

GENERAL VOCABULARY

registrar keeping official records of the students

'THE DANGER OF A SINGLE STORY' CHIMAMANDA NGOZI ADICHIE

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie was born the fifth of six children in the town of Nsukka in south-eastern Nigeria, where the University of Nigeria is situated. Her father was a professor of statistics at the university and her mother was the university's first female **registrar**.

Adichie studied medicine and pharmacy at the University of Nigeria for a year and a half. Then she left Nigeria to study communications and political science in the USA. Now she divides her time between Nigeria, where she teaches writing workshops, and the United States.

She has published poetry and fiction and her novels have won several awards. For example, her first novel, *Purple Hibiscus* (2003), was awarded the Commonwealth Writers' Prize for Best First Book (2005). Adichie says of feminism and writing, 'I think of myself as a storyteller, but I would not mind at all if someone were to think of me as a feminist writer... I'm very feminist in the way I look at the world, and that world view must somehow be part of my work.'

BEFORE YOU START READING

- 1 Think of an ethnic group about which you have a few ideas but about which you know very few actual facts. Write down your honest views of the stereotype of that ethnic group.
- 2 Find out as much about this group as you can. Write down some new things that surprise you.
- 3 Do you think others see you in a stereotyped way? Write down some of the stereotypes they might have.

▼ FROM 'THE DANGER OF A SINGLE STORY' BY CHIMAMANDA NGOZI ADICHIE

TED A nonprofit organisation devoted to spreading ideas, usually in the form of short, powerful talks (18 minutes or less); TED stands for Technology, Entertainment and Design.

campus The complex of buildings that make up a university.

Adichie, a successful novelist, delivered this speech at a TED conference. She speaks about the power of storytelling and the danger of a single view.

I'm a storyteller. And I would like to tell you a few personal stories about what I like to call "the danger of the single story." I grew up on a university **campus** in eastern Nigeria. My mother says that I started reading at the age of two, although I think four is probably close to the truth. So I was an early reader, and what I read were British and American children's books.

impressionable Easily influenced.

Chinua Achebe and Camara Laye
Prominent and pioneering Nigerian authors
in the second half of the 20th century.



▲ Nigerian poet and novelist Chimamanda
Ngozi Adichie

raffia Dry palm leaves.

Mariah Carey Popular American singer.

I was also an early writer, and when I began to write, at about the age of seven, stories in pencil with crayon illustrations that my poor mother was obligated to read, I wrote exactly the kinds of stories I was reading: all my characters were white and blue-eyed, they played in the snow, they ate apples, and they talked a lot about the weather, how lovely it was that the sun had come out.

Now, this despite the fact that I lived in Nigeria. I had never been outside Nigeria. We didn't have snow, we ate mangoes, and we never talked about the weather, because there was no need to. ...

What this demonstrates, I think, is how **impressionable** and vulnerable we are in the face of a story, particularly as children. Because all I had read were books in which characters were foreign, I had become convinced that books by their very nature had to have foreigners in them and had to be about things with which I could not personally identify. Now, things changed when I discovered African books. There weren't many of them available, and they weren't quite as easy to find as the foreign books.

But because of writers like Chinua Achebe and Camara Laye, I went through a mental shift in my perception of literature. I realized that people like me, girls with skin the colour of chocolate, whose kinky hair could not form ponytails, could also exist in literature. I started to write about things I recognized.

Now, I loved those American and British books I read. They stirred my imagination. They opened up new worlds for me. But the unintended consequence was that I did not know that people like me could exist in literature. So what the discovery of African writers did for me was this: it saved me from having a single story of what books are.

I come from a conventional, middle-class Nigerian family. My father was a professor. My mother was an administrator. And so we had, as was the norm, live-in domestic help, who would often come from nearby rural villages. So, the year I turned eight, we got a new house boy. His name was Fide. The only thing my mother told us about him was that his family was very poor. My mother sent yams and rice, and our old clothes, to his family. And when I didn't finish my dinner, my mother would say, "Finish your food! Don't you know? People like Fide's family have nothing." So I felt enormous pity for Fide's family.

Then one Saturday, we went to his village to visit, and his mother showed us a beautifully patterned basket made of dyed **raffia** that his brother had made. I was startled. It had not occurred to me that anybody in his family could actually make something. All I had heard about them was how poor they were, so that it had become impossible for me to see them as anything else but poor. Their poverty was my single story of them.

Years later, I thought about this when I left Nigeria to go to university in the United States. I was 19. My American roommate was shocked by me. She asked where I had learned to speak English so well, and was confused when I said that Nigeria happened to have English as its official language. She asked if she could listen to what she called my "tribal music", and was consequently very disappointed when I produced my tape of **Mariah Carey**.

stove What do you notice about this paragraph?

AIDS Auto-immune Deficiency Syndrome, a threat to life in some African countries.

fleeing Exploiting someone financially; robbing someone of their money

Guadalajara City in Mexico popular with tourists.

Alice Walker 20th-century African-American writer.

She assumed that I did not know how to use a stove.

What struck me was this: she had felt sorry for me even before she saw me. Her default position toward me, as an African, was a kind of patronising, well-meaning pity. My roommate had a single story of Africa: a single story of catastrophe. In this single story, there was no possibility of Africans being similar to her in any way, no possibility of feelings more complex than pity, no possibility of a connection as human equals. ...

So, after I had spent some years in the U.S. as an African, I began to understand my roommate's response to me. If I had not grown up in Nigeria, and if all I knew about Africa were from popular images, I too would think that Africa was a place of beautiful landscapes, beautiful animals, and incomprehensible people, fighting senseless wars, dying of poverty and AIDS, unable to speak for themselves and waiting to be saved by a kind, white foreigner. I would see Africans in the same way that I, as a child, had seen Fide's family. ...

But I must quickly add that I too am just as guilty in the question of the single story. A few years ago, I visited Mexico from the U.S. The political climate in the U.S. at the time was tense, and there were debates going on about immigration. And, as often happens in America, immigration became synonymous with Mexicans. There were endless stories of Mexicans as people who were fleeing the healthcare system, sneaking across the border, being arrested at the border, that sort of thing.

I remember walking around on my first day in Guadalajara, watching the people going to work, rolling up tortillas in the marketplace, smoking, laughing. I remember first feeling slight surprise. And then, I was overwhelmed with shame. I realised that I had been so immersed in the media coverage of Mexicans that they had become one thing in my mind, the abject immigrant. I had bought into the single story of Mexicans and I could not have been more ashamed of myself.

So that is how to create a single story, show a people as one thing, as only one thing, over and over again, and that is what they become. ...

Stories matter. Many stories matter. Stories have been used to dispossess and to malign, but stories can also be used to empower and to humanise. Stories can break the dignity of a people, but stories can also repair that broken dignity.

The American writer Alice Walker wrote this about her Southern relatives who had moved to the North. She introduced them to a book about the Southern life that they had left behind. "They sat around, reading the book themselves, listening to me read the book, and a kind of paradise was regained."

I would like to end with this thought: That when we reject the single story, when we realise that there is never a single story about any place, we regain a kind of paradise.

UNDERSTANDING THE TEXT



▲ Simple storytelling can have a powerful influence on young children.

This is a speech delivered to a conference with an educational theme. In it, Adichie discusses the power and influence that simple storytelling can have, particularly on the young. She shows from her own experience how stories can cause prejudices and that new stories are then needed to redress the balance. Her argument is even more compelling because she shows how she herself was vulnerable to just such influences.

She explains how all the stories she knew when she was growing up were European in outlook, perspective and characterisation, which led her to think that all stories had to be about white people. Then she shows that some Americans tend to have a very limited and simplified impression of Africa, not realising, for example, that there is such a thing as an educated Nigerian middle class. In the last part she explains how she herself had an equally limited view of Mexican culture, influenced by American worries about illegal immigration and drugs.

In this speech, Adichie uses personal stories, or anecdotes, to persuade people that they need to hear or read a wide variety of stories to understand the peoples of the world. To rely on what she calls the 'single story' will never be enough.

ACTIVITY 1

A01

SKILLS

ANALYSIS, INTERPRETATION

▼ IDENTIFYING KEY POINTS

Find key parts of the speech and consider what Adichie is trying to tell the reader (or in this case, the listener). Copy and complete the table, adding examples of your own.

▼ DETAIL	▼ WHAT IT TELLS THE READER
'my characters were white and blue-eyed, they played in the snow'	That she took the material for her stories from her reading, not from her surroundings.
'whose kinky hair could not form ponytails'	
'a beautifully patterned basket made of dyed raffia'	

ACTIVITY 2

A01

SKILLS

CRITICAL THINKING, ANALYSIS, INTERPRETATION

▼ IDENTIFYING KEY THEMES

Copy and complete the following table, identifying the themes of Adichie's speech and adding any examples of your own.

▼ THEME	▼ QUOTATION	▼ COMMENT
Ignorance	'She... was confused when I said that Nigeria happened to have English as its official language.'	Like other examples in the speech, Adichie's room-mate knows nothing about another culture.
Prejudice		
Self-knowledge		
Importance of stories		

EXAM-STYLE QUESTION

A02

SKILLS

CRITICAL THINKING,
ANALYSIS, ADAPTIVE
LEARNING, CREATIVITY

How does the writer use language and structure to explore identity? You should support your answer with close reference to the passage, including **brief** quotations.

(12 marks)

EXPLORING LANGUAGE

SUBJECT VOCABULARY

anecdotal consisting of short stories based on someone's personal experience

persuasive able to make other people believe something or do what you ask

The language of this passage is **anecdotal** and **persuasive**: it is evident that the writer is trying hard to communicate some linked experiences that were important to her in making her examine the way that people form prejudiced views of others. She tries to do this as concisely as possible. She uses narrative, detail, emotive language and makes comments about her thoughts and feelings.

The sentence structure is varied in the speech: compare the sentence beginning, 'If I had not grown up in Nigeria...', with the short simple sentence with which the passage begins. What do you think such variety contributes to a piece such as this? Speech-writing also offers the opportunity for less formal sentence structures than you would find in most written English. Can you find evidence of this in the passage?

ACTIVITY 3

A02

SKILLS

CRITICAL THINKING, ANALYSIS,
INTERPRETATION

▼ IDENTIFYING LINGUISTIC TECHNIQUES AND DEVICES

Copy and complete the following table, explaining as precisely as you can what you think the effect that each technique has on the audience. A simple way to start this is to put your finger at random on the passage, and try to find a linguistic technique or device in the sentence you've landed on.

▼ LINGUISTIC TECHNIQUES OR DEVICES	▼ QUOTATION	▼ EFFECT CREATED
Personal anecdote	'I visited Mexico from the U.S...'	By explaining how she discovered that she has the kind of prejudice that she has experienced from others, she shows how universal prejudice is, and also that she doesn't see herself as superior to others.
Anaphora (repetition of opening words of phrases which are next to each other)	'no possibility...'	
Emotive language		
Use of short sentences		

STRUCTURE

KEY POINT

Persuasion is not only about language in terms of words used, but also about using structure to build credibility point by point.

All good persuasive speeches have a clear structure, enabling the audience to follow the points linked together in an argument. The structure of this speech is simple and effective. You can soon see that it is written in 18 paragraphs. One way of analysing the structure would be to summarise the content of each paragraph in a sentence. Another way would be to divide the speech into sections and chart it that way.

ACTIVITY 4

A02

SKILLS

CRITICAL THINKING, ANALYSIS,
INTERPRETATION

▼ IDENTIFYING EFFECTS OF STRUCTURE

Copy and complete the table, noting how the content is divided up.

▼ PARAGRAPHS	▼ CONTENT	▼ COMMENT ON RELEVANCE TO ARGUMENT
1–3	Her childhood reading and writing.	This introduces the key theme and shows its impact on herself when very young.

Analyse the structure of the paragraphs as well and you will see that they are not all identical. Short paragraphs have an effect on the way you read them.

ACTIVITY 5

A01

SKILLS

CRITICAL THINKING, ANALYSIS,
ADAPTIVE LEARNING, CREATIVITY

▼ UNDERSTANDING ANOTHER'S CULTURE

Imagine (if it is not true!) that you and your partner come from different cultures or countries and that you are meeting for the first time. Talk as honestly as you can about your expectations of each other, your prejudices and stereotypes.

ACTIVITY 6

A02

SKILLS

PROBLEM SOLVING, ADAPTIVE LEARNING,
CREATIVITY, INNOVATION

▼ WRITING TASKS

- 1 'A student cannot be regarded as educated unless they are equipped with the ability both to examine cultural prejudice critically when they come across it and also to challenge it in discussion.'

You have been asked to give a speech to your class in which you express your views on this statement. The speech may consider:

- whether there is adequate provision in the curriculum and, if not, how it should be improved
- how the quality of discussion and debate on these issues might be improved
- any other points you wish to make.

Your response will be marked for the accurate and appropriate use of vocabulary, spelling, punctuation and grammar.

- 2 Write about a time when you have been surprised by someone's views or realised that your own views were wrong.
Your response could be real or imagined.

EXAMPLE STUDENT ANSWER A TO QUESTION 2

In a school assembly the headteacher talked about an appalling civil war that had happened in part of Africa, and in which hundreds of thousands of people had been massacred, just because they were an ethnic minority. I had got used to people saying that we ought to respect the beliefs of others and I thought that pretty much all countries accepted this by now. I mean, I knew something about the holocaust in Europe during the Second World War – it was so terrible that it was a warning to the rest of the world never to do anything like that ever again. But this was another attempt at genocide, in my own lifetime. I realised that I had been wrong. It was going to take much longer for the whole world to learn. If they ever did.

Assess the answer above. Some of the aspects you might want to consider are: how does it manage information and ideas, does it address the intended reader, is it well structured, how accurate is the spelling and grammar, and generally how well has the text fulfilled the task set by the question?

EXAMPLE STUDENT ANSWER B TO QUESTION 2

I supposed I'd always envied him in a way, I mean he was good at sports, I mean I'm alright but he was obviously excellent, and he was quite clever as well. I sort of resented the way he could do things quite easily. So I never really gave him much of a chance. I slagged him off to my friends saying he was arrogant and such (using some nice slangy phrases of course). Later though he did me a good turn, though I didn't deserve it. He spoke up for me when I was trying hard to get into the first XI, and said I deserved a chance. I honestly don't know why he did, but it made a difference. It happened like this.....

Now look at the answer above. How well does the writer communicate? Do you think the writer understands the needs of their reader? What do you think of the tone and the vocabulary used?

EXAM-STYLE QUESTION

A02

SKILLS

CRITICAL THINKING,
ANALYSIS, ADAPTIVE
LEARNING,
CREATIVITY

How does Adiche develop a persuasive argument?

You should support your answer with close reference to the passage, including brief quotations.

(12 marks)

A PASSAGE TO AFRICA

GEORGE ALAGIAH

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

George Alagiah was born in Sri Lanka, but when he was five years old his family moved to live in West Africa. He now lives in the United Kingdom and works as a newscaster for the BBC.

This passage comes from his book *A Passage to Africa*. In this autobiography, he writes about his life and experiences as a TV reporter working mainly across Africa. In this extract, he writes about a report he made when he was covering the civil war in Somalia for the BBC.



▲ BBC newscaster George Alagiah

BEFORE YOU START READING

- 1 Find some information about George Alagiah. You can look at the BBC website.
- 2 Find out something about the civil war in Somalia, which began in the 1990s.
- 3 In a small group or with a partner, share your ideas on the following questions.
 - Why do you think people watch news on television? Do you watch it? If you don't, why not?
 - Have you ever watched a news programme reporting a war or a humanitarian crisis, such as a famine or an earthquake? What do you remember about it and the effect it had on you?
 - Does television reporting of terrible events, such as floods or famines, help the people who are suffering?

▼ FROM A PASSAGE TO AFRICA BY GEORGE ALAGIAH

Alagiah writes about his experiences as a television reporter during the war in Somalia, Africa in the 1990s. He won a special award for his report on the incidents described in this passage.

I saw a thousand hungry, lean, scared and betrayed faces as I criss-crossed Somalia between the end of 1991 and December 1992, but there is one I will never forget.

I was in a little hamlet just outside Gufgaduud, a village in the back of beyond, a place the aid agencies had yet to reach. In my notebook I had jotted down instructions on how to get there. 'Take the Badale Road for a few kilometres til the end of the tarmac, turn right on to a dirt track, stay on it for about forty-five minutes – Gufgaduud. Go another fifteen minutes approx. – like a ghost village.'...

In the ghoulis manner of journalists on the hunt for the most striking pictures, my cameraman ... and I tramped from one hut to another. What might have appalled us when we'd started our trip just a few days before no longer impressed us much. The search for the shocking is like the craving for a drug: you require heavier and more frequent doses the longer you're at it. Pictures that stun the editors one day are written off as the same old stuff the next. This sounds callous, but it is just a fact of life. It's how we collect and compile the images that so move people in the comfort of their sitting rooms back home.

There was Amina Abdirahman, who had gone out that morning in search of wild, edible roots, leaving her two young girls lying on the dirt floor of their hut. They had been sick for days, and were reaching the final, enervating stages of terminal hunger. Habiba was ten years old and her sister, Ayaan, was nine. By the time Amina returned, she had only one daughter. Habiba had died. No rage, no whimpering, just a passing away – that simple, frictionless, motionless deliverance from a state of half-life to death itself. It was, as I said at the time in my dispatch, a vision of 'famine away from the headlines, a famine of quiet suffering and lonely death'.

There was the old woman who lay in her hut, abandoned by relations who were too weak to carry her on their journey to find food. It was the smell that drew me to her doorway: the smell of decaying flesh. Where her shinbone should have been there was a festering wound the size of my hand. She'd been shot in the leg as the retreating army of the deposed dictator took revenge on whoever it found in its way. The shattered leg had fused into the gentle V-shape of a boomerang. It was rotting; she was rotting. You could see it in her sick, yellow eyes and smell it in the putrid air she recycled with every struggling breath she took.

And then there was the face I will never forget.

My reaction to everyone else I met that day was a mixture of pity and revulsion. Yes, revulsion. The degeneration of the human body, sucked of its natural vitality by the twin evils of hunger and disease, is a disgusting thing. We never say so in our TV reports. It's a taboo that has yet to be breached. To be in a feeding centre is to hear and smell the excretion of fluids by people who are beyond controlling their bodily functions. To be in a feeding centre is surreptitiously to wipe your hands on the back of your trousers after you've held the clammy palm of a mother who has just cleaned vomit from her child's mouth.

revulsion Disgust.

surreptitiously Secretly.

There's pity, too, because even in this state of utter despair they aspire to a dignity that is almost impossible to achieve. An old woman will cover her shrivelled body with a soiled cloth as your gaze turns towards her. Or the old and dying man who keeps his hoe next to the mat with which, one day soon, they will shroud his corpse, as if he means to go out and till the soil once all this is over.

I saw that face for only a few seconds, a fleeting meeting of eyes before the face turned away, as its owner retreated into the darkness of another hut. In those brief moments there had been a smile, not from me, but from the face. It was not a smile of greeting, it was not a smile of joy – how could it be? – but it was a smile nonetheless. It touched me in a way I could not explain. It moved me in a way that went beyond pity or revulsion.

What was it about that smile? I had to find out. I urged my translator to ask the man why he had smiled. He came back with an answer. 'It's just that he was embarrassed to be found in this condition,' the translator explained. And then it clicked. That's what the smile had been about. It was the feeble smile that goes with apology, the kind of smile you might give if you felt you had done something wrong.

Normally inured to stories of suffering, accustomed to the evidence of deprivation, I was unsettled by this one smile in a way I had never been before. There is an unwritten code between the journalist and his subjects in these situations. The journalist observes, the subject is observed. The journalist is active, the subject is passive. But this smile had turned the tables on that tacit agreement. Without uttering a single word, the man had posed a question that cut to the heart of the relationship between me and him, between us and them, between the rich world and the poor world. If he was embarrassed to be found weakened by hunger and ground down by conflict, how should I feel to be standing there so strong and confident?

I resolved there and then that I would write the story of Gufgaduud with all the power and purpose I could muster. It seemed at the time, and still does, the only adequate answer a reporter can give to the man's question.

I have one regret about that brief encounter in Gufgaduud. Having searched through my notes and studied the dispatch that the BBC broadcast, I see that I never found out what the man's name was. Yet meeting him was a seminal moment in the gradual collection of experiences we call context. Facts and figures are the easy part of journalism. Knowing where they sit in the great scheme of things is much harder. So, my nameless friend, if you are still alive, I owe you one.

inured Hardened.



► The civil war in Somalia began in 1991.

UNDERSTANDING THE TEXT

George Alagiah's purpose is to explain his role as a reporter, giving his thoughts and feelings about a particularly challenging incident. He is also trying to challenge his readers, to make you think about your role.

The questions in the following table will help you approach this aspect of the text. Read the text again and find answers to the questions in the table. Remember, more than one point can be made in answer to each question.

QUESTION	ANSWER AND EVIDENCE
What kinds of pictures and stories do the television news companies want?	1 Powerful images – 'the most striking pictures' 2 3
What do the television news companies not want to show or report?	1 Yesterday's news – old pictures are 'written off as the same old stuff' 2 3
What do we learn about TV audiences from this passage?	1 2 3

KEY POINT

The author of this passage used the smile as the central focus of the passage, to encourage the reader to discover its significance.

ACTIVITY 1

A01

SKILLS CRITICAL THINKING

▼ THE MAN'S SMILE

This smile is the key to a full understanding of the passage because it makes such an impact on the writer.

► Look at the following list of statements about the smile and then find a quotation to illustrate each one:

- it reverses roles
- it asks questions
- it stimulates actions
- it affects the writer very powerfully.

► Now try to put into your own words what you think the importance of the smile is.

► In the extract from *A Passage to Africa*, can you find any other examples of things that seem to be the opposite of what they should be?

EXAM-STYLE QUESTION

A02

SKILLS

CRITICAL THINKING, ANALYSIS,
ADAPTIVE LEARNING, CREATIVITY

How does the writer use language and structure to create a sense of atmosphere?

You should support your answer with close reference to the passage, including brief quotations.

(12 marks)

EXPLORING LANGUAGE

In this passage, George Alagiah is writing both as a journalist and about being a journalist. He describes what he saw in a vivid way, but at the same time he gives the reader an insight into the world of reporting, where journalists compete with each other to get the largest audience.

Complete the following table to think about the differing uses and kinds of language in the passage.

▼ LANGUAGE USE	▼ EXAMPLE
Emotive words are used to convey the world of the victims.	1 Adjectives emphasise their poverty – for example, 'hungry', 'lean', 'scared'. 2 3
Words give you a vivid image of the world of the television journalist.	1 They are like predators 'on the hunt'. 2 3
Sentence structure is varied to engage the reader.	1 Incomplete sentences are used for effect. 2 3

ACTIVITY 2

A04

A05

SKILLS

ADAPTIVE LEARNING,
INTERPRETATION,
CREATIVITY, INNOVATION

▼ WRITING TASKS

- 1 Imagine that you are a television or radio news reporter.
 - **Describe a vivid and dramatic scene for a news item. You can either give this account live to the class or write the script for it.**
 - **Write an entry for a personal diary giving your real thoughts and feelings about what you saw.**
- 2 In his book, George Alagiah writes, 'In global terms, if you have a roof over your head, food on the table, a doctor who will not charge you when you are ill and a school place that does not depend on your ability to pay, then, my friend, you are rich.' Comment on this, giving your ideas on what makes you rich.
- 3 Write a short story entitled 'The Smile'.

THE EXPLORER'S DAUGHTER

KARI HERBERT

SUBJECT VOCABULARY

memoir a form of autobiography

GENERAL VOCABULARY

narwhal a species of whale, famous for the long single tusk on its head

kayak a type of canoe

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

Kari Herbert's father was a polar explorer. She lived as a child with her family in northwest Greenland in the Arctic. She was so fascinated by the place that she returned there later as an adult to write about it.

The book from which this extract is taken is partly a **memoir** and partly a travel book, giving the reader information about this strange and beautiful place, its people and its animals. She found that the way of life of the Inughuit people of Greenland was changing due to the impact of the modern world. However they still retained aspects of their traditional way of life, such as hunting for food and driving teams of dogs.

A major part of the extract is an account of a hunt for **narwhal**. Hunting is a very emotive issue and many conservationists argue that whales should be protected. Kari Herbert's feelings on this topic are divided. She sympathises with both the narwhal and the hunters, who face incredible danger. They hunt in **kayaks** in water so cold that they would die quickly if their kayak overturned.



▲ The Inughuit of the Arctic understand the intelligence of the narwhal.

BEFORE YOU START READING

- 1 Do some research.
 - Find some information about Kari Herbert. You can visit her website.
 - Find out as much as you can about the Inughuit people (sometimes spelt Inuit and formerly known as Eskimo) and their way of life.
 - Find pictures of narwhal and information about them.

2 Some people think that hunting animals should be banned. In a small group or with a partner, share your ideas on the following questions.

- ▶ What arguments can you think of in favour of hunting animals?
- ▶ What arguments can you think of against hunting animals?
- ▶ Do you think hunting wild animals should be banned?
- ▶ How important is it to protect endangered species?

▼ FROM *THE EXPLORER'S DAUGHTER* BY KARI HERBERT

As a small child, Herbert lived, with her family, among the Inughuit people (sometimes called Inuits, or Eskimos) in the harsh environment of the Arctic. In 2002 she revisited the area, staying near Thule, a remote settlement in North Greenland. In this passage she writes about her experience of watching a hunt for the narwhal, a toothed whale, and what she thought and felt about it.

Two hours after the last of the hunters had returned and eaten, narwhal were spotted again, this time very close. Within an hour even those of us on shore could with the naked eye see the plumes of spray from the narwhal catching the light in a spectral play of colour. Two large pods of narwhal circled in the fjord, often looking as if they were going to merge, but always slowly, methodically passing each other by. Scrambling back up to the lookout I looked across the glittering kingdom in front of me and took a sharp intake of breath. The hunters were dotted all around the fjord. The evening light was turning butter-gold, glinting off man and whale and catching the soft billows of smoke from a lone hunter's pipe. From where we sat at the lookout it looked as though the hunters were close enough to touch the narwhal with their bare hands and yet they never moved. Distances are always deceptive in the Arctic, and I fell to wondering if the narwhal existed at all or were instead mischievous tricks of the shifting light...

The narwhal rarely stray from High Arctic waters, escaping only to the slightly more temperate waters towards the Arctic Circle in the dead of winter, but never entering the warmer southern seas. In summer the hunters of Thule are fortunate to witness the annual return of the narwhal to the Inglefield Fjord, on the side of which we now sat.

The narwhal... is an essential contributor to the survival of the hunters in the High Arctic. The mattak or blubber of the whale is rich in necessary minerals and vitamins, and in a place where the climate prohibits the growth of vegetables or fruit, this rich source of vitamin C was the one reason that the Eskimos have never suffered from scurvy... For centuries the blubber of the whales was also the only source of light and heat, and the dark rich meat is still a valuable part of the diet for both man and dogs (a single narwhal can feed a team of dogs for an entire month). Its single ivory tusk, which can grow up to six feet in length, was used for harpoon tips and handles for other hunting implements (although the ivory was found to be brittle and not hugely satisfactory as a weapon), for carving protective tupilaks, and even as a central beam for their small ancient dwellings. Strangely, the tusk seems to have little use for the narwhal itself; they do not use the tusk to break through ice as a breathing hole, nor will they use it to catch or attack prey, but rather the primary use seems to be to disturb the top of the sea bed in order to catch Arctic halibut for which they have a particular predilection. Often the ends of their tusks are worn down or even broken from such usage.

Pods Small groups of whales.

Fjord A long, narrow strip of the sea, between steep mountains.

Mattak or blubber The fat of the whale.

Scurvy A painful, weakening disease caused by lack of vitamin C.

Tupilaks Charms or figures with magical powers.

Predilection Liking.

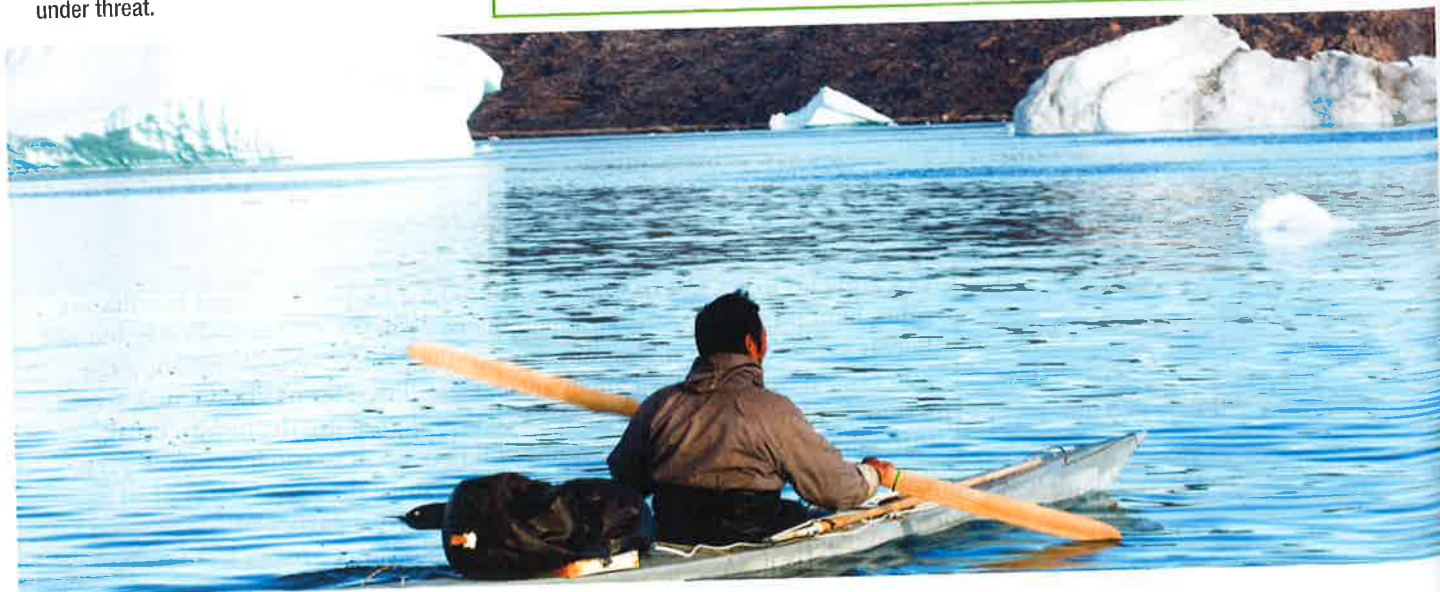
The women clustered on the knoll of the lookout, binoculars pointing in every direction, each woman focusing on her husband or family member, occasionally spinning round at a small gasp or jump as one of the women saw a hunter near a narwhal... Each wife knew her husband instinctively and watched their progress intently; it was crucial to her that her husband catch a narwhal – it was part of their staple diet, and some of the mattak and meat could be sold to other hunters who hadn't been so lucky, bringing in some much-needed extra income. Every hunter was on the water. It was like watching a vast, waterborne game with the hunters spread like a net around the sound.

The narwhal... are intelligent creatures, their senses are keen and they talk to one another under the water. Their hearing is particularly developed and they can hear the sound of a paddling kayak from a great distance. That was why the hunters had to sit so very still in the water.

One hunter was almost on top of a pair of narwhal, and they were huge. He gently picked up his harpoon and aimed – in that split second my heart leapt for both hunter and narwhal. I urged the man on in my head; he was so close, and so brave to attempt what he was about to do – he was miles from land in a flimsy kayak, and could easily be capsized and drowned. The hunter had no rifle, only one harpoon with two heads and one bladder. It was a foolhardy exercise and one that could only inspire respect. And yet at the same time my heart also urged the narwhal to dive, to leave, to survive.

This dilemma stayed with me the whole time that I was in Greenland. I understand the harshness of life in the Arctic and the needs of the hunters and their families to hunt and live on animals and sea mammals that we demand to be protected because of their beauty. And I know that one cannot afford to be sentimental in the Arctic. 'How can you possibly eat seal?' I have been asked over and over again. True, the images that bombarded us several years ago of men battering seals for their fur hasn't helped the issue of polar hunting, but the Inughuit do not kill seals using this method, nor do they kill for sport. They use every part of the animals they kill, and most of the food in Thule is still brought in by the hunter-gatherers and fishermen. Imported goods can only ever account for part of the food supply; there is still only one annual supply ship that makes it through the ice to Qaanaaq, and the small twice-weekly plane from West Greenland can only carry a certain amount of goods. Hunting is still an absolute necessity in Thule.

▼ Traditional ways of life in the Arctic are under threat.



UNDERSTANDING THE TEXT

Kari Herbert sympathises with both hunter and hunted. The writer's central purposes are to convey the tension of the subject but also its beauty. You need to examine the different ways in which the writer does these things within the same passage. Copy and complete the following table with answers and evidence from the extract.

▼ QUESTION	▼ ANSWER AND EVIDENCE
Why do the Inughuit hunt the narwhal? Find as many reasons as you can.	1 Narwhal meat provides food – 'a valuable part of the diet for both man and dogs'. 2 3
What details show the difficulties and dangers faced by the Inughuit in the hunt?	1 2 3
What details show the writer's respect and sympathy for the narwhal?	1 2 3

EXPLORING LANGUAGE

The extract has many purposes and the writer uses language in different ways to fulfil these. She uses description to convey the beauty of the setting, gives the reader information about the Inughuit and the narwhal, dramatises the hunt and gives the reader an insight into her own thoughts and feelings. Copy and complete the following table to help you sort out these various strands.

▼ LANGUAGE USE	▼ EVIDENCE
Language to convey the effects of light.	1 A 'glittering kingdom'. 2 3
Language to give information: factual, scientific, other specialised language.	1 Precise scientific language makes the information more authoritative – for example, '[Its] mattak or blubber... is rich in necessary minerals and vitamins'. 2 3
Language to create tension.	1 The way the women react suggests their nervousness – for example, 'spinning round at a small gasp'. 2 3
Language to show the conflict in the writer's personal feelings and thoughts.	1 2 3

ACTIVITY 1

A04

A05

SKILLS

REASONING, CREATIVITY,
INNOVATION

▼ WRITING TASKS

- 1 Write about a place you know well, or have recently re-visited, that has changed significantly in the time that you have known it. Analyse the ways in which it has changed, giving your thoughts about these changes.
- 2 Some people think that not enough is being done to preserve traditions and customs. What aspects of your way of life would you most want to keep and why?

EXAM-STYLE QUESTION

A02

SKILLS

CRITICAL THINKING, ANALYSIS,
ADAPTIVE LEARNING, CREATIVITY

How does the writer use language and structure to explore the hunters' way of life?

You should support your answer with close reference to the passage, including **brief** quotations.

(12 marks)



▲ The Fjords of Greenland are a challenging place to explore, let alone live.

EXPLORERS OR BOYS MESSING ABOUT? STEVEN MORRIS

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

This is a newspaper article that tells the story of two men rescued by the Chilean Navy when their helicopter crashed in the sea in the Antarctic.

BEFORE YOU START READING

- 1 Do some research. You might want to look at the original article. Compare this with how it was reported at the time by doing an internet search for 'antarctic helicopter crash 2003'.
- 2 In a small group or with a partner, share your ideas on the following questions.
 - Do you think that it is fair that the taxpayers have to pay for these explorers and others like them to be rescued?
 - What do you see as the advantages and disadvantages of:
 - requiring all explorers to buy additional insurance
 - requiring all explorers to buy licences from the government, without which they would not be allowed to explore
 - requiring explorers to do community work to repay any taxpayers' money spent on rescuing them?



Sunset over the Antarctic Ocean
Sunset over the Antarctic Ocean

▼ 'EXPLORERS OR BOYS MESSING ABOUT? EITHER WAY, TAXPAYER GETS RESCUE BILL' BY STEVEN MORRIS

Adapted from an article published in The Guardian newspaper, January 28, 2003: Helicopter duo plucked from liferaft after Antarctic crash.

Their last expedition ended in farce when the Russians threatened to send in military planes to intercept them as they tried to cross into Siberia via the icebound Bering Strait.

Yesterday a new adventure undertaken by British explorers Steve Brooks and Quentin Smith almost led to tragedy when their helicopter plunged into the sea off Antarctica.

The men were plucked from the icy water by a Chilean naval ship after a nine-hour rescue which began when Mr Brooks contacted his wife, Jo Vestey, on his satellite phone asking for assistance. The rescue involved the Royal Navy, the RAF and British coastguards.

Last night there was resentment in some quarters that the men's adventure had cost the taxpayers of Britain and Chile tens of thousands of pounds.

Experts questioned the wisdom of taking a small helicopter – the four-seater Robinson R44 has a single engine – into such a hostile environment.

There was also confusion about what exactly the men were trying to achieve. A website set up to promote the Bering Strait expedition claims the team were planning to fly from the north to south pole in their "trusty helicopter".

But Ms Vestey claimed she did not know what the pair were up to, describing them as 'boys messing about with a helicopter'.

The drama began at around 1am British time when Mr Brooks, 42, and 40-year-old Mr Smith, also known as Q, ditched into the sea 100 miles off Antarctica, about 36 miles north of Smith Island, and scrambled into their liferaft.

Mr Brooks called his wife in London on his satellite phone. She said: 'He said they were both in the liferaft but were okay and could I call the emergency people?'

Meanwhile, distress signals were being beamed from the ditched helicopter and from Mr Brooks' Breitling emergency watch, a wedding present.

The signals from the aircraft were deciphered by Falmouth coastguard and passed on to the rescue coordination centre at RAF Kinloss in Scotland.

The Royal Navy's ice patrol ship, HMS Endurance, which was 180 miles away surveying uncharted waters, began steaming towards the scene and dispatched its two Lynx helicopters.

One was driven back because of poor visibility but the second was on its way when the men were picked up by a Chilean naval vessel at about 10.20 am British time.

Though the pair wore survival suits and the weather at the spot where they ditched was clear, one Antarctic explorer told Mr Brooks' wife it was 'nothing short of a miracle' that they had survived.

Falmouth Coastal town in Cornwall, England.

Both men are experienced adventurers. Mr Brooks, a property developer from London, has taken part in expeditions to 70 countries in 15 years. He has trekked solo to Everest base camp and walked barefoot for three days in the Himalayas. He has negotiated the white water rapids of the Zambezi river by kayak and survived a charge by a silver back gorilla in the Congo. He is also a qualified mechanical engineer and pilot.

He and his wife spent their honeymoon flying the helicopter from Alaska to Chile. The 16,000-mile trip took three months.

Mr Smith, also from London, claims to have been flying since the age of five. He has twice flown a helicopter around the globe and won the world freestyle helicopter flying championship.

Despite their experience, it is not the first time they have hit the headlines for the wrong reasons.

In April, Mr Brooks and another explorer, Graham Stratford, were poised to become the first to complete a crossing of the 56-mile wide frozen Bering Strait between the US and Russia in an amphibious vehicle, Snowbird VI, which could carve its way through ice floes and float in the water in between.

But they were forced to call a halt after the Russian authorities told them they would scramble military helicopters to lift them off the ice if they crossed the border.

Ironically, one of the aims of the expedition, for which Mr Smith provided air back-up, was to demonstrate how good relations between east and west had become.

The wisdom of the team's latest adventure was questioned by, among others, Günter Endres, editor of *Jane's Helicopter Markets and Systems*, who said: 'I'm surprised they used the R44. I wouldn't use a helicopter like that to go so far over the sea. It sounds as if they were pushing it to the maximum.'

A spokesman for the pair said it was not known what had gone wrong. The flying conditions had been 'excellent'.

The Ministry of Defence said the taxpayer would pick up the bill, as was normal in rescues in the UK and abroad. The spokesperson said it was 'highly unlikely' it would recover any of the money.

Last night the men were on their way to the Chilean naval base Eduardo Frei, where HMS Endurance was to pick them up. Ms Vestey said: 'They have been checked and appear to be well. I don't know what will happen to them once they have been picked up by HMS Endurance – they'll probably have their bottoms kicked and be sent home the long way.'

UNDERSTANDING THE TEXT

On the surface, this may appear to be an information text, as the article explains what happened to the two men and how they were rescued. However, the writer also takes a strongly critical stance on what he sees as irresponsible behaviour on the part of the two explorers. The key to understanding the article is in recognising how the writer makes his opinions clear.

ACTIVITY 1

A01

SKILLS CRITICAL THINKING

▼ EXPLORING OPINIONS

Copy and complete the following table, finding explanations and evidence of the writer's opinions.

▼ THE WRITER'S OPINIONS	▼ EXPLANATION AND EVIDENCE
The two explorers are presented as childish.	1 Mr Smith has a nickname, which suggests a juvenile nature. 2 When they get in trouble they phone home, like running home to their mother. 3 Ms Vestey dismisses them as 'boys' and describes their behaviour as 'messaging about'.
The writer uses irony to express his opinions.	1 Mr Smith's nickname is ironic as Q is the character from the James Bond films who is good with technical devices. 2 3
The two explorers are not really as expert as they claim to be.	1 2 3
The Royal Navy is used to criticise the two men.	1 2 3
The writer uses experts to voice his criticisms for him.	1 2 3
The writer uses emotive language.	1 2 3

- Write a single paragraph that directly expresses how the writer feels, rather than using the range of indirect criticisms that the writer uses in the text.

ACTIVITY 2

A04

A05

SKILLS CRITICAL THINKING, ANALYSIS, ADAPTIVE LEARNING, CREATIVITY

▼ OPINION AND FACT

Think of a recent event or situation of which you have personal experience, and about which you have a critical opinion. Write a short account, including factual details, but use what you have learnt from the extract to find ways to express your opinions as well.

EXAM-STYLE QUESTION

A02

SKILLS

CRITICAL THINKING, ANALYSIS, ADAPTIVE LEARNING, CREATIVITY

How does the writer use language and structure to detail their opinion on the event?

You should support your answer with close reference to the passage, including **brief** quotations. (12 marks)

GENERAL VOCABULARY

irony using words to convey a meaning that is completely opposite to their apparent meaning

BETWEEN A ROCK AND A HARD PLACE

ARON RALSTON

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

Between a Rock and a Hard Place is an autobiography written by Aron Ralston, an engineer turned outdoorsman and motivational speaker. It relates his experience in 2003 of being trapped for five days and seven hours in Blue John Canyon, in the Utah desert in the southern United States.

His right arm was trapped by a boulder and, unable to free himself, he amputated his arm using a blunt pocketknife. He then had to return through the canyon and climb down a 20-metre slope before he could reach safety and receive medical care.

BEFORE YOU START READING

- 1 Read about Aron Ralston and his experience. If you are able to, watch *127 Hours*, the 2010 film on the same subject.
- 2 Think about what attracts people to potentially dangerous outdoor activities and sports. Is it a love of adventure? A sense of boredom? Or something else entirely?
- 3 Share any accounts of survival or lucky escapes that you have heard or read about.



 Blue John Canyon, Utah, USA

▼ FROM *BETWEEN A ROCK AND A HARD PLACE* BY ARON RALSTON

In this first-hand account, Ralston describes how a boulder crushed his right hand while he was climbing and hiking in a canyon. He had not informed anyone of his hiking plans.

drop-off A sheer downward slope.

chockstone A stone that has become stuck between rocks.

overhang A part of something (in this case, the rock) that extends over something else.

traverse Cross.

teeters Balance unsteadily.

torque Rotating force.

ricochets Bounces off.

I come to another drop-off. This one is maybe eleven or twelve feet high, a foot higher and of a different geometry than the overhang I descended ten minutes ago. Another refrigerator chockstone is wedged between the walls, ten feet downstream from and at the same height as the ledge. It gives the space below the drop-off the claustrophobic feel of a short tunnel. Instead of the walls widening after the drop-off, or opening into a bowl at the bottom of the canyon, here the slot narrows to a consistent three feet across at the lip of the drop-off and continues at that width for fifty feet down the canyon.

Sometimes in narrow passages like this one, it's possible for me to stem my body across the slot, with my feet and back pushing out in opposite directions against the walls. Controlling this counterpressure by switching my hands and feet on the opposing walls, I can move up or down the shoulder width crevice fairly easily as long as the friction contact stays solid between the walls and my hands, feet, and back. This technique is known as stemming or chimneying; you can imagine using it to climb up the inside of a chimney.

Just below the ledge where I'm standing is a chockstone the size of a large bus tire, stuck fast in the channel between the walls, a few feet out from the lip. If I can step onto it, then I'll have a nine-foot height to descend, less than that of the first overhang. I'll dangle off the chockstone, then take a short fall onto the rounded rocks piled on the canyon floor.

Stemming across the canyon at the lip of the drop-off, with one foot and one hand on each of the walls, I traverse out to the chockstone. I press my back against the south wall and lock my left knee, which pushes my foot tight against the north wall. With my right foot, I kick at the boulder to test how stuck it is. It's jammed tightly enough to hold my weight. I lower myself from the chimneying position and step onto the chockstone. It supports me but teeters slightly. After confirming that I don't want to chimney down from the chockstone's height, I squat and grip the rear of the lodged boulder, turning to face back up canyon. Sliding my belly over the front edge, I can lower myself and hang from my fully extended arms, akin to climbing down from the roof of a house.

As I dangle, I feel the stone respond to my adjusting grip with a scraping quake as my body's weight applies enough torque to disturb it from its position. Instantly, I know this is trouble, and instinctively, I let go of the rotating boulder to land on the round rocks below. When I look up, the backlit chockstone falling toward my head consumes the sky. Fear shoots my hands over my head. I can't move backward or I'll fall over a small ledge. My only hope is to push off the falling rock and get my head out of its way.

The next three seconds play out at a tenth of their normal speed. Time dilates, as if I'm dreaming, and my reactions decelerate. In slow motion: the rock smashes my left hand against the south wall; my eyes register the collision, and I yank my left arm back as the rock ricochets; the boulder then crushes my right hand and ensnares my right arm at the wrist, palm

in, thumb up, fingers extended; the rock slides another foot down the wall with my arm in tow, tearing the skin off the lateral side of my forearm. Then silence.

My disbelief paralyzes me temporarily as I stare at the sight of my arm vanishing into an implausibly small gap between the fallen boulder and the canyon wall. Within moments, my nervous system's pain response overcomes the initial shock. Good God, my hand. The flaring agony throws me into a panic. I grimace and growl... My mind commands my body, 'Get your hand out of there!' I yank my arm three times in a naive attempt to pull it out. But I'm stuck.

Anxiety has my brain tweaking; searing-hot pain shoots from my wrist up my arm. I'm frantic, and I cry out... My desperate brain conjures up a probably apocryphal story in which an adrenaline-stoked mom lifts an overturned car to free her baby. I'd give it even odds that it's made up, but I do know for certain that *right now*, while my body's chemicals are raging at full flood, is the best chance I'll have to free myself with brute force. I shove against the large boulder, heaving against it, pushing with my left hand, lifting with my knees pressed under the rock. I get good leverage with the aid of a twelve-inch shelf in front of my feet. Standing on that, I brace my thighs under the boulder and thrust upward repeatedly, grunting, 'Come on... move!' Nothing.

apocryphal Doubtful, untrue.

UNDERSTANDING THE TEXT

This extract from *Between a Rock and a Hard Place* describes the place where the accident occurred and the event itself. Aron Ralston describes the events in great detail. He recreates the scene of the accident effectively. As he is writing for a general audience, he explains the terminology related to climbing as well as the reasons behind the different things he does. His clearheaded and analytical thinking pattern is effectively brought out as well as his ability to react quickly and to take action in the face of an unexpected problem.

As this is an autobiography, it is written in the first person and has many factual details that makes it feel authentic. Because it narrates a stressful situation, the present tense is used. This gives it a sense of immediacy and makes the reader feel as though they are there with the writer as the events unfold.



▲ 'Another chockstone is wedged between the walls...'

ACTIVITY 1

A01

SKILLS ANALYSIS, INTERPRETATION

▼ DESCRIPTIVE LANGUAGE

- 1 Copy and complete the following table, identifying different pieces of information or descriptive detail given in the passage. Explain how each detail helps us to understand the writer's character or feelings.

▼ INFORMATION/DESCRIPTION	▼ ANSWER AND COMMENT
'Instead of the walls widening after the drop-off, or opening into a bowl at the bottom of the canyon, here the slot narrows to a consistent three feet across at the lip of the drop-off and continues at that width for fifty feet down the canyon.'	This information shows us that he is able to assess his surroundings in an accurate and analytical manner. He uses terms such as 'consistent three feet' which shows that he is skilled at gauging distance – a necessary skill for a climber.
'With my right foot, I kick at the boulder to test how stuck it is.'	

- 2 From the second paragraph, find two phrases that show the writer is careful.

EXPLORING LANGUAGE

Ralston's style is largely factual and analytical. He is very clear and precise in what he says about the events and his reactions. His use of minute details and his step-by-step narrative style are strong techniques that he uses to make his writing effective and interesting.

ACTIVITY 2

A02

SKILLS ANALYSIS, INTERPRETATION

▼ LANGUAGE FOR EFFECT

Copy and complete the following table, thinking about other techniques that the writer has used and their effect.

▼ TECHNIQUE	▼ EXAMPLE	▼ EFFECT
Emotive language	'flaring agony'	This phrase shows the extent of the pain the writer feels as the first shock wears off. The word 'flaring' shows how the pain rapidly grows and spreads, while the word 'agony' shows how extremely painful it is.
Direct speech		
Variety in punctuation		
	'akin to climbing down from the roof of a house'	
Personification		

ACTIVITY 3

A02

SKILLS

CRITICAL THINKING, ANALYSIS,
INTERPRETATION

▼ SENTENCE TYPE

Ralston uses a variety of sentence types to make his writing interesting. Copy and complete the following table with examples of each type and explain the effect.

▼ TYPE OF SENTENCE	▼ EXAMPLE	▼ EFFECT
Long complex sentences		
Short sentences		
Incomplete sentences		

EXAM-STYLE QUESTION

A02

SKILLS

CRITICAL THINKING, ANALYSIS,
ADAPTIVE LEARNING, CREATIVITY

How does the writer use language and structure to engage of the reader?

You should support your answer with close reference to the passage, including **brief** quotations. (12 marks)

ACTIVITY 4

A04

A05

SKILLS

PROBLEM SOLVING, CREATIVITY,
INNOVATION

▼ WRITING TASKS

- Write a magazine article giving your views on the statement: 'Extreme situations bring out the best in all of us'. In the article, you may include:
 - anecdotal incidents that support this statement
 - the positives and negatives of facing extreme situations
 - any other points you wish to make.
- In 1910, Robert Scott, an English naval officer and explorer, led an expedition to the South Pole. Three explorers from this group set out in July 1911 to collect emperor penguin eggs to be studied by scientists back home. After 35 days they managed to return to base camp with three eggs. During this trip, the three explorers faced extreme hardship due to cold and weather. Imagine that you are one of the explorers and write a diary entry detailing one day of the journey.

KEY POINT

First-person narration is often noted for its level of detail. This can enable the writer to write with immediacy and power.

HOW TO WRITE A SUCCESSFUL ANSWER

in this paragraph Addresses the question directly.

unsure Focuses on a specific feeling.

he is also able to make a quick decision and react His thoughts are given in the candidate's own words.

The following is a candidate's answer to the question, 'In your own words explain what the writer's thoughts and feelings are in paragraph 5'. The annotations show some of the strengths of the answer.

In this paragraph the writer feels worried as he is unsure whether the stone that he is balancing on will hold. The movement of the stone alerts him to danger and reacts quickly. He is very frightened as he watches the stone falling towards him, but he is also able to make a quick decision and react. He doesn't give up and wait but thinks of what action he can take and picks the only option available to him which is to push the stone away.

Using this answer as a guide, write your own answer to the following question.

- In your own words, explain the writer's feelings and reactions in paragraph 7.

'YOUNG AND DYSLEXIC? YOU'VE GOT IT GOING ON' BENJAMIN ZEPHANIAH

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

Benjamin Zephaniah has earned widespread respect for his ability to overcome spite, prejudice and ridicule. Because of his difficulties with reading, his teachers dismissed him as unintelligent and not worthy of their attention. Rejected by a number of schools, he was unable to read when he left education at the age of 13. Unusually and bravely, he refused to give in to despair, acknowledged his difficulties and joined an adult reading class. Since then, he has taken an imaginative and constructive approach to life's challenges.

In this article from *The Guardian* newspaper, Zephaniah explains how this happened, from his early difficulties in school to his determination to write. He performed some of his early work in church at the age of 11, but found himself with a criminal record two years later. Despite this troubled period, he has gone on to become a successful poet and writer. His publication within a well-regarded national newspaper can be seen as an ironic contrast to his earlier life.



▲ Poet Benjamin Zephaniah

BEFORE YOU START READING

- 1 Find out more about the author and his very unusual background before he became a highly regarded poet and author. Find out what you can about borstals, reform schools and life in poor inner-city areas of Britain. Write down your thoughts and highlight what you think makes a typical writer. Is Zephaniah what you would consider to be a 'traditional' writer?
- 2 Read the following example of Zephaniah's poetry, entitled *White Comedy*. Look at the way that Zephaniah uses the words 'white' and 'black' and the way that they affect other words. Look at some other examples of his poetry. What common themes can you identify within his poems?

I waz whitemailed
By a white witch,
Wid white magic
An white lies,
Branded by a white sheep
I slaved as a whitesmith
Near a white spot
Where I suffered whitewater fever.
Whitelisted as a whiteleg
I waz in de white book
As a master of white art,
It waz like white death.

People called me white jack
Some hailed me as a white wog,
So I joined de white watch
Trained as a white guard
Lived off the white economy.
Caught and beaten by de
whiteshirts
I waz condemned to a white mass,
Don't worry,
I shall be writing to de Black
House.

▼ 'YOUNG AND DYSLEXIC? YOU'VE GOT IT GOING ON' BY BENJAMIN ZEPHANIAH

This article was published in *The Guardian*, 2 October 2015, and is adapted from Zephaniah's contribution to *Creative, Successful, Dyslexic* (Jessica Kingsley, 2015).

As a child I suffered, but learned to turn dyslexia to my advantage, to see the world more creatively. We are the architects, we are the designers.

I'm of the generation where teachers didn't know what dyslexia was. The big problem with the education system then was that there was no compassion, no understanding and no humanity. I don't look back and feel angry with the teachers. The ones who wanted to have an individual approach weren't allowed to. The idea of being kind and thoughtful and listening to problems just wasn't done: the past is a different kind of country.

At school my ideas always contradicted the teachers'. I remember one teacher saying that human beings sleep for one-third of their life and I put my hand up and said, "If there's a God isn't that a design fault? If you've built something, you want efficiency. If I was God I would have designed sleep so we could stay awake. Then good people could do one-third more good in the world."

The teacher said, "Shut up, stupid boy. Bad people would do one-third more bad." I thought I'd put in a good idea. I was just being creative. She also had a point, but the thing was she called me stupid for even thinking about it.

I remember a teacher talking about Africa and the 'local savages' and I would say, "Who are you to talk about savages?" She would say, "How dare you challenge me?" – and that would get me into trouble.

Once, when I was finding it difficult to engage with writing and had asked for some help, a teacher said, "It's all right. We can't all be intelligent, but you'll end up being a good sportsperson, so why don't you go outside and play some football?" I thought, "Oh great", but now I realise he was stereotyping me.

I had poems in my head even then, and when I was 10 or 11 my sister wrote some of them down for me. When I was 13 I could read very basically but it would be such hard work that I would give up. I thought that so long as you could read how much the banknote was worth, you knew enough or you could ask a mate.

I got thrown out of a lot of schools, the last one at 13. I was expelled partly because of arguing with teachers on an intellectual level and partly for being a rude boy and fighting. I didn't stab anybody, but I did take revenge on a teacher once. I stole his car and drove it into his front garden. I remember him telling us the Nazis weren't that bad. He could say that in the classroom. When I was in borstal I used to do this thing of looking at people I didn't want to be like. I saw a guy who spent all his time sitting stooped over and I thought, "I don't want to be like that", so I learned to sit with a straight back. Being observant helped me make the right choices.

A high percentage of the prison population are dyslexic, and a high percentage of the architect population. If you look at the statistics, I should

dyslexia Difficulties with reading despite normal intelligence.

the past is a different kind of country A phrase meaning that life was different in the past.

contradict Challenge what someone has said.

stereotyping Making unwarranted assumptions about someone or something.

borstal A residential training centre for young people who are in trouble.



be in prison: a black man brought up on the wrong side of town whose family fell apart, in trouble with the police when I was a kid, unable to read and write, with no qualifications and, on top of that, dyslexic. But I think staying out of prison is about conquering your fears and finding your path in life.

When I go into prisons to talk to people I see men and women who, in intelligence and other qualities, are the same as me. But opportunities opened for me and they missed theirs, didn't notice them or didn't take them.

I never thought I was stupid. I didn't have that struggle. If I have someone in front of me who doesn't have a problem reading and writing telling me that black people are savages I just think, "I'm not stupid – you're the one who's stupid." I just had self-belief.

For my first book I told my poems to my girlfriend, who wrote them down for me. It really took off, especially within the black community. I wrote "wid luv" for "with love". People didn't think they were dyslexic poems, they just thought I wrote phonetically.

At 21 I went to an adult education class in London to learn to read and write. The teacher told me, "You are dyslexic," and I was like, "Do I need an operation?" She explained to me what it meant and I suddenly thought, "Ah, I get it. I thought I was going crazy."

I wrote more poetry, novels for teenagers, plays, other books and recorded music. I take poetry to people who do not read poetry. Still now, when I'm writing the word "knot", I have to stop and think, "How do I write that?" I have to draw something to let me know what the word is to come back to it later. If I can't spell "question" I just put a question mark and come back to it later.

When I look at a book, the first thing I see is the size of it, and I know that's what it's like for a lot of young people who find reading tough. When Brunel University offered me the job of professor of poetry and creative writing, I knew my students would be officially more educated than me. I tell them, "You can do this course and get the right grade because you have a good memory – but if you don't have passion, creativity, individuality, there's no point." In my life now, I find that people accommodate my dyslexia. I can perform my poetry because it doesn't have to be word perfect, but I never read one of my novels in public. When I go to literary festivals I always get an actor to read it out for me. Otherwise all my energy goes into reading the book and the mood is lost.

If someone can't understand dyslexia it's their problem. In the same way, if someone oppresses me because of my race I don't sit down and think, "How can I become white?" It's not my problem, it's theirs and they are the ones who have to come to terms with it.

If you're dyslexic and you feel there's something holding you back, just remember: it's not you. In many ways being dyslexic is a natural way to be.

What's unnatural is the way we read and write. If you look at a pictorial language like Chinese, you can see the word for a woman because the character looks like a woman. The word for a house looks like a house. It is a strange step to go from that to a squiggle that represents a sound.

So don't be heavy on yourself. And if you are a parent of someone with

accommodate Make adjustments for someone or something.

oppresses Makes someone feel inadequate or worthless and limits their freedom.

defect Something that prevents proper functioning or a problem.

dyslexia don't think of it as a defect. Dyslexia is not a measure of intelligence: you may have a genius on your hands. Having dyslexia can make you creative. If you want to construct a sentence and can't find the word you are searching for, you have to think of a way to write round it. This requires being creative and so your 'creativity muscle' gets bigger.

Kids come up to me and say, "I'm dyslexic too," and I say to them, "Use it to your advantage, see the world differently. Us dyslexic people, we've got it going on – we are the architects. We are the designers." It's like these kids are proud to be like me and if that helps them, that is great. I didn't have that as a child. I say to them, "Bloody nondyslexics ... who do they think they are?"

UNDERSTANDING THE TEXT

This newspaper article is drawn from Zephaniah's contribution to a book about how dyslexic people can be successful. He presents himself as someone who has found ways of coping with dyslexia, persuading other dyslexics that they should not regard dyslexia as an obstacle, but as an opportunity to be creative, rather than restricted.

In a relatively short space, Zephaniah introduces a number of important points. Mainly, he does this by using short, tightly-written paragraphs so that in a matter of a few minutes you learn what the author understands as the essential elements of his coping with dyslexia.

ACTIVITY 1

A01

SKILLS

CRITICAL THINKING

▼ ANALYSING THE ARTICLE

Copy and complete the following table, analysing what the writer is saying in each of the examples from the article.

▼ EXAMPLE	▼ WHAT THE WRITER IS SAYING
'no compassion, no understanding and no humanity'	These words show Zephaniah's view of his time in school.
'She also had a point'	
'such hard work that I would give up'	
'But opportunities opened for me and they missed theirs'	
'Do I need an operation?'	
'I don't sit down and think, "How can I become white?"'	

ACTIVITY 2

A01

SKILLS

ANALYSIS, INTERPRETATION

▼ THEMES AND IDEAS

Copy and complete the following table. Find evidence of each theme in the article and discuss your findings.

▼ THEME	▼ COMMENT	▼ EVIDENCE
Failed schooling	Zephaniah describes his poor start in life, which contrasts with what he achieves later despite the difficulties faced at school.	
Challenging teachers		
Things not being what they seemed / what people would expect them to be		
Escaping, avoiding things and coping		
Turning things round		
Creativity		

EXPLORING LANGUAGE

An even tone is maintained in the opening paragraphs, despite the fact that Zephaniah is describing events that troubled him at the time. He reports events without reacting to them. In this way, readers are encouraged to draw their own conclusions, and this makes Zephaniah's points more convincing. On two occasions, he simply tells readers what he thought when faced with a teacher whose comments troubled him. This shows the reader an example of his reacting without making things worse. Zephaniah shows his self-restraint when provoked. In his final two paragraphs, he provides encouragement and a challenge with the striking phrases, 'creativity muscle' and 'Bloody nondyslexics ... who do they think they are?'.

KEY POINT

Sometimes, non-fiction writers hold back from giving their full reaction to create a space in which the reader can fill with their own reaction.

A short, introductory paragraph conveys Zephaniah's conclusion from the outset and engages with the reader: 'We are the architects, we are the designers'. The writing is matter-of-fact and lacks self-pity. From being thrown out of schools to his appointment as a professor of poetry at a university, he presents important events in his life in chronological order, to show how he came to see beyond his troubles as a teenager and turned them into something positive, from which both he and the reader can learn.

ACTIVITY 3

A02

SKILLS ANALYSIS

▼ LANGUAGE FOR EFFECT

Copy and complete the following table, explaining the techniques that Zephaniah uses in these extracts to achieve his purposes. A clue has been provided in each case.

▼ EXAMPLE	▼ CLUE	▼ TECHNIQUE
'I had poems in my head even then.'	Think about metaphor.	
'I saw a guy who spent all his time sitting stooped over and I thought, 'I don't want to be like that,' so I learned to sit with a straight back.'	Look at the main verbs.	
'If you look at the statistics, I should be in prison: a black man brought up on the wrong side of town whose family fell apart, in trouble with the police when I was a kid, unable to read and write, with no qualifications and, on top of that, dyslexic.'	Look at the list.	

ACTIVITY 4

A01

SKILLS COLLABORATION, EMPATHY, NEGOTIATION

▼ AUDIENCE AND LANGUAGE

Make notes on your answers to the following questions. Discuss them with others if possible.

- 1 Why does Zephaniah think architects are important? What does he think about 'beating the odds'?
- 2 How inspiring do you think other dyslexics would find this piece? Why?
- 3 Zephaniah thinks a pictorial written language, such as the Chinese system, is easier to understand – do you agree? Can you think of any other examples? Think about how a letter represents a thing, and about representing sound.

ACTIVITY 5

A04

A05

SKILLS

CREATIVITY, INNOVATION

▼ WRITING TASKS

- 1 A friend has been told that they are dyslexic. Write about what you would do to help and encourage them.
- 2 Someone in your class is being treated badly by a teacher. Write a story in which this classmate deals with the problem, not by becoming angry, but by thinking creatively.

EXAM-STYLE QUESTIONS

A02

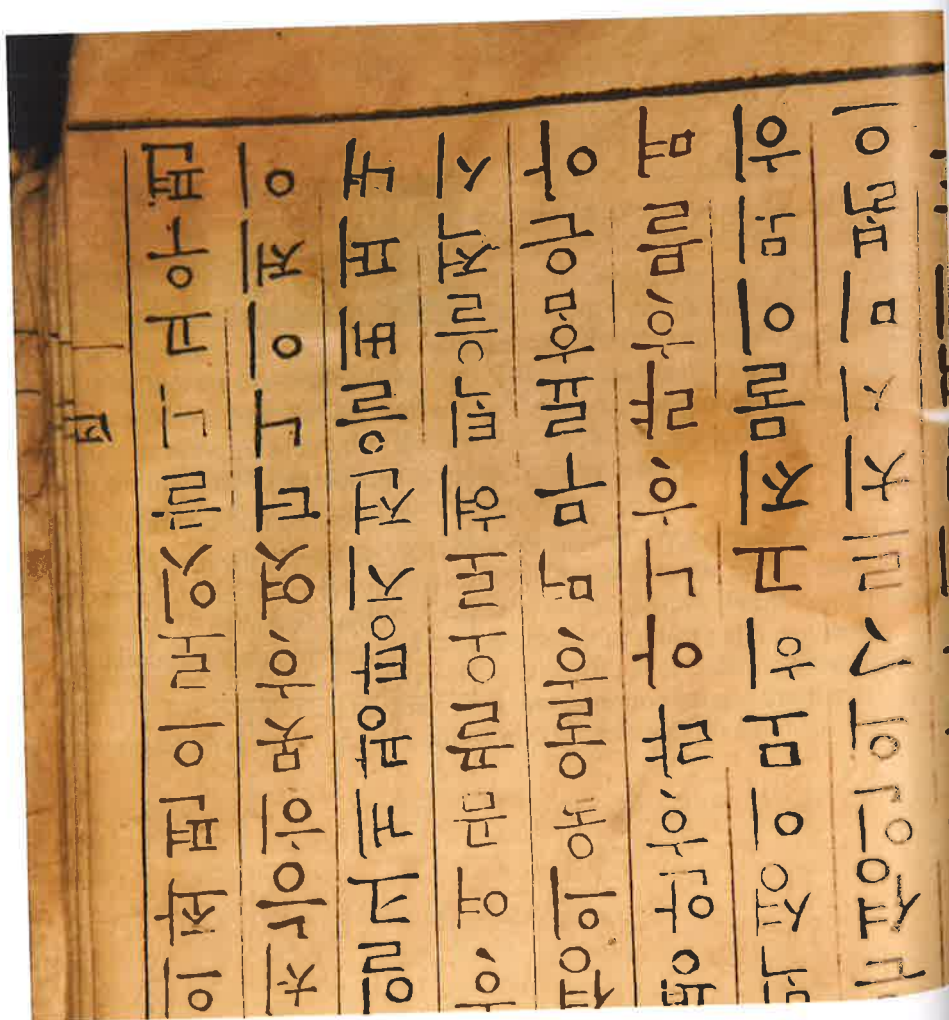
SKILLS

CRITICAL THINKING, ANALYSIS,
ADAPTIVE LEARNING, CREATIVITY

How does the writer explore his early life and relationship with reading?
You should support your answer with close reference to the passage, including **brief** quotations. (12 marks)

How does the writer use language and structure to encourage the reader to challenge unfair treatment?

You should support your answer with close reference to the passage, including **brief** quotations. (12 marks)



► Some languages make more sense to people than others.

SUBJECT VOCABULARY

travelogue a book that describes a travel experience

A GAME OF POLO WITH A HEADLESS GOAT

EMMA LEVINE

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

This extract comes from a book which was written as a spin-off from Emma Levine's television series about strange and unusual sports. It is a **travelogue** in which she describes these sports, the people involved and her experiences of filming them. In doing so, she gives an insight not just into the sports themselves, but into the lives and culture of the people who take part in and watch them.

BEFORE YOU START READING

- 1 Do some research.
 - Find some information about Emma Levine. You can visit her website by searching for her name.
 - Find a newspaper report on a motor race, perhaps a Formula 1 Grand Prix, and make some notes about the way in which it has been written.
 - What is the strangest sport or game you know or can find information about?
- 2 In a small group or with a partner, share your ideas on the following questions.
 - Do you prefer to take part in sport or watch it?
 - How important is sport in your life?
 - Do you think the involvement of money in sport (for example, gambling or excessive pay for sportspeople) ruins sport?

▼ FROM A GAME OF POLO WITH A HEADLESS GOAT BY EMMA LEVINE

Levine travelled throughout Asia researching and filming unusual sports. In this passage she writes about a donkey race in Karachi, Pakistan.

We drove off to find the best viewing spot, which turned out to be the crest of the hill so we could see the approaching race. I asked the lads if we could join in the 'Wacky Races' and follow the donkeys, and they loved the idea. 'We'll open the car boot, you climb inside and point your camera towards the race. As the donkeys overtake us, we'll join the cars.' 'But will you try and get to the front?' 'Oh yes, that's no problem.'

The two lads who had never been interested in this Karachi sport were suddenly fired up with enthusiasm. We waited for eternity on the brow of the hill, me perched in the boot with a zoom lens pointing out. Nearly one hour later I was beginning to feel rather silly when the only action was a villager on a wobbly bicycle, who nearly fell off as he cycled past and gazed around at us.

Several vehicles went past, and some donkey-carts carrying spectators. 'Are they coming?' we called out to them. 'Coming, coming,' came the reply. I was beginning to lose faith in its happening, but the lads remained confident.

Just as I was assuming that the race had been cancelled, we spotted two approaching donkey-carts in front of a cloud of fumes and dust created by some fifty vehicles roaring up in their wake. As they drew nearer, Yaqoob revved up the engine and began to inch the car out of the lay-by. The two donkeys were almost dwarfed by their entourage; but there was no denying their speed – the Kibla donkey is said to achieve speeds of up to 40 kph, and this looked close. The two were neck-and-neck, their jockeys perched on top of the tiny carts using their whips energetically, although not cruelly.

The noise of the approaching vehicles grew; horns tooting, bells ringing, and the special rattles used just for this purpose (like maracas, a metal container filled with dried beans). Men standing on top of their cars and vans, hanging out of taxis and perched on lorries, all cheered and shouted, while the vehicles jostled to get to the front of the convoy.

Yaqoob chose exactly the right moment to edge out of the road and swerve in front of the nearest car, finding the perfect place to see the two donkeys and at the front of the vehicles. This was Formula One without rules, or a city-centre rush hour gone anarchic; a complete flouting of every type of traffic rule and common sense.

Our young driver relished this unusual test of driving skills. It was survival of the fittest, and depended upon the ability to cut in front of a vehicle with a sharp flick of the steering wheel (no lane discipline here); quick reflexes to spot a gap in the traffic for a couple of seconds; nerves of steel, and an effective horn. There were two races – the motorized spectators at the back; in front, the two donkeys, still running close and amazingly not put off by the uproar just behind them. Ahead of the donkeys, oncoming traffic – for it was a main road – had to dive into the ditch and wait there until we had passed. Yaqoob loved it. We stayed near to the front, his hand permanently on the horn and his language growing more colourful with every vehicle that tried to cut in front.

The road straightened and levelled, and everyone picked up speed as we neared the end of the race. But just as they were reaching the finishing line,



▲ Emma Levine writes about the ancient sports of Asia.

anarchic Lawless.

flouting Breaking.

the hospital gate, there was a near pile-up as the leading donkey swerved, lost his footing and he and the cart tumbled over. The race was over.

And then the trouble began. I assumed the winner was the one who completed the race but it was not seen that way by everyone. Apart from the two jockeys and 'officials' (who, it turned out, were actually monitoring the race) there were over a hundred punters who had all staked money on the race, and therefore had strong opinions. Some were claiming that the donkey had fallen because the other one had been ridden too close to him. Voices were raised, fists were out and tempers rising. Everyone gathered around one jockey and official, while the bookmakers were trying to insist that the race should be re-run.

Yaqoob and Iqbal were nervous of hanging around a volatile situation. They agreed to find out for me what was happening, ordering me to stay inside the car as they were swallowed up by the crowd. They emerged sometime later. 'It's still not resolved,' said Iqbal, 'but it's starting to get nasty. I think we should leave.' As we drove away, Yaqoob reflected on his driving skills. 'I really enjoyed that,' he said as we drove off at a more sedate pace. 'But I don't even have my licence yet because I'm underage!'

They both found this hilarious, but I was glad he hadn't told me before; an inexperienced, underage driver causing a massive pile-up in the middle of the high-stakes donkey race could have caused problems.

UNDERSTANDING THE TEXT

Emma Levine's purpose in writing her book was to describe and inform. She obviously has to engage the reader and hold their interest. As you study this text, you need to think about how she does this.

ACTIVITY 1

A01

SKILLS CRITICAL THINKING, ANALYSIS

▼ THREE RACES

The passage seems a straightforward description and narrative of the race, but it isn't. First of all, there is not just one race happening, but three:

- the donkey race
- the spectators' race
- the writer's race to get the best pictures.

- 1 Find one quotation for each of these in order to show that there are three races taking place.
- 2 Is the main focus of the reader's interest the race, or the people involved in it? What do you think? Find some evidence to support your point of view.

STRUCTURE

The passage can be defined as a series of linked paragraphs, describing events in chronological order and concluding with the end of the race and the writer's overview of what happened. The internal structure is much more complex than this simple outline suggests.

ACTIVITY 2

A01

SKILLS

ANALYSIS, INTERPRETATION

▼ TYPES OF WRITING

Copy and complete the following table, finding examples of each of the different kinds of writing used in the passage. How does each of the examples that you have found add to the reader's interest in the passage?

▼ TYPE OF WRITING	▼ EXAMPLE(S)
Description	
Dialogue	
Informational writing	
Narrative	
Evaluation	
Commentary	

EXPLORING LANGUAGE

Most newspaper reports of sports races are serious in tone, and try to give the facts of the race and what it was like. Emma Levine's purpose is much more complicated than that. This passage is a mixture of comic writing and serious reportage, with a lot of information given as well. Consider each of these elements carefully.

KEY POINT

The subject matter of this passage lends itself to both comedy and drama and the writer exploits both to great effect.



▲ The Kibla donkey is said to achieve speeds of up to 40 kph.

ACTIVITY 3

A02

SKILLS ANALYSIS

▼ LANGUAGE FOR EFFECT

KEY POINT

Sport, which essentially shows adults playing games, is a fertile subject for writers.

Copy and complete the following table to help you understand how language is used in the passage.

▼ QUESTION		▼ ANSWER AND EVIDENCE
What words and phrases does Levine use to bring out the humour of the race?		1 'the "Wacky Races"' – this reference to a famous television cartoon series puts the race in a comic context. 2 3
What words and phrases help to convey the excitement of the races?	Words that convey movement	1 'some fifty vehicles roaring up in their wake' – this conveys the speed of the cars and the speed of the donkeys. 2 3
	Words that suggest sound	1 2 3
	Words that create visual images	1 2 3
What words and phrases help show that the passage contains some serious moments?		1 'Yaqoob and Iqbal were nervous of hanging around a volatile situation' – this shows the danger of the situation and how quickly the mood of the spectators might change. 2 3

ACTIVITY 4

A04

A05

SKILLS REASONING, CREATIVITY, INNOVATION

▼ WRITING TASKS

- 1 Write a short story about a race or a hunt.
- 2 Write a newspaper report on a game involving a team sport, such as football, cricket or basketball.
- 3 'Taking part in sport is more important than winning'. Argue either in favour of this statement or against it.

EXAM-STYLE QUESTION

A02

SKILLS

CRITICAL THINKING,
ANALYSIS, ADAPTIVE
LEARNING, CREATIVITY

How does the writer use language and structure to create excitement and interest?

You should support your answer with close reference to the passage, including **brief** quotations.

(12 marks)

BEYOND THE SKY AND THE EARTH: A JOURNEY INTO BHUTAN

JAMIE ZEPPA

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

Jamie Zeppa is a Canadian writer and college professor. *Beyond the Sky and Earth: A Journey into Bhutan* is an autobiography that recounts her experiences on a two-year assignment as an English lecturer in the 1980s in the mountainous kingdom of Bhutan. It is a **memoir**, but it should also be classed as travel writing. It is a record of the culture and life of a Himalayan village and her initial reactions and growing attachment to this remote and unexplored part of the world.

Bhutan is a **landlocked** country in South Asia and was not exposed to western influences until the second half of the 20th century, which enabled it to retain much of its unique identity and charm. It is a country that has been named the happiest in Asia and the eighth happiest in the world.

SUBJECT VOCABULARY

memoir a form of autobiography

GENERAL VOCABULARY

landlocked without a coastline

BEFORE YOU START READING

- 1 Do some research about the history and geography of Bhutan.
- 2 In groups, talk about what makes your own culture different from that of other countries. Are there many differences, or only a few? Talk about the different things that people discuss when describing a culture, such as language, clothing and practices.
- 3 Quite often the names of countries and cities have very interesting stories behind their origin. Share any that you know with the rest of your class.

▼ FROM BEYOND THE SKY AND THE EARTH: A JOURNEY INTO BHUTAN BY JAMIE ZEPPA

When Zeppa was 24 years old she left Canada to teach in Bhutan. This memoir grew out of an essay she wrote about her early days in the country.

Mountains all around, climbing up to peaks, rolling into valleys, again and again. Bhutan is all and only mountains. I know the technical explanation for the landscape, landmass meeting landmass, the Indian subcontinent colliding into Asia thirty or forty million years ago, but I cannot imagine it. It is easier to picture a giant child gathering earth in great armfuls, piling up rock, pinching mud into ridges and sharp peaks, knuckling out little valleys and gorges, poking holes for water to fall through.

It is my first night in Thimphu, the capital, a ninety-minute drive from the airport in Paro. It took five different flights over four days to get there, from Toronto to Montreal to Amsterdam to New Delhi to Calcutta to Paro. I am exhausted but I cannot sleep. From my simple, pine-panelled room at the

Paro A valley in Bhutan that contains the country's only international airport.

flavorless Zeppa uses American English spellings.

Saskatchewan A province in Canada known for its harsh winters.

British Columbia A Canadian province on the west coast, containing the city of Vancouver.

impish Mischievous; the term comes from the name of a mythological creature, 'imp', believed to cause trouble.

WUSC World University Service of Canada, a non-profit organisation that works with local bodies to strengthen educational systems and economic opportunities.

Willie Nelson A well-known American musician of country music whose career was at its height in the 1970s.

Rambo The American main character from the Rambo films.

dzong A type of fortress found in the present and former Tibetan Buddhist kingdoms of the Himalayas, particularly Bhutan and south Tibet.

emissary A diplomat or representative for a country.

George Bogle A Scottish traveller and diplomat who was the first to establish diplomatic relations with Tibet.

Druk Sherig hotel, I watch mountains rise to meet the moon. I used to wonder what was on the other side of mountains, how the landscape resolved itself beyond the immediate wall in front of you. Flying in from the baked-brown plains of India this morning, I found out: on the other side of mountains are mountains, more mountains and mountains again. The entire earth below us was a convulsion of crests and gorges and wind sharpened pinnacles. Just past Everest, I caught a glimpse of the Tibetan plateau, the edge of a frozen desert 4,500 meters above sea level. Thimphu's altitude is about half of that but even here, the winter air is thin and dry and very cold.

The next morning, I share breakfast of instant coffee, powdered milk, plasticky white bread and **flavorless** red jam in the hotel with two other Canadians who have signed on to teach in Bhutan for two years. Lorna has golden brown hair, freckles and a no nonsense, home-on-the-farm demeanour that is frequently shattered by her ringing laughter and stories of wild characters that populate her life in Saskatchewan. Sasha from **British Columbia** is slight and dark, with an **impish** smile. After breakfast, we have a brief meeting with Gordon, the field director of the WUSC program in Bhutan, and then walk along the main road of Thimphu. Both Lorna and Sasha have traveled extensively; Lorna trekked all over Europe and northern Africa and Sasha worked for a year in an orphanage in Bombay. They are both ecstatic about Bhutan so far, and I stay close to them, hoping to pick up some of their enthusiasm.

Although Thimphu's official population is 20,000, it seems even smaller. It doesn't even have traffic lights. Blue-suited policemen stationed at two intersections along the main street direct the occasional truck or land cruiser using incomprehensible but graceful hand gestures. The buildings all have the same pitched roof, trefoil windows and heavy beams painted with lotus flowers, jewels and clouds. One-storied shops with wooden-shuttered windows open onto the street. They seem to be selling the same things: onions, rice, milk powder, dried fish, plastic buckets and metal plates, quilts and packages of stale, soft cookies from India – Bourbon Biscuits, Coconut Crunchies and the hideously colored Orange Cream Biscuits. There are more signs of the outside world than I had expected: teenagers in acid washed jeans, Willie Nelson's greatest hits after the news in English on the Bhutan Broadcasting Service, a **Rambo** poster in a bar. Overall, these signs of cultural infiltration are few, but they are startling against the Bhutanese-ness of everything else.

The town itself looks very old, with cracked sidewalks and faded paintwork but Gordon told us that it didn't exist thirty-odd years ago. Before the sixties, when the third king decided to make it the capital, it was nothing but rice paddies, a few farm houses, and a **dzong** – one of the fortresses that are scattered throughout the country. Thimphu is actually new. "Thimphu will look like New York to you when you come back after a year in the east," he said.

At the end of the main road is Tashichho Dzong, the seat of the Royal Government of Bhutan, a grand, whitewashed, red-roofed, golden-tipped fortress, built in the traditional way, without blueprints or nails. Beyond, hamlets are connected by footpaths, and terraced fields, barren now, climb steadily from the river and merge into forest. Thimphu will never look like New York to me, I think.

The Bhutanese are a very handsome people, 'the best built race of men I ever saw,' wrote **emissary** George Bogle on his way to Tibet in 1774, and I find I

Padmasambhava An Indian Buddhist master.

shamanistic religion A religion that has a belief in natural phenomenon and in powerful spirits that can be influenced by shamans (a person who acts as an intermediary between natural and supernatural worlds).

lama A Buddhist monk from Tibet or Mongolia.

Sandalwood A tree grown for its fragrant wood and oil in the Indian subcontinent.

feliculously Pleasingly or well-chosen.

Sanskrit An ancient Indian language.

Jesuits Members of a Roman Catholic order devoted to missionary work.

cordial Friendly and polite.

Ashley Eden An official and diplomat in India under British rule.

Great Game The economic and political conflict between the British Empire and the Russian Empire for supremacy in Central Asia in the 19th century.

agree. Of medium height and sturdily built, they have beautiful aristocratic faces with dark, almond-shaped eyes, high cheekbones and gentle smiles. Both men and women wear their black hair short. The women wear a *kira*, a brightly striped, ankle-length dress and the men a *gho*, a knee-length robe that resembles a kimono, except the top part is exceptionally voluminous. The Bhutanese of Nepali origin tend to be taller, with sharper features and darker complexions. They too wear the *gho* and *kira*. People look at us curiously, but they do not seem surprised at our presence. Although we see few other foreigners in town, we know they are here. Gordon said something this morning about Thimphu's small but friendly 'ex-pat' community.

When we stop and ask for directions at a hotel, the young man behind the counter walks with us to the street, pointing out the way, explaining politely in impeccable English. I search for the right word to describe the people, for the quality that impresses me most – dignity, unselfconsciousness, good humor, grace – but can find no single word to hold all of my impressions.

In Thimpu, we attended a week-long orientation session with twelve other Irish, British, Australian and New Zealand teachers new to Bhutan. Our first lessons, in Bhutanese history, are the most interesting. Historical records show that waves of Tibetan immigrants settled in Bhutan sometime before the tenth century, but the area is thought to have been inhabited long before that. In the eighth century, the Indian saint Padmasambhava brought Buddhism to the area, where it absorbed many elements of Bon, the indigenous shamanistic religion. The new religion took hold but was not a unifying force. The area remained a collection of isolated valleys, each ruled by its own king. When the Tibetan lama Ngawang Namgyel arrived in 1616, he set about unifying the valleys under one central authority and gave the country the name Druk Yul, meaning Land of the Thunder Dragon. Earlier names for Bhutan are just as beautiful – the Tibetans knew the country as the Southern Land of Medicinal Herbs and the South Sandalwood Country. Districts within Bhutan were even more felicitously-named: Rainbow District of Desires, Lotus Grove of the Gods, Blooming Valley of Luxuriant Fruits, the Land of Longing and Silver Pines. Bhutan, the name by which the country became known to the outside world, is thought to be derived from *Bhotanta*, meaning the 'end of Tibet' or from the Sanskrit *Bhu-uttan*, meaning 'highlands'.

While the rest of Asia was being overrun by Europeans of varying hue but similar cry, only a handful of Westerners found their way into Bhutan. Two Portuguese Jesuits came to call in 1627, and six British missions paid brief but cordial visits from the late 1700s until the middle of the next century. Relations with the British took a nasty turn during the disastrous visit of Ashley Eden in 1864. Eden, who had gone to sort out a small problem of the Bhutanese raids on British territory, had his back slapped, his hair pulled, and his face rubbed with wet dough, and was then forced to sign an outrageous treaty that led to a brief war between the British and the Bhutanese. Considering the consolidated British empire in the south, and the Great Game being played out in the north between the colonial powers, Bhutan's preservation of its independence was remarkable. I am full of admiration for this small country that has managed to look after itself so well.

UNDERSTANDING THE TEXT

This extract gives the reader a vivid description of the writer's first impressions of a foreign land. It conveys the way in which the writer's reaction changes from an initial lukewarm attitude to a gradual fascination as she begins to learn about the country's history and observe its culture.

Travel writing gives personal accounts of explorations and travel experiences. Examples of the genre contain many factual details. Terms that are specific to that culture are explained and opinions are conveyed. Like most travel writing, this extract describes a key event and includes background details and research that was most likely conducted after the travel experience has ended.

ACTIVITY 1

A01

SKILLS

ANALYSIS

▼ FEATURES OF TRAVEL WRITING

Copy and complete the following table, finding examples of these features of travel writing in the passage.

▼ FEATURE	▼ EXAMPLE
Central event	
Factual details	
Background details	
Terminology and explanation	
Opinions	
Evidence of research	

ACTIVITY 2

A02

SKILLS

CRITICAL THINKING, ANALYSIS,
INTERPRETATION

▼ LANGUAGE FOR EFFECT

Because this is a memoir, the reader learns about Bhutan through the eyes of the narrator, and it conveys her mixed feelings effectively. While the text is full of information intended to give the reader a sense of place, it is also her personal view of Bhutan and everything that she sees and experiences.

Copy and complete the following table, making a list of the writer's feelings, giving an example and explaining their effect.

▼ FEELING/ATTITUDE	▼ EXAMPLE	▼ COMMENT
A sense of being unable to understand the experience.	'... but I cannot imagine it'	The writer seems unable to even understand the geography of the area, as if it is so different from what she is used to that she needs to visualise it in different ways.
A lack of enthusiasm for the country.	'teenagers in acid washed jeans, Willie Nelson's greatest hits after the news in English on the Bhutan Broadcasting Service...'	

EXPLORING LANGUAGE

In this extract, Jamie Zeppa is both an observer and a participant. She is looking at and reflecting on the elements of culture that she sees around her, but she is also beginning to participate by attending the training session as part of her work as a lecturer. These aspects are reflected in the language choices she makes.

This is mainly an informative piece full of factual information. If it was too full of facts, the reader might find it boring or dry. However, Zeppa is able to make it lively and capture the reader's attention. One reason for this is her love for the place. Another reason is her skilled use of techniques and the language choices she makes.

- ▶ In the second paragraph, find two phrases that show that the writer is observing her surroundings.
- ▶ Look at paragraph three and explain in your own words what the writer thinks about Thimphu.



▲ The mountains of the Paro Valley, Bhutan

ACTIVITY 3

A02

SKILLS ANALYSIS, INTERPRETATION

▼ TECHNIQUES FOR EFFECT

Copy and complete the following table, thinking about the techniques used in the extract and their effect on the reader.

▼ TECHNIQUE	▼ EXAMPLE	▼ EFFECT
Repetition		
Hyphenated words		
Imagery		
Original phrases		

Now copy and complete the next table, picking out some words or phrases that Zeppa uses to make her text feel lively and to add vivid detail.

▼ WORDS OR PHRASES	▼ COMMENT
'hideously coloured Orange Cream Biscuits'	A small amount of humour is added by this phrase. It also creates a picture in the reader's mind of the brightness of the food dye used and creates an impression that the writer finds some aspects of what she sees very different from home.

The writer uses lists extensively as a technique. This is particularly useful because she is describing the varied and fascinating world that she is being exposed to. Lists can be of two types:

- 1 syndetic lists – a list connected by the use of conjunctions between each term, for example, 'apples and oranges and grapes'
- 2 asyndetic lists – a list connected by commas, for example, 'umbrellas, shoes, prams and all sorts of things'. At times, even the final conjunction 'and' can be omitted, for example, 'articles, adjectives, nouns, phrases, clauses, verbs... the list was endless'.

Copy and complete the following table, finding an example of each type of list in the passage and explaining why it might have been used.

▼ TYPE	▼ EXAMPLE	▼ EFFECT
Syndetic		
Asyndetic		

KEY POINT

Look at the ways in which the writer uses language to perform the dual roles of observer and participant.

ACTIVITY 4

A04

A05

SKILLS

TEAMWORK, SELF-PRESENTATION

▼ TEN THINGS I NEED ...

- 1 Give a speech on the topic, 'The ten things I need in order to be happy'. When planning, think of all the little things as well as the important things that you should have in your list. Try to add one item or idea that is really different from other people's, as this can be used to comic effect.
- 2 In pairs, create the text for a radio commercial advertising an exotic or interesting place to visit, then perform it for the class.

ACTIVITY 5

A04

A05

SKILLS

PROBLEM SOLVING, CREATIVITY, INNOVATION

▼ WRITING TASKS

- 1 Write an article for your school newspaper persuading senior students to take a gap year after their final exams. During this year, they should provide some service to the community before beginning their university education. How will you convince them to do so?
- 2 Look at the following images. Write a narrative beginning with the words, 'I wanted to get away to a place that was different from any that I had known until now'.



▲ 'A place that was different from any that I had known'

EXAM-STYLE QUESTION

A02

SKILLS

CRITICAL THINKING, ANALYSIS, ADAPTIVE LEARNING, CREATIVITY

How does the writer use language and structure to convey her growing fascination with Bhutan?

You should support your answer with close reference to the passage, including brief quotations.

(12 marks)

H IS FOR HAWK HELEN MACDONALD

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

Helen Macdonald is a very experienced and enthusiastic falconer. When her father died suddenly on a London street, she was devastated. In an attempt to cope with her grief, she decided to buy and train one of the most difficult and aggressive of birds of prey, the goshawk. The experience changed her life. She said: 'The book is a memoir about that year when I lost my father and trained a hawk'.

Macdonald's book, published in 2013, won the Samuel Johnson Prize and Costa Book of the Year Award (both highly prestigious awards in the UK and Ireland). One reviewer, Mark Cocker, said: 'More than any other writer I know, Macdonald is able to **summon** the mental world of a bird of prey... As a naturalist she has somehow acquired her bird's laser-like visual **acuity**'. In addition, he praised her writing for its verbal inventiveness and precision.

GENERAL VOCABULARY

summon in this case, bring an image into the reader's mind

acuity the keenness or sharpness of something such as sight

BEFORE YOU START READING

- 1 Find out what you can about goshawks and what makes them different from other birds of prey.
- 2 Find some pictures of hawks on the internet. Try to think of some words or phrases to describe them and their apparent 'personalities'.
- 3 What is hawking? What do you think might be the rewards of training a goshawk with which to go hawking?

▼ FROM *H IS FOR HAWK* BY HELEN MACDONALD

When Macdonald's father died suddenly of a heart attack, Macdonald was devastated. An experienced falconer, she adopted a goshawk to distract her from her grief. In this extract Macdonald meets her hawk for the first time.

'We'll check the ring numbers against the Article 10s,' he explained, pulling a sheaf of yellow paper from his rucksack and unfolding two of the official forms that accompany captive-bred rare birds throughout their lives. 'Don't want you going home with the wrong bird.'

We noted the numbers. We stared down at the boxes, at their parcel-tape handles, their doors of thin plywood and hinges of carefully tied string. Then he knelt on the concrete, untied a hinge on the smaller box and squinted into its dark interior. A sudden *thump* of feathered shoulders and the box shook as if someone had punched it, hard, from within. 'She's got her hood off,' he said, and frowned. That light, leather hood was to keep the hawk from fearful sights. Like us.

Another hinge untied. Concentration. Infinite caution. Daylight irrigating the box. Scratching talons, another thump. And another.

Article 10s Certificates required for rare or endangered species sold in the UK.



▲ The goshawk, an aggressive bird of prey

primaries Large feathers at the ends of the wings.

fretful porpentine A defensive porcupine (the phrase is borrowed from Shakespeare's *Hamlet*).

illuminated bestiary A beautifully illustrated medieval book about mythical and real animals.

marionette A puppet worked by strings.

jesses Short leather straps fastened to the legs.

point-source glitter Glitter made up of many points of light.

tautly Tensely, tightly.

hackles Small feathers at the back of the neck.

Thump. The air turned syrupy, slow, flecked with dust. The last few seconds before a battle. And with the last bow pulled free, he reached inside, and amidst a whirring, chaotic clatter of wings and feet and talons and a high-pitched twittering and it's all happening at once, the man pulls an enormous, enormous hawk out of the box and in a strange coincidence of world and deed a great flood of sunlight drenches us and everything is brilliance and fury. The hawk's wings, barred and beating, the sharp fingers of her dark-tipped primaries cutting the air, her feathers raised like the scattered quills of a fretful porpentine. Two enormous eyes. My heart jumps sideways. She is a conjuring trick. A reptile. A fallen angel. A griffon from the pages of an illuminated bestiary. Something bright and distant, like gold falling through water. A broken marionette of wings, legs and light-splashed feathers. She is wearing jesses, and the man holds them. For one awful, long moment she is hanging head-downward, wings open, like a turkey in a butcher's shop, only her head is turned right-way-up and she is seeing more than she has ever seen before in her whole short life. Her world was an aviary no larger than a living room. Then it was a box. But now it is this; and she can see *everything*: the point-source glitter on the waves, a diving cormorant a hundred yards out; pigment flakes under wax on the lines of parked cars; far hills and the heather on them and miles and miles of sky where the sun spreads on dust and water and illegible things moving in it that are white scraps of gulls. Everything startling and new-stamped on her entirely astonished brain.

Through all this the man was perfectly calm. He gathered up the hawk in one practised movement, folding her wings, anchoring her broad feathered back against his chest, gripping her scaled yellow legs in one hand. 'Let's get that hood back on,' he said tautly. There was concern in his face. It was born of care. This hawk had been hatched in an incubator, had broken from a frail bluish eggshell into a humid perspex box, and for the first few days of her life this man had fed her with scraps of meat held in a pair of tweezers, waiting patiently for the lumpen, fluffy chick to notice the food and eat, her new neck wobbling with the effort of keeping her head in the air. All at once I loved this man, and fiercely. I grabbed the hood from the box and turned to the hawk. Her beak was open, her hackles raised; her wild eyes were the colour of sun on white paper, and they stared because the whole world had fallen into them at once. One, two, three. I tucked the hood over her head. There was a brief intimation of a thin, angular skull under her feathers, of an alien brain fizzing and fusing with terror; then I drew the braces closed. We checked the ring numbers against the form. It was the wrong bird. This was the younger one. The smaller one. This was not my hawk.

Oh.

So we put her back and opened the other box, which was meant to hold the larger, older bird. And dear God, it did. Everything about this second hawk was different. She came out like a Victorian melodrama: a sort of madwoman in the attack. She was smokier and darker and much, much bigger, and instead of twittering, she wailed; great, awful gouts of sound like a thing in pain, and the sound was unbearable. *This is my hawk*, I was telling myself and it was all I could do to breathe. She too was bareheaded, and I grabbed the hood from the box as before. But as I brought it up to her face I looked into her eyes and saw

Medea Greek revenge tragedy about a woman with magical powers.

something blank and crazy in her stare. Some madness from a distant country. I didn't recognise her. *This isn't my hawk.* The hood was on, the ring numbers checked, the bird back in the box, the yellow form folded, the money exchanged, and all I could think was, *But this isn't my hawk.* Slow panic. I knew what I had to say, and it was a monstrous breach of etiquette. 'This is really awkward,' I began. 'But I really liked the first one. Do you think there's any chance I could take that one instead...?' I tailed off. His eyebrows were raised. I started again, saying stupider things: 'I'm sure the other falconer would like the larger bird? She's more beautiful than the first one, isn't she? I know this is out of order, but I... Could I? Would it be all right, do you think?' And on and on, a desperate, crazy barrage of incoherent appeals.

I'm sure nothing I said persuaded him more than the look on my face as I said it. A tall, white-faced woman with wind-wrecked hair and exhausted eyes was pleading with him on a quayside, hands held out as if she were in a seaside production of *Medea*. Looking at me he must have sensed that my stuttered request wasn't a simple one. That there was something behind it that was very important. There was a moment of total silence.

UNDERSTANDING THE TEXT

KEY POINT

Non-fiction can incorporate elements more associated with fiction, such as creative use of narrative.

This extract from the book describes the moment when Macdonald first meets the hawk she has decided to train. It is a moment of great significance – the relationship that she builds with this bird is the main topic of the book and is the method that she adopts for dealing with her grief for her father.

Although the second hawk that is pulled out is the one that she has reserved for herself, Macdonald makes a very quick decision on instinct. There is something she does not like about the larger bird and she decides to ask for the one that the man brought out first. She describes both birds in detail.

This kind of writing is sometimes called 'creative non-fiction'. This is because, although it is factual, it is also imaginative and highly-crafted writing. When you re-read the extract, look out for the same kinds of writing that you get in fiction – description, narrative, dialogue, thoughts and feelings, as well as more fact-based explanation.

ACTIVITY 1

A01

SKILLS ANALYSIS

▼ EXAMINING THE DETAIL

Much of the success of creative non-fiction is in the detail. Copy and complete the following table, examining details from the extract and considering what they tell the reader.

▼ LINES	▼ DETAILS	▼ WHAT DOES THIS TELL THE READER?
9–11	'a sudden thump... as if someone had punched it, hard, from within'	The bird is powerful and aggressive.
	'...in one practised movement, folding her wings, anchoring her broad feathered back against his chest...'	
	'Her beak was open, her hackles raised; her wild eyes were the colour of sun on white paper...'	

ACTIVITY 2

A01

SKILLS ANALYSIS

THEMES

Copy and complete the following table, thinking carefully about the themes of the extract. Add some more themes that you noticed in the extract.

THEME	EXAMPLE	COMMENT
Beauty of the bird	Lines 24–26: ‘She is a conjuring trick... a fallen angel... like gold...’.	Macdonald is completely fascinated, almost overwhelmed, by the bird.
Fierce personality of the bird		
Emotional reaction		

EXPLORING LANGUAGE

GENERAL VOCABULARY

lexicographer writer of dictionaries
curated objects objects in a museum

The language of this passage is inventive and intense. It is clear that the writer was concentrating hard on communicating as vividly as possible an experience that was important in her life and in the story that she is telling. You can see this in a number of ways such as in the precision of the vocabulary, the originality of the imagery (the figurative language); and the variety of sentence structures. Mark Cocker wrote that Macdonald ‘combines a **lexicographer**’s pleasure in words as carefully **curated objects** with an inventive passion for words or for ways of releasing fresh effects from the old stock’. Can you see why he said this?

ACTIVITY 3

A02

SKILLS CRITICAL THINKING, ANALYSIS, INTERPRETATION

LANGUAGE FOR EFFECT

Copy and complete the following table, finding examples of the different linguistic techniques and devices and considering the effect that they create. Then identify some more linguistic techniques, quotations and effects for yourself.

TECHNIQUES OR DEVICES	QUOTATION	EFFECT CREATED
Lists	‘glitter on the waves, a diving cormorant...’	This makes you understand in detail the range and precision of the bird’s vision.
Similes		
Metaphors		
Short incomplete sentences		

STRUCTURE

To understand the structure of the extract, you can either look at the content of each of the eight paragraphs or think of it as being composed of a smaller number of sections.

ACTIVITY 4

A02

SKILLS CRITICAL THINKING

KEY POINT

One of the most individual aspects of creative non-fiction is the extent to which the author uses figurative language.

▼ UNDERSTANDING THE STRUCTURE

- 1 Copy and complete the following table, dividing the extract into four or five sections as you think appropriate.

▼ SECTIONS	▼ WHAT THE SECTION IS ABOUT (CONTENT)
First section: Line ____ to line ____. [Hint: Think about which paragraph shifts into a different stage in the account. Where does the hawk actually appear?]	
Second section: Line ____ to line ____. [Hint: Is the focus always on the bird itself?]	
Third section: Line ____ to line ____.	

- 2 You know that the content is structured. What does this structure help to achieve?

EXAMPLE STUDENT ANSWER A TO THE EXAM-STYLE QUESTION

Macdonald is clearly excited about seeing the hawk: you can tell this by the way she exaggerates, saying that the hawk is 'enormous, enormous'.

If this is typical of the whole response, it would justify a Level 2 mark with the following comments.

- Some understanding of and comment on language and structure and how these are used by writers to achieve effects, including use of vocabulary.
- The selection of references is valid, but not developed.

EXAMPLE STUDENT ANSWER B TO THE EXAM-STYLE QUESTION

Macdonald creates excitement through a range of linguistic techniques. Her language is emotive and figurative, creating a forceful effect. For example, in the lines beginning, 'the man pulls an enormous, enormous hawk...' the words 'brilliance and fury' express her strong feelings while the repetition of 'enormous' shows she is surprised.

If this is typical of the whole response, it would justify a Level 3 mark with the following comment.

- Clear understanding and explanation of language and how it is used to achieve effects, including use of vocabulary and sentence structure.

ACTIVITY 5

A04

A05

SKILLS

CRITICAL THINKING, ANALYSIS,
REASONING, INTERPRETATION

▼ WRITING TASKS

- 1 'Making personal relationships with animals is the only way we can understand their nature'. Write a magazine article giving your views on this statement. The article may include:
 - the advantages and disadvantages of such relationships
 - any other points you wish to make.
 Your response will be marked for the accurate and appropriate use of vocabulary, as well as accuracy of spelling and grammar.
- 2 How does the writer present the character of the hawks in the passage from *H is for Hawk*?

You should write about:

 - the description of their appearance
 - the way they behave
 - the writer's use of language and techniques to convey these.
 You should refer closely to the text to support your answer and use **brief** quotations.

EXAM-STYLE QUESTIONS

A02

SKILLS

CRITICAL THINKING, ANALYSIS,
ADAPTIVE LEARNING, CREATIVITY

How does the writer use language and structure to portray the birds and setting?

You should support your answer with close reference to the passage, including **brief** quotations. (12 marks)

How does the writer create a sense of excitement?

You should support your answer with close reference to the passage, including **brief** quotations. (12 marks)

CHINESE CINDERELLA ADELINE YEN MAH

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

Chinese Cinderella is an autobiography by Adeline Yen Mah in which she describes growing up in a wealthy family in Hong Kong in the 1950s. She is rejected by her stepmother and her father is a distant, though powerful, character. She spends much of her time at boarding school.

BEFORE YOU START READING

Do some research.

- Look up Adeline Yen Mah on the internet.
- Can you find other examples of childhood autobiographies?

▼ FROM *CHINESE CINDERELLA* BY ADELINE YEN MAH

Growing up in a wealthy family in 1950s Hong Kong, Mah should have had an enviable childhood, but she was rejected by her dominating stepmother and despised by her brothers and sisters. She was sent to a boarding school and left there. In this extract from her autobiography she relates one of the few occasions when she went home.

Time went by relentlessly and it was Saturday again. Eight weeks more and it would be the end of term ... in my case perhaps the end of school forever.

Four of us were playing Monopoly. My heart was not in it and I was losing steadily. Outside it was hot and there was a warm wind blowing. The radio warned of a possible typhoon the next day. It was my turn and I threw the dice. As I played, the thought of leaving school throbbed at the back of my mind like a persistent toothache.

'Adeline!' Ma-mien Valentino was calling.

'You can't go now,' Mary protested. 'For once I'm winning. One, two, three, four. Good! You've landed on my property. Thirty-five dollars, please. Oh, good afternoon, Mother Valentino!'

We all stood up and greeted her.

'Adeline, didn't you hear me call you? Hurry up downstairs! Your chauffeur is waiting to take you home!'

Full of foreboding, I ran downstairs as in a nightmare, wondering who had died this time. Father's chauffeur assured me everyone was healthy.

'Then why are you taking me home?' I asked.

'How should I know?' he answered defensively, shrugging his shoulders.

'Your guess is as good as mine. They give the orders and I carry them out.'

During the short drive home, my heart was full of dread and I wondered what I had done wrong. Our car stopped at an elegant villa at mid-level, halfway up the hill between the peak and the harbour.

'Where are we?' I asked foolishly.



▲ Chinese-American author and physician
Adeline Yen Mah

typhoon A storm in the Indian or Western Pacific Oceans.

bridge A card game played with four people.

'Don't you know anything?' the chauffeur replied rudely. 'This is your new home. Your parents moved here a few months ago.'

'I had forgotten,' I said as I got out.

Ah Gum opened the door. Inside, it was quiet and cool.

'Where is everyone?'

'Your mother is out playing bridge. Your two brothers and Little Sister are sunbathing by the swimming pool. Your father is in his room and wants to see you as soon as you get home.'

'See me in his room?' I was overwhelmed by the thought that I had been summoned by Father to enter the Holy of Holies – a place to which I had never been invited. Why? ...

Timidly, I knocked on the door. Father was alone, looking relaxed in his slippers and bathrobe, reading a newspaper. He smiled as I entered and I saw he was in a happy mood. I breathed a small sigh of relief at first but became uneasy when I wondered why he was being so nice, thinking, Is this a giant ruse on his part to trick me? Dare I let my guard down?

'Sit down! Sit down!' He pointed to a chair. 'Don't look so scared. Here, take a look at this! They're writing about someone we both know, I think.'

He handed me the day's newspaper and there, in one corner, I saw my name ADELINE YEN in capital letters prominently displayed.

'It was announced today that 14-year-old Hong Kong schoolgirl ADELINE JUN-LING YEN of Sacred Heart Canossian School, Caine Road, Hong Kong, has won first prize in the International Play-writing Competition held in London, England, for the 1951–1952 school year. It is the first time that any local Chinese student from Hong Kong has won such a prestigious event. Besides a medal, the prize comes with a cash reward of FIFTY ENGLISH POUNDS. Our sincere congratulations, ADELINE YEN, for bringing honour to Hong Kong. We are proud of you.'

Is it possible? Am I dreaming? Me, the winner?

'I was going up the lift this morning with my friend C.Y. Tung when he showed me this article and asked me, "Is the winner Adeline Jun-ling Yen related to you? The two of you have the same uncommon last name." Now C.Y. himself has a few children about your age but so far none of them has won an international literary prize, as far as I know. So I was quite pleased to tell him you are my daughter. Well done!'

He looked radiant. For once, he was proud of me. In front of his revered colleague, C.Y. Tung, a prominent fellow businessman also from Shanghai, I had given him **face**. I thought, Is this the big moment I have been waiting for? My whole being vibrated with all the joy in the world. I only had to stretch out my hand to reach the stars.

'Tell me, how did you do it?' he continued. 'How come you won?'

'Well, the rules and regulations were so very complicated. One really has to be dedicated just to understand what they want. Perhaps I was the only one determined enough to enter and there were no other competitors!'

He laughed approvingly. 'I doubt it very much but that's a good answer.'

'Please, Father,' I asked boldly, thinking it was now or never. 'May I go to university in England too, just like my brothers?'

face In this context, a positive successful appearance in the eyes of other people.

'I do believe you have potential. Tell me, what would you study?'

My heart gave a giant lurch as it dawned on me that he was agreeing to let me go. How marvellous it was simply to be alive! Study? I thought. Going to England is like entering heaven. Does it matter what you do after you get to heaven?

But Father was expecting an answer. What about creative writing? After all, I had just won first prize in an international writing competition!

'I plan to study literature. I'll be a writer.'

'Writer!' he scoffed. 'You are going to starve! What language are you going to write in and who is going to read your writing? Though you may think you're an expert in both Chinese and English, your Chinese is actually rather elementary. As for your English, don't you think the native English speakers can write better than you?'

I waited in silence. I did not wish to contradict him.

'You will go to England with Third Brother this summer and you will go to medical school. After you graduate, you will specialise in obstetrics. Women will always be having babies. Women patients prefer women doctors. You will learn to deliver their babies. That's a foolproof profession for you. Don't you agree?'

Agree? Of course I agreed. Apparently, he had it all planned out. As long as he let me go to university in England, I would study anything he wished. How did that line go in Wordsworth's poem? *Bliss was it in that dawn to be alive.*

'Father, I shall go to medical school in England and become a doctor. Thank you very, very much.'

obstetrics Caring for women who are having babies.

Wordsworth A Romantic poet who wrote during the 18th and 19th centuries.

ACTIVITY 1

A01

SKILLS

REASONING, CREATIVITY,
INTERPERSONAL SKILLS

▼ CHILDHOOD AUTOBIOGRAPHIES

In a small group or with a partner, discuss the following questions.

- 1 Do you think that adults always remember the incidents of their childhood accurately? Do you think that this matters when reading a book like *Chinese Cinderella*?
- 2 Some critics think that characters in *Chinese Cinderella* are either all good or all bad, and that very few of the characters are realistic. What do you think of this point of view?

UNDERSTANDING THE TEXT

Adeline Yen Mah writes to inform, explain and describe. She is writing for a general audience which may be interested in childhood memoirs, or perhaps in understanding the culture that Yen Mah comes from. Yen Mah writes in such a way that you can understand not only what is happening, but also the emotional impact of each incident in the passage.

The key to understanding the piece is to understand Adeline and her thoughts and feelings about boarding school and her ambition to travel to England. Most important of all is her relationship with her father.

ACTIVITY 2

A01

SKILLS

CRITICAL THINKING

▼ ANALYSING EMOTIONS

Copy and complete the following tables, finding evidence in the extract for Adeline's feelings.

▼ ADELINE'S FEELINGS BEFORE SHE MEETS HER FATHER	▼ EVIDENCE
Her first reaction on hearing that he wants to see her.	She is 'overwhelmed'.
She suggests her father's room is somewhere uniquely special, a place to be revered, an inner sanctum to which few, if any, are admitted.	1 'the Holy of Holies' 2 'a place to which I had never been invited' 3
Her feelings on entering her father's room.	1 She knocks 'timidly'. 2 3

▼ ADELINE'S FEELINGS AS SHE MEETS HER FATHER	▼ EVIDENCE
He is commanding, as indicated by the repetition and use of exclamation.	1 Use of exclamation marks 2 He orders her to 'Sit down!' and repeats it. 3
He is reassuring.	1 2 3
Their relationship lacks warmth and closeness.	1 2 3
He appears to be relaxed and at ease, in contrast to her tension.	1 2 3
She is desperate to please her father and her reaction to his pleasure is overwhelming.	1 2 3
She emphasises her shyness.	1 2 3
She emphasises that she is wary of him.	1 2 3

EXPLORING LANGUAGE

Like all writers, Adeline Yen Mah uses certain effects in order to create a response in the reader. Copy and complete the following table, explaining the effect(s) that you think she was trying to achieve with each technique.

▼ TECHNIQUE	▼ INTENDED EFFECT
Moves into the present tense.	Emphasises her lack of confidence and how worried she was.
Use of repetition by her father.	Indicates either impatience or vigour.
Use of punctuation and short sentences.	Develops the reader's understanding of character.
Use of triple rhetorical questions all written in the present tense.	
Use of cliché .	
Use of numbers rather than names for children.	
The passage starts in the past tense, moves through the present tense and ends with the past tense.	

GENERAL VOCABULARY

cliché An overused, unoriginal phrase or saying.

KEY POINT

Writers are highly skilled at using language to achieve particular psychological responses in the reader. Try to become aware of your own responses when reading to understand what the writer is doing.

ACTIVITY 3

A04

A05

SKILLS

REASONING, CREATIVITY,
INNOVATION

▼ WRITING TASKS

- Consider the following two statements. Write an argument in favour of one of these statements.
 'Boarding schools teach young people to become confident and well-rounded adults.'
 'Sending young children away to boarding school is cruel and unnatural.'
- Describe your hopes and dreams for your future and how you would feel if someone made your dreams come true.

EXAM-STYLE QUESTION

A02

SKILLS

CRITICAL THINKING,
ANALYSIS, ADAPTIVE
LEARNING, CREATIVITY

How does the writer use language and structure to convey her emotions? You should support your answer with close reference to the passage, including **brief** quotations.

(12 marks)