depart on their honeymoon, austerity Britain will still be there with plenty with which to turn smiles into frowns.

**Text 5: Hollywood shuns intelligent entertainment. The games industry doesn't. Guess who's winning?**

LA Noire and Portal 2 are video games that challenge the mind instead of the thumbs

Do you remember the days when you used to be able to head out to the cinema safe in the knowledge that even if the film you wanted to see had sold out, there'd be something else worth watching? I'm talking about 10,000 years ago, obviously, because here's what's on at your local multiplex.

Screen one: a 3D CGI cartoon about a wisecracking badger with attitude you'd quite happily reverse a six-tonne tractor over. Screen two: a 3D superhero theme park ride that thinks it's King Lear. Screen three: a rom-com so formulaic you suspect it was created from a template on Moonpig.com. Screen four: The Very Hungry Caterpillar 3D. Screen five: all of the above, randomly intercut with one another because no one's paying attention anyway. Screen six: a lightshow for cattle. And so on.

About once a month there's a film actually worth bothering with: either something with a quirky sensibility and a modest budget, or the occasional decent blockbuster the studios have made by mistake. There seems to be something missing from cinema: big budget dramas with panache, aimed at an adult audience. Where are they? They migrated to television. And – don't snort with derision here – to video games.

Consider two of the biggest video games of 2011 thus far. The first is Portal 2, a darkly humorous science fiction . . . what? Story? Puzzle? Game? "Experience" seems like the best word to use, even though typing that makes me feel like shoving my fist in my mouth to punch my brain from an unexpected angle. The game mechanics of Portal 2 are almost impossible to describe without diagrams, but I'll try: you wander around a 3D environment trying to escape a series of rooms by firing magic holes on to the walls or floor; holes you can walk or fall through. So if I fire a hole on to the ceiling, and another on to the ground, I can jump through the ground and re-appear falling through the ceiling. This simple dynamic provides the basis for a series of fiendishly clever puzzles you find yourself working through – all of it tied into a humorous narrative that unfolds with more confidence, charm and sophistication than was strictly necessary. And before you whine about the solitary nature of games, it also includes a cooperative two-player mode in which you and a friend play through a parallel game together. The whole thing is stunningly clever and immensely enjoyable.

And then there's LA Noire, the James Ellroy-inspired crime drama, which has caused a stir, and rightly so, with its firm focus on narrative and staggering new facial animation technology. I'm a massive dweeb who keeps up with the latest gaming developments, and even I was astounded at what they've pulled off here. You're watching actors give genuine performances – within something that is still defiantly and unapologetically a video game. The lead character is played by Aaron Staton, AKA Ken Cosgrove from Mad Men – and is instantly recognisable, not just from his likeness, but also his facial mannerisms. Amusingly, plenty of his fellow Mad Men cast members also show up throughout the game (as well as faces familiar from shows such as Heroes and Fringe), reinforcing the overall feel of the game. If you've never played a game, or you think you hate them – but my description sounds vaguely appealing, give it a spin. Just watch someone else play it for a while if you like. I guarantee you'll be surprised.

And what really made me excited, thinking about both of these games, is that behind the state-of-the-art technology they both make use of (which has a level of sophistication that might come as a blinding shock to anyone who hasn't played a game since 1996), they're both old-fashioned video games at heart – not old-fashioned in the finger-twitching, reaction-testing Space Invaders sense, but something richer, something often overlooked by the population at large: old-fashioned video games that challenge the mind instead of the thumbs.

The size, scope, and sheer self-assurance of LA Noire marks a major comeback for adventure games – for interactive fiction – and, potentially, a huge leap forward for wider acceptance of the medium as a whole.

Somehow Portal 2 and LA Noire manage to be more cinematic than a great deal of contemporary cinema – while being something entirely different, something with the phrase "I LOVE VIDEO GAMES" embedded in their DNA like a cheerful slogan through a stick of rock. These are not replacements for films, but something thrillingly different. Gaming's ongoing push into the mainstream consciousness has entered a bold new phase – by appealing to the players' intelligence and imagination, it's starting to make Hollywood look embarrassing.

**Text 6: A golden opportunity for Britain to lead the world in energy production**

The government's bold commitment to new sources of power is welcome. But we must not botch it this time

This week, our leaders are expected to commit Britain to a civic overhaul that no other nation has had the courage – or recklessness, depending on your viewpoint – to contemplate. On Tuesday, the cabinet is set to approve measures that will lead to a revolution in power generation, transport, house construction, planning, manufacturing and farming in Britain over the next 20 years. The aim is to mitigate the worst ravages of global warming.

The proposals form the basis of the fourth budget of the Committee on Climate Change and will be presented for cabinet consideration this week so they can be made law by the end of June. Initial hostility from business secretary Vince Cable and from Treasury officials, who fear funds needed for economic recovery are being wasted on projects of no immediate benefit, has been swept aside. Soon, we will be committed to the basic, radical goal of cutting carbon dioxide emissions to around 390m tonnes a year by 2027.

Other nations have made emission commitments, but most have planned no further than the end of this decade. The Committee on Climate Change's budget takes Britain 10 years further down the line. As its chief executive, David Kennedy, says: "We have moved into uncharted territory and we are going to be watched, carefully, by other countries. No one else has a target like this."

The budget is therefore not just one of domestic importance, it is of international significance. Hence the support of foreign secretary William Hague, who has made plain his backing for the budget. According to the committee, by 2027, we should be generating 40% of our electricity from renewable sources (currently only a few per cent) and 40% from nuclear plants (roughly double its present level). The remainder will come from coal, gas and oil plants, with the crucial caveat that most will be connected to carbon capture and storage (CCS) systems that will trap their carbon dioxide emissions and pump them underground for safe storage.

With that kind of kit, Britain can free itself from its dependence on fossil fuels and seriously cut back on harmful heating carbon emissions, says the committee. The obvious point is that most of this hardware does not exist yet. Only one or two pilot plants are in operation at present. This is unproven technology.

Similarly, it is clear that the goal of generating 40% of our electricity from renewables cannot be met through our current obsession with building onshore wind farms. There is not enough land on the British Isles to provide homes for them. We will need other sources of renewable power. Tidal power plants and wave energy generators are two particularly promising candidates, though again the technologies involved are unproved.

And that might seem remiss. Relying on power sources, that have still to be developed, looks naïve: an apparent mistake that will certainly be pounced on by those who deny that fossil fuels are dangerous, and that we need to wean ourselves of their use. We are taxing ourselves to sustain an unrealistic ecological dream, they argue.

The argument is unfair, however. The very fact that many of these technologies are still in development offers us a key advantage. Over the past four decades, Britain has amassed a great deal of marine engineering experience following the exploitation of North Sea oil, for example. That expertise is precisely the kind needed to build up a strong offshore wind turbine industry in the UK.

The same is true for both tidal and wave power plants. The seas around Britain have some of the strongest tides in the world and are ripe for exploitation. Generating devices are still at a relatively primitive development stage, though plans have been announced for trials of tidal devices in Islay and Orkney. These are reckoned to have considerable promise. They will need careful and costly nurture, however.

The crucial point is that by acting in a timely manner in facing up to climate change, Britain has given itself a chance to take pole position in the development of a range of renewable technologies which could then be sold round the world. For that, the government deserves congratulations. Passing the carbon budget is just the start, however, for it is equally clear that if we want to exploit these opportunities we will need to adopt a far more realistic attitude to the generation of power than we have in the past.

In the 20th century, Britain was given crucial leads that we should have used to build up other types of energy generation. We squandered them instead. Calder Hall, in Cumbria, was the first atom plant to supply power to a national grid, for example. However, development of the next generation of UK nuclear stations – the advanced gas-cooled reactor – was botched. As a result, Britain's tranche of atom plants will be either French or American.

Similarly, we should have taken a lead in wind turbine development, given the gusty meteorological conditions of these islands but again we fluffed the chance. As a result, the wind farms that dot the countryside consist of turbines that are made in Denmark or Germany.

The new carbon budget gives Britain a chance to cut its emissions bill, establish energy security for the nation for the next century – and develop a range of new industries. The last on this list is arguably the most important – and the most vulnerable.

**Text 7: Cultural desert: the art scene of Marfa, Texas**

It's a tiny ranching community – and the art capital of far west Texas. With its galleries and gourmet food spots, the one-horse town of Marfa is firmly on the map

"You have to reinvent yourself when you come here," Joni Marginot says, blinking furiously as hot gritty wind attacks our eyes, "because life as you knew it can't exist in a place like this."

"This" is Marfa, one of a handful of tiny towns in one of the least populated, most isolated corners of the US. And Joni is one of the locals. The Trans-Pecos region of far western Texas is 82,000 sq km of uncompromising wilderness, with the New Mexico state line to the north and the Mexican border, hugged for 1,600km by the fabled Rio Grande, on its western and southern flanks. Here brutal mountain ranges and sun-grizzled deserts seem to play on a loop. It's the kind of landscape you glance down at from your plane seat and wonder, could anyone live there?

It takes me four hours to drive to Marfa. South-east out of El Paso (the region's biggest city) the sprawl of auto repair shops and Mexican cantinas quickly falls away as the sky rears up and the long, heat-hazed highways suck me forward. The sense of space is absolute and immediate: here golden eagles soar and the police are on speeders like glue.

Marfa, when I get there, turns out to be unexpectedly small. "Just a four-way stop, and not even a proper one," as one local puts it. But the single main street, lined with impressive civic buildings leading up to a gracious court house (built 1886), echoes Marfa's glory days as county seat and watering hole for the railroad company.

Look closer, though, and you see many of these buildings are empty. When the trains stopped coming, Marfa fell into a decline and the high desert plains crept in. But then an unlikely thing happened: tiny, isolated Marfa became funky art capital of the west. It started in 1979 with Donald Judd, a renowned minimalist artist who moved here from New York, apparently making quite an impression as he wandered around this poor, ranching community dressed in a kilt and playing the bagpipes.

These days, it's not tumbleweed but cultural tourists rolling down Marfa's streets, and galleries have sprung up all over town. Many ventures disappear as fast as they arrive – as local journalist Sterry Butcher puts it: "We're an art lookin', not art buyin' town" – but a hardcore of determined creative types remain. Artist and curator Ann Marie Nafziger moved here five years ago. She now works out of Ballroom Marfa, but for the first couple of years she took a job at the Thunderbird Motel, the only work she could find: "It's an adventure living here," she laughs. "Realising that going to a restaurant at 10pm is a luxury. But you give up so much to move here, we want each other to succeed – so we'll all stay."

In Marfa's tight-knit, hard-working community, everyone does at least two jobs and nothing happens unless you make it happen: an empty shop is an opportunity, a creative challenge. Saarin Keck (Maiya's sister) and her husband Ronnie converted an old Studebaker dealership into the Pizza Foundation (pizzafoundation.com); Food Shark's Adam Bork has just opened the Museum of Electronic Wonders and late Night Grilled Cheese Parlour, a pop-up restaurant in a vintage television showroom.

Joni Marginot came to visit from Maryland in 2003, and never left: "I love that there's no McDonald's or Walmart here," she says proudly. "If you're the kind of person who appreciates the funeral parlour that's now a bar [Padre's, padresmarfa.com], or Tumbleweed [tumbleweedlaundry.com], the laundromat with an ice-cream parlour, you'll fit right in."

Nearby, the Trans-Pecos (west of the Pecos river) region has the clearest, darkest skies in North America, making this a top place for star-gazing. The McDonald Observatory (mcdonaldobservatory.org), perched at 2,000m in the nearby Davis Mountains, has some of the biggest telescopes in the world (including the 9.2m Hobby-Eberly). Three times a week, "star party" programmes allow enthusiastic astronomers to show you around their favourite solar systems. Close by, the historic town of Fort Davis (population 1,000) is utterly gorgeous. Century-old wooden buildings line the tiny high street, making me wish I was riding a horse, rather than driving a Chevrolet Impala. I could happily have stayed on at the genteel Hotel Limpia, had another chocolate malted milkshake at the old-fashioned Drug Store across the street, but the road was calling.

We stop for lunch at Kathy's Kosmic Kowgirl Kafe, a hot pink food truck on the road into Terlingua (kathyskosmickowgirlkafe.blogspot.com). Kathy (think Ma Larkin in a cowboy hat) is a hoot and, over excellent burritos, tells hilarious stories about crossing the Rio Grande into Mexico with Mimi – owner of the La Posada Milagro hotel, where I'm to stay that night .

"After 9/11," Kathy says soberly. "Everything changed: the border closed, and our friends and neighbours for years … gone."

I keep my dinner-date with Mimi, one of the friendly locals: it transpires that Mimi had been the girlfriend of a major Mexican drug lord, and was forced to go into an FBI protection programme then on the run for five years, after the drug lord was gunned down. I fall asleep thinking that the population of Terlingua may only be around the 265 mark, but any one of them is probably the most interesting person you'll ever meet.

**Self-check Instructions:**

1. Check your answers against those in the guide (for some of the sections there may be multiple answers or additional answers not included).
2. Analyse your performance in the exercises – note down what are you doing well and what you need help with.

**Text 1: Tuition fees are just one of the hurdles facing young people**

1. Summary

• The writer does not consider it right to leave children without the skills to manage their money and to organise their finances.

• Tuition fees have caused contention and debate and many young people are currently facing debt through poverty and unemployment.

• Initiatives have been set up to help young people, like the Young Scot ‘Crossroads Cafés’ which gives advice to young people.

• The older generations have used the resources of this country and enjoyed having enough of what they needed. They have disadvantaged the youth.

2. Key ideas

• Young people are being treated unfairly and are being disadvantaged. They are not being supported.

• The older generation are not supporting them enough and have used an unfair share of the countries resources.

• Something must be done to help.

3. Attitude: critical/condemning

“Letting kids leave school with no financial skill is unacceptable” – shouldn’t be allowed.

“blighted by debt” – strong language and imagery shows he disagrees.

“Nearly 750,000 under 25’s went to Citizen’s Advice for help last year” – huge statistic showing amount of need.

“This is just the tip of the iceberg” – imagery shows that the problem is hidden and large in size.

“There is still too little support” – the word ‘too’ emphasises the lack of help.

“This approval clearly failed” – ‘failed’ – emotive word to use shows how desperate the situation seems to be and how little support is being given.

4. Tone – indignant/angry/critical/upset

“is unacceptable” – does not felt hat this is right.

“Too little support” – condemning their actions.

“The least they can do” – makes it sound as if they have done nothing to help so far.

Any quotations used above may be acceptable with a good comment.

5. Techniques:

• METAPHOR: “Financial minefield” – really dangerous/perilous/can be easily upset, causing damage.

“Simmering anger” – shows that their anger is fierce and growing stronger like a pot growing hotter as it simmers.

“Tip of the iceberg” – the problem is much larger than it seems and a great deal of it is hidden.

“Lit the touch paper” – touch paper is used to ignite an explosion and their anger is being compared to an explosion which is about to go off. It is clear that people are growing very frustrated.

• ALLITERATION: “bearing the brunt” – bitter tone – emphasises anger.

• FACTS AND FIGURES: “The number of 16 to 24 year olds claiming unemployment benefit has jumped fourfold from 5840 in 2008 to more than 25,800 this year” – shows scale of the crisis.

• PARENTHESIS: “Letting kids leave school without a basic understanding of finance – whether it’s the way credit cards work, how interest rolls up, saving money or just general financial management – is no longer acceptable. – list in parenthesis gives examples of the key basic things that the writer feels that children should be taught.

**Text 2: Snowbound Scotland: What emotions come to the fore in a prolonged cold-snap?**

1. Summary

• The great beauty of snow and its ability to transform the landscape.

• Pity for drivers and the traffic chaos that is caused.

• Snow brings silence and a time of beauty and calm.

• Snow brings out positive qualities in the people of the UK. People find joy in playing in it and walking in it. They are kinder and more caring towards others.

• There are difficulties for pensioners and the vulnerable.

2. Key ideas

• Snow creates beauty and changes the landscape.

• It changes people’s outlook and personalities for the better.

• It can cause disruption and problems for the most vulnerable and on our roads.

3. Attitude: positive/endorsing/admiring

“magical event”/”magical shimmer” – it is something special and out of the ordinary.

“Transcendental qualities” – it can change things in a way that is unexplainable.

“enchanted properties” – it seems like it is casting a spell over the landscape. Everything is changed by it.

“What is it about white that cleans up the world?” – shows that the writer feels that it makes things look tidy, fresh and new.

“gives us the gift of now” – makes us appreciate what is happening at this moment.

“rekindle qualities such as camaraderie and sense of community” – snow forces people to get along and support each other.

“smiles are more frequent” – people are happy more often.

4. Tone – excited/joy/delight

See above for key quotations.

5. Techniques:

• METAPHOR: “enchantment than a curse” – in fairy stories enchantments usually make people fall in love but curses cause disaster. Here snow is considered like an enchantment as it is pleasant and can cause feelings of warmth and joy.

“draped in a blanket of white” – the snow covers the ground entirely like a blanket.

• WORD CHOICE: “magical properties” - it is something special and out of the ordinary.

“Spectral backlight” – playing on the idea of the light being ghost-like and glowing faintly.

• RULE OF THREE: “turn Scotland into a softer, quieter nation. A brighter one too…” – emphasising the complete contrast to Scotland without snow.

• ONOMATOPOEIA: “whizzing down a hill” – emphasises the speed of the descent and how much fun is had.

• ALLITERATION: “pixilated pleasures” – mocking modern technology.

**Text 3: Women Mean Business**

1. Summary

• We are in a global recession and so the writer questions if using women in business jobs could help to solve this problem.

• Wittenberg-Cox and Maitland have written a new book arguing women could help business and profits – an idea they call ‘Womenomics’.

• Women are under represented and only 3 major companies have women as a leader.

• Legislation is too slow a way to make change – women’s skills need to be used more now.

2. Key ideas

• Women are not included enough in business and are under-represented.

• The situation needs to change.

• Legislation could change things but it is slow.

• Our economy would be better off with women having a bigger role.

3. Attitude: critical/supportive of women

“markets are crashing” – we are in a desperate situation financially.

“Senior British business figures –and yes, they are mainly men” – bitter tone – this fact proves women are not in the top jobs.

“And yet women remain a minority” – the first words signal regret and sadness that they are not being made a bigger part of the business world.

“Could such legislation work here?” – the writer is suggesting options that would help women participate.

4. Tone – sarcasm/irony/supportive

Any quotations used above may be acceptable with a good comment.

“Spice Girls have cancelled the rest of their world tour” – irony shows evidence for the lack of money in the world economy, but chooses this example for humour.

“- and yes, they are mainly men” – shows sarcasm and bitterness that women are left out.

“littered with endorsements” – shows that women are being supported by others.

“So, can women save the world from recession?” – makes the reader question if women can help and solve the issue.

5. Techniques:

• RULE OF THREE: “The dollar is falling, the markets are crashing and the spice girls have cancelled the rest of their world tour” – list which humorously shows that the world is in a recession and short of money. Builds to a climax.

• RHETORICAL QUESTIONS: “Could women save the world from recession?” – shows that the writer is making the reader re-think their view on the role of women.

• METAPHOR: “gender asbestos” – harmful and dangerous substance – hidden in walls. Here it represents the hidden threats that stop women from reaching higher positions.

“glass ceiling” - There is what seems like an invisible barrier which people can’t break through.

“The door barred” - it’s as if someone is physically stopping women from getting the opportunities that they need.

• EMOTIVE WORD CHOICE – pupils may choose forma variety of examples.

**Text 4: William and Kate: reason to be cheerful?**

1. Summary

• We are in a recession and the writer wonders if the general public will be pleased with an expensive royal wedding.

• There are comparisons to previous royal weddings (The Queen and Prince Philip/Charles and Diana) which were affected by money concerns.

• Experts agree that the public will enjoy it as it is like a soap opera, as long as the palace don’t advertise their wealth.

• Some people will be jealous of their wealth and feel inadequate.

• It will be good for tourism and it will make the nation have a positive outlook.

2. Key ideas

• Some people will be jealous of their wealth as we are facing a recession.

• It will be good for our country as it will boost moral and make people view things positively.

• Poverty and misery will continue when the wedding is over.

3. Attitude: negative/critical/condemning

“And when it’s over… austerity Britain will still be there with plenty with which to turn smiles into frowns” – The writer’s final statement implies that people will still be miserable and in poverty after the celebrations of the wedding are over.

“choosing between the car and the kids” – bitter - shows the extent of the difficulty and poverty.

“shrinking list of reasons to be cheerful” – sarcasm - shows the writer feels that here is little to be happy about.

4. Tone – comic/cutting/sarcastic/bitter

Any quotations used above may be acceptable with a good comment.

“smiles into frowns” – bitter - shows that the nation are suffering in poverty.

“choosing between the car and the kids” – bitter - shows the extent of the difficulty and poverty.

“austerity Britain” – people are in great need.

“blasted wasteland” – bitter - shows the extent of the damage on our country. It is as if nothing is left.

“shrinking list of reasons to be cheerful” – sarcasm - shows the writer feels that here is little to be happy about.

“top of the happiness totaliser” – deep sarcasm – it’s as if he is mocking the fans who are over-joyed.

5. Techniques:

• MEATPHOR: “a dark cloud rather than a ray of sunshine” – feels that it is an event which will cause doom and misery rather than something that symbolises hope and happiness.

• HYPERBOLE/EXAGGERATION: “unfurling their union flags” – no-one would be doing this so far before the wedding and so it makes these fans seem obsessed.

• RHETORICAL QUESTION: “What of the rest of us, will we take pleasure in the young couple’s happiness?” – makes the reader question if the public truly care about the event and how they truly feel.

• CONTRAST: “depart on honeymoon, austerity Britain will still be there” – shows the difference between the wealth in the country and the wealth of the royal family.

• FACTS/FIGURES: “750 million turned out to see Charles and Diana get married in 1981.” – shows the extent of the support the royal weddings received in the past.

• QUOTATION: – “everybody is pleased.” – gives greater credibility if someone has stated this.

**Text 5: Hollywood shuns intelligent entertainment. The games industry doesn’t. Guess who’s winning?**

1. Summary

• Films were once reliably good, but now they are lacking content. You find it hard to find something good to view at the cinema.

• Video games are doing much better, particularly “Portal 2 “and “LA Noire”. One makes you think about moving from space to space and the other has excellent realistic graphics.

• These games are better because they challenge the mind and are traditional video games.

• Games are different from films and they are much more thrilling.

2. Key ideas:

• The games industry is continually improving and advancing. There are new advancements with graphics and how they look.

• The games industry is better than the film industry and more engaging.

3. Attitude: enthusiasm/disregard for films/annoyance at films

• Anti-films

“happily reverse a six-tonne tractor over” – shows his hatred for annoying, gimmicky characters in films.

“so formulaic that you suspect it was created form a template on moonpig.com” – shows that he feels some films are so unoriginal and don’t have good ideas.

“Light show for cattle” – he thinks of some films as so awful that they are just light shows with no content or interest.

“Once a month there’s a film worth bothering with” – it sounds as if good films only come out every now and again. ‘Bothering with’ suggests that even the ones worth watching aren’t great.

• Pro computer games

“darkly humorous science fiction” – shows that he appreciates the comedy of it.

“Before you whine” – this shows that he is defending computer games against any reader who may disagree or whine.

“I was astounded at what they’ve pulled off.” – the word ‘astounded’ show how amazed he was.

“I guarantee you’ll be surprised” – he makes promises to the reader about how much they will enjoy it.

“What really makes me excited” – he declares how pleased he is about the fact that these games are traditional games which make you think.

“challenge the mind instead of the thumbs”

4. Tone: enthusiasm/approval/delight

Any quotations used above may be acceptable with a good comment.

5. Techniques:

RHETORICAL QUESTIONS: “even if the film you wanted to see had sold out, there’d be something else worth watching?” – shows that he feels annoyed that there is very little worth watching and he is challenging the reader to see if they feel the same way.

HYPERBOLE/EXAGGERATION: “I’m talking about 10,000 years ago, obviously” – he deliberately states a ridiculous amount of time to show that it was a long, long time since any good films were released.

“you’d happily reverse a tractor over” – shows his anger and range at ridiculous, gimmicky characters.

METAPHOR: “a light show for cattle” – he shows that people are being hearded in and are behaving foolishly like cattle. The idea of a light show shows that the film has no proper content – it might as well be lights and pictures.

WORD CHOICE: “stunningly clever and immensely enjoyable” – shows his great pleasure in playing such a good computer game.

SECOND PERSON/TALKING TO THE READER: “I guarantee you’ll be surprised” – he invites the reader to think about their views and perhaps try the game.

PARENTHESIS: “(which has a level of sophistication that might come as a blinding shock to anyone who hasn’t played a game since 1996). – he is being cheeky to the reader to create humour and to cause them to rethink their opinions.

SIMILE: “like a cheerful slogan through a stick of rock” – to show that they are thoroughly traditional video games and being a traditional game is what it centres around. Like a piece of rock which has a message through the centre.

**Text 6: A golden opportunity for Britain to lead the world in energy production**

1. Summary

• There is a new climate bill being put before Parliament so that we can take the lead with renewable resources. We plan to get 40% of our energy from renewable sources and 40% form nuclear sources.

• However, it seems foolish to rely so heavily on new technology and renewable power which haven’t been tested yet.

• Despite all this, the writer feels that this is the right time to use these new energy sources.

• We failed to develop nuclear power and wind turbines in order to enhance our expertise and skills in this area.

2. Key ideas

• We could be leaders in the process as countries take steps towards renewable energy.

• We have failed in the past and now is the time to succeed.

3. Attitude: Positive/critical of past failures

“the argument is unfair, however. The fact that many of these technologies are still in development offers us an advantage.” – the writer feels that we are in a good position to begin developing renewable energy sources.

“Amassed a great deal of marine engineering experience” – this emphasises just how well prepared we are to take on this challenge.

“deserves congratulations” – shows that the writer feels that the government have done very well and are successful in this area.

4. Tone: enthusiastic/supportive

Any quotations used above may be acceptable with a good comment.

“The argument is unfair, however. The very fact that many of these techniques are in development offers us a key advantage. “ – the writer feels that we are in a good position as shown by the words ‘key advantage’.

“Britain has given itself a chance to take pole position” – the writer likens this to sporting success and claims that Britain could take the lead.

“The government deserves congratulations” – shows that the writer feels that the government have done very well and are successful in this area.

“was botched” – critical tone – shows the writer’s disapproval of the government’s failings and feels that they foolishly let this chance pass them by.

“We squandered them instead” – critical – the word ‘squandered’ shows that the writer feels that we wasted our chance to do well.

5. Techniques:

• PARENTHESIS – “had the courage – or recklessness, depending on your viewpoint – to contemplate.” – creates a tone of irony to amuse the reader. It makes the reader question if this is a wise decision.

• WORD CHOICE – “worst ravages” – the word choice emphasises the complete and utter destruction that global warming will create and how everything could be removed by it if action is not taken.

• METAPHOR: “swept aside” – it shows that hostility was really easy to remove like someone brushing away dirt from the floor.

• HYPERBOLE “current obsession with building onshore wind farms” – British people are not literally obsessed with building wind farms; however, it shows how rapidly we have built them and haw readily/easily we think about building another.

• SHORT SENTENCE: “We squandered them instead” – this sentence is full of impact and shows that the writer feels annoyed that we did not take the chance to develop the resources at that time.

• LIST: “Cut its emissions bill, establish energy security for the nation, for the next century – and develop a range of new industries” – this emphasises the key reasons for undertaking the programme.

**Text 7: Cultural Desert: the art scene of Marfa, Texas**

1. Summary

• This place is very barren and it is highly isolated in a desert region of Texas.

• Marfa is a cultural art centre in the middle of no-where. This is not because of art buying locals, but because of art enthusiasts who live there.

• The locals make a living at anything they can and so there is a strange variety of services.

• The locals are quirky and animated despite hardship.

2. Key ideas

• This place is fly-blown and full of poverty, but quirky and very interesting due to the people who live there.

• It is a strange mix of old and new culture in one place.

• People must survive on their own.

3. Attitude: keen/adventurous/inquisitive/seeking knowledge

“it’s the kind of landscape you glance down at form your plane seat and wonder, could anyone live there?’ – this shows that she is intrigued and surprised that these people make this a cultural town.

“The road is calling” – shows that she wants to continue discovering new places.

“Kathy is a hoot” – enjoyment of the company of the locals.

“most interesting person you’ll ever meet” – shows her admiration for the locals and how they have had a varied and interesting life.

4. Tone: matter of fact/admiring

Any quotations used above may be acceptable with a good comment.

“Marfa is one of a handful of tiny towns in one of the least populated, most isolated corners of the US.” – explains clearly and concisely – factual reporting.

“Impressive civic buildings” – she shows her admiration for the buildings and how well built they are.

“but any one of them is probably the most interesting person you’ll ever meet.” – shows that she finds them more interesting and remarkable than the inhabitants of other places.

“I could happily have stayed on at…” – She felt at home and wished that she could spend more time there.

5. Techniques:

• PERSONIFICATION: “hot, gritty wind attacks our eyes” – show how aggressively the wind was blowing at them and the pain that this caused.

“the road was calling” – shows that she feels that she must travel and that the road was exciting and inviting.

• METAPHOR: “hugged” – To show how the two stands of land share a border. They are right next to each other.

• RHETORICAL QUESTION: “Could anyone live here?” – shows the writer’s surprise that this could be a place of culture, but also that they want to know more.

• PARENTHESIS: “(Population 1000)” – shows how small the settlement is and how accurately she has researched this.

• SECOND PERSON/TALKING TO THE READER: “look closer, though, and you see many of these buildings are empty” – allows the reader to picture the scene as if they were looking in the buildings.