

fullspate

Pre-Proficiency Primer



This file contains the first quarter of the book (units 1 - 5).

For units 6 - 23 send an email to: info@fullspate.net

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Dedication

This book is dedicated to
the memory of all the
squashed furry things
in the road.

May they rest in peace.

Definition

If a river is **in full spate**
it contains a lot of water
flowing very fast.

If a person is in full spate
they have a lot to say and
could carry on talking all evening.

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Language extra: spelling; subjunctive.

Preface

So what's the point of the book? Here are a few of its aims.

- To help students with the ideas and issues they are expected to be able to speak and write about at this level. After all, a woman without ideas is a woman with nothing to say, and a woman with nothing to say is not going to improve her language skills.
- To give students as many opportunities as possible to express themselves and use the English they are learning. So, for instance, there are no texts which simply present new vocabulary or end with comprehension questions; each of them leads into a discussion of something controversial – discussions that students should find interesting and motivating.
- To raise the students' level of general English: developing their fluency, boosting their active vocabulary and increasing the range of linguistic structures they use.
- To give lots of help with writing. Students need a lot of practice and a lot of help to write well. In each unit of this book the reading texts and the discussions provide most of the ideas and information that can then be used in the writing task at the end. After the second unit there is also an intensive writing tutorial, giving an in-depth look at the essay, which is the form of choice throughout most of the book.
- To give students a good background in materials and skills that will be particularly useful for those who are likely to sit exams such as the Michigan Proficiency, IELTS and Edexcel level 5. There are no practice tests in this pre-proficiency course, but its academic focus makes it more relevant for groups with those aims. (Apart from a brief task in unit one there is none of the work with literature that would be expected in a Cambridge CPE course.) Arguably this narrows the range of the course, but we feel that it makes the course relevant to a greater number of students, including those who were not high flyers at FCE level and all those who have no ambition either to study English at university or to become teachers of the language.

In the feedback so far a number of questions have cropped up repeatedly. Here are a few of them.

Why is it so big?

Assuming that classes meet for between 4.5 and 6 hours a week, the plan was to get through a unit a week. At that rate there should be enough material to take the class from October through to Easter.

Where's the companion?

There isn't one. The course involves a lot of work with English definitions of new vocabulary. We would also encourage students to have a good dictionary, use it and keep copious notes from which they can revise. We agree with the advocates of learner autonomy who urge us to help students develop the skills, habits and interests that will enable them to continue learning beyond the limits of the course. Dictionary use and note-taking skills are elements of that.

Isn't there too much speaking?

You can't please everyone. The material here will only suit teachers who are more concerned with helping their students enjoy using English and work out their own ideas. Other teachers have other priorities and there are already many good books on the market that cater to their needs.

Anyway, we hope you like the book and can make good use of it. If there is anything which you think is just not up to scratch, don't hesitate to drop us an e-line. Our address is:

info@fullspate.net

Happy teaching!

michael reid

Unit 1

Ice Breakers

In English **breaking the ice** is what you do when you are with a group of strangers and you do something to try to get rid of the unfriendly atmosphere. If your group still has that slightly frosty atmosphere you will need to break the ice. Giving everyone a chance to speak is probably a good idea.

Take it in turns to say a few things about yourself to the rest of the group. As well as the obvious include information about:

- how you spend your free time
- what you like most about your studies or your job
- your ambitions
- how easy or difficult you think it will be to achieve those ambitions

Brush up your tenses.

A. If you **brush up** an area of knowledge you revise it and try to improve it. Let's try to combine a little more ice breaking with brushing up our tenses. In pairs take it in turns to ask and answer each of the following questions. In your answers you should use the same tense as the one in the question unless there are instructions in brackets that tell you to do otherwise.

1. Think of your last summer holiday and think of something you did almost every day. What was it that you did?
2. Did you use to have any hobbies that you no longer have?
3. Tell me what it was difficult to get used to doing when you first went to secondary school.
4. Thinking back to the past, was there something that a friend or relative was always doing that really irritated you?
5. This time last week, what were you doing?
6. What do you often do on a Friday evening?
7. Is there someone in your circle of friends who regularly does something that irritates you? Begin your answer like this: "There is one guy who keeps annoying me. He is always"
8. Think of something in the future that you have already arranged to do (you may already have made the appointment, bought the tickets or booked the table, for instance). Tell us about the arrangement (using the present continuous like this: "On (Friday) at (8 o'clock) I am ...-ing").
9. Think about this time tomorrow. What will you be doing?
10. Make a prediction about what you think people in your society will be doing fifty years from now?

B: Pause for thought

Three questions about some of the grammar in that conversation:

1. What emotion are we usually expressing when we use the present continuous or the past continuous to refer to a repeated action in the present or past? (Think back to your answers to questions 4 and 7 above.)
2. What kind of future event can we refer to using the present continuous? (Question 8 above.)
3. More generally, do we use the present and past and future continuous to describe repeated actions or actions that were, are or will be in progress at a particular point in time?

C: Back to the present

Almost everyone enjoys a good film. Did you know that when we describe the plot of a film we use the present simple tense? Get two or three people in the group to very briefly describe the plot of their favourite film using the present tense.

D: Future

1. English is not a very rational language, but sometimes there are ways of explaining why we say one thing and not another. Look at these two sentences. They are both predictions. Explain why we use **will** in one case and **going to** in the other. (Clue: the reason has to do with what we base our prediction on.)

- I think that in the future it will be harder for young people to find a job.
- Look at that climber's legs shaking. He's going to fall.

2. As you remember from the old days, we use **going to** to express our intentions. What a great opportunity for discussing the things we are going to do to become more familiar with the English language (beyond just working through the course book, which, to be honest, is really not enough). So, what are you going to do?

Pre-reading discussion

We are going to read a passage about friendship. Before we do, here are some topics to discuss as a whole class:

1. Imagine you get your first decent job and you have to move away to live in some distant part of your country. Unfortunately it turns out that you and your colleagues have little in common and you don't want to spend your free time with them. Pretty soon you start to feel lonely. What could you do to make new friends?
2. In big cities some particularly lonely people put adverts in the personal columns of newspapers and magazines hoping to come into contact with people they can really get on with. What do you think of this idea?
3. Some people, for one reason or another, do end up living with no mates whatsoever. How bad is it being lonely? What can it do to you?

Reading

Here is a little story from the Scottish writer Ivor Cutler about how to make friends.

There are some words you will need to know: **whitewash** is a type of cheap paint; a **dressing gown** is what some people wear over their pyjamas or use to cover themselves up after coming out of the bath; a **vest**, in British English, is a sleeveless piece of clothing worn under the shirt.

How to Make Friends

Perhaps you are unsure how to make friends. There is no need to worry. I have the answer.

First of all, take a small bucket of whitewash, then stand by the window and look out. When you see someone approaching whom you would like to know, wait until he is directly below, then empty the bucket over his head.

He will stop, look up, and shout unspeakable language at you. You will say: "Do come upstairs and clean yourself."

He will come up the stairs to your flat, leaving footprints of whitewash on the carpet.

You will say: "Come. Have a bath," and you will turn on the taps. While he is taking his shirt off you will say: "Ah! You have a hole in your vest. Let me mend it while you are having your bath." He will reply: "Thank you, I am very grateful for this."

By the time he comes out of the bath you will have finished sewing the vest, and you will let him borrow your best silk dressing-gown. He can then take his clothes, wash them in the bath water and hang them out to dry.

You will say: "Come and sit with me by the window while they are drying." Then you talk, enjoying each other's conversation.

By the time the clothes are dry it is lunchtime so you offer him a share of your dinner. Afterwards he says: "Well, I really must go now," and as you go downstairs he notices with alarm the whitewash on the carpet and says: "Oh my goodness! Look what I have done to your carpet." You tell him it doesn't matter because you only rent the room. It is the landlord's carpet. He says: "But we cannot let you get into trouble with your landlord. We will clean the carpet together." So you clean the carpet, and this makes your friendship stronger than ever.

When everything is clean he will say: "Well, I really must go now, but I shall come and see you again tomorrow and we shall have another long talk."

You have made a friend.

Questions

1. Does the person referred to as "you" in the story live on the ground floor or on the first floor?
2. How is the stranger supposed to react when you empty the bucket of whitewash over his head?
3. We often use the word **footsteps** to refer to the sound someone makes when they are walking. What word is used in the passage to refer to the visible marks left by a walker?
4. Which verb in the passage is synonymous with "repair"?
5. What kind of material is **silk**?
6. Does the person referred to as "you" own his own flat?
7. What is a **landlord**?
8. You should also know that the person a landlord collects money from is called a **tenant**. Can you describe what a tenant is?
9. Which phrase in the third paragraph from the end means "he is shocked at the sight"?
10. How would you describe the tone of this little piece of writing:
a) serious b) humorous c) hilarious d) childish

Language extra

A. Ivor wrote: "**Do** come upstairs."

We use the verb **do** like this in conversation to show that we feel strongly about what we are saying, and we put a lot of emphasis on the verb when we say the sentence. Here are some more examples:

I **do** like your new hairstyle.

You **do** waste a lot of time, don't you?

B. The word **Well** came up in the dialogue in the story. This word is very common in conversation and it is used in a number of different ways. Look at these little pieces of dialogue or monologue and match them with the descriptions that follow:

1. "Can we really be certain that the universe began with a big bang?"
"Well ... err ... That's a difficult question."
2. "And another thing: some people are making too many personal phone calls."
"Well, this could go on all evening. I think we can deal with the minor complaints tomorrow. Let's call it a day, shall we?"
3. "If there's no scientific proof then it must be nonsense."
"Well, that might not actually be true, you know."
4. "After that, we didn't speak for ages. Well, not ages exactly. Just three days."
5. "Well, well, look who's here!"

In which of the above is "well" used:

- a. To express surprise.
- b. To fill in a gap when you're not sure what to say.
- c. To show that you have doubts about what someone else has said.
- d. To show that you are trying to bring a conversation to an end.
- e. When you need to explain or correct something you have just said.

C. Another important word Ivor uses is **shall**. In this story he uses it in an old-fashioned way. Most people wouldn't say: "I shall see you tomorrow," rather they would say: "I will see you tomorrow."

Can you remember the most common situations in which we still use "shall" instead of "will"?

Here are three typical examples of the three different uses of "shall". Match the examples with the descriptions below.

1. "Shall I mend your vest for you?"
 2. "Shall we meet again tomorrow?"
 3. "What shall we have for lunch?"
- a) a request for a suggestion b) an offer c) a suggestion

D. Ivor also gives us a good example of what we call the **future perfect**:

By the time he comes out of the bath you **will have finished** sewing the vest.

To practise using this tense, do the following:

1. Think of a future date two or three years from now and say what you hope you will have done by then. Begin like this: "By (date) I hope I"
2. Say what you hope you will have achieved by the time you retire.

Vocabulary

While we are on the topic of friendship check you know the meanings of the following words by using them to fill in the gaps in the sentences below.

mate	companion	acquaintance	colleague	rival	intimate
confide	company	hospitality	reserved	solitary	privacy

1. If there is a worry that you might be left on your own, one of your friends might say: "Don't worry. I will keep you" (i.e. I will stay with you.)
2. Someone you work with is your
3. If two of you work for the same organisation and are competing for a better job, you will describe the other person as your
4. Someone you have met but whom you haven't really got to know yet is still only a(n)
5. You didn't want to travel on your own so you found someone who would be your travelling
6. If you meet people on your travels and they invite you in to give you refreshments and perhaps a bite to eat, you thank them afterwards for their
7. An informal word for a good friend is
8. If you are very close to your friend, we say that your friendship is
9. If you have secrets that you don't want to keep to yourself and you have a friend you can trust, you might in him or her.
10. You might be a sociable person and yet still value your - time and space in which you are not disturbed by other people.
11. People who aren't very sociable and who often prefer to be alone are said to be
12. In contrast to people from the Mediterranean, the English are often said to be In other words, they don't give a free and full expression to their feelings in public.

Reading

Humour is a great way of breaking the ice, and the next bit is funny. It might not be hilarious, but it is slightly humorous.

It comes from one of the really big books of the twentieth century: **Catch-22** by Joseph Heller. The main characters are in a squadron of the American air force based on an island somewhere in the Mediterranean during the Second World War. Yossarian (like his friend Clevinger) is a pilot but unlike Clevinger he's not happy with the war.

From this extract you should be able to work out what catch-22 is. You already know the more common meaning of the word "catch" ("I throw the Frisbee and you catch it") but here it has a different meaning. Try to work out what the catch is. Because it is a little confusing you will probably have to read the passage a couple of times before you get it.

A couple of words: First, **flak** refers to the bullets and shells fired at aircraft. Second, do you know what it means when American parents say their teenage kids are grounded because of their bad behaviour? What do you think it means when a doctor in the air force grounds a pilot because the guy has gone nuts?

Catch-22

Yossarian wanted out. He knew the war just didn't make sense. Men went mad and were rewarded with medals. All over the world, boys on every side of the bomb line were laying down their lives for what they had been told was their country, and no one seemed to mind, least of all the boys who were laying down their young lives. There was no end in sight. The only end in sight was Yossarian's own. Every time he got into his plane to fly a mission people were trying to kill him. He couldn't see them but he'd seen the flak whizzing up past the plane windows red and hot. One day one of those pieces was going to have his name on it. He knew it. He tried to remind people how crazy it all was, but they thought *he* was crazy. Even Clevinger, who should have known better. Clevinger had said there were principles at stake, and he believed in them passionately. He was crazy.

As Yossarian saw it, his only hope now was Doc Daneeka. Only he could certify Yossarian unfit for duty and give him his ticket out. He knew they grounded guys who were not right in the head, and hadn't Clevinger already said he had a problem in that department? Surely the doctor would help. He was his friend, after all.

"You've got to ground me, Doc. You've got to sign that paper and send me home. I can't take it anymore."

"You're wasting your time," Doc Daneeka was forced to tell him.

"Can't you ground someone's who's crazy?"

"Oh sure, I have to. There's a rule saying I have to ground anyone who's crazy."

"Then ground me. I'm completely nuts. Ask Clevinger. He'll tell you how crazy I am."

"There's no point. He's crazy," said the Doc quite calmly. "You can't let crazy people decide whether you are crazy or not."

"He ain't crazy. He's one of the sanest pilots in the squad."

"So he's obviously out of his head," said the Doc. "He's got to be insane to want to keep flying combat missions after all the close calls he's had."

"Well, if he's nuts why don't you ground him?"

"He doesn't ask me. That's part of the rule: he's got to ask me otherwise I can't ground him."

"That's all he has to do to be grounded?"

"That's all. Let him ask me," said the Doc.

"And then you can ground him?"

"No, then I can't ground him."

"You mean there's a catch?" asked Yossarian, just trying to get things straight.

"Sure there's a catch," replied the Doc and it almost seemed as if he had a smile on his face. "Catch 22. If he asks – if he really doesn't want to fly bombing missions – then he can't be crazy, can he? Only those who are crazy are grounded."

Yossarian was moved very deeply by the absolute simplicity of Catch-22 and let out a respectful whistle.

"That's some catch," he observed.

"It's the best there is," Doc Daneeka replied.

Questions

1. Yossarian talks about boys who lay down their lives for their country. What does this mean? (Irregular verb: lay, laid, laid)
2. Why didn't Clevinger agree with Yossarian's opinion about the war?
3. A **stake** is something, especially money, which you risk in an activity like gambling (risking your money – i.e. betting - in a game of chance). Derived from this we have the phrase **at stake**. When discussing the war, what do you think Clevinger means when he says certain principles are at stake?
4. What does Yossarian want the doctor to do exactly?
5. When Clevinger has been flying combat missions he has had some close calls. What do you think a **close call** is?

6. To be grounded there are two conditions that a pilot must satisfy. What are those two conditions?
7. Why is it practically impossible for a pilot to satisfy both conditions?
8. Why does Yossarian whistle at the end?
9. Here's another example of the same use of the word "catch". A phone company says it will give you a free phone. That sounds great, but there is a catch. You only get the "free" phone if you sign an agreement to pay for the company's phone services for at least 12 months. From this example and from catch-22 what is this meaning of the word "catch"?
10. The passage talks about crazy people. To avoid too much repetition it uses five other words or phrases which are synonymous with "crazy". What are they?
11. Which adjective is used to describe people who are not crazy?

Note 1: Yossarian is American, which is why he can say: "He **ain't** crazy," instead of saying: "He isn't crazy." In fact, "ain't" can even be used to replace "haven't", as in: "You ain't seen nothin' yet," (which is also a double negative, by the way, which makes it really bad English, but that doesn't stop people saying it.)

Note 2: The fact that Yossarian is American also explains why he can use the word **some** in this un-British way: "That's some catch." Normally we would not use "some" to refer to one thing – we don't say: "I've got some dog." But Yossarian and his fellow countrymen do use the word like this when they want to show approval or admiration. So if you're living in the States and your neighbour buys a huge new limousine, you can say to him: "Wow! That's some car, buddy."

Language extra

Doc Daneeka says Clevinger has had some close calls. Hey, what a great excuse to revise the **present perfect**, our favourite tense.

A. How about a little conversation to get back into the habit of using this great tense? Take it in turns to ask and answer these four questions. Use full sentences in the answer (that isn't very natural, but it's good practice on this special occasion).

1. How many times have you travelled abroad?
2. Is there something that you have recently finished or recently done?
3. Think of a friend whom you haven't seen for a while. Tell us how long it has been since you last saw him or her.
4. Think of an activity you particularly enjoy but that you haven't had the chance to do for quite some time. Tell us how long it has been since you last did this (but begin the sentence like this: "I haven't..... since/for")

B. The exam you're aiming for might not have sentence transformation exercises, but that's no excuse for not doing them now. Do this one just to check that you have got the hang of the present perfect.

The last time I took a stroll along the seafront was when Tracy visited us.

I haven't

The last time I rode a horse was two years ago.

It has

C. Do you remember anything about the **present perfect progressive** (or the continuous – take your pick of names)?

1. Which of the following sentences would we use to emphasize that we are still in the middle of an activity?
I've read "Moby Dick".
I've been reading "Moby Dick".
2. Which would we choose to emphasize the duration of an activity or state?
I've been waiting here in the rain for three hours. Where've you been?
I've waited here in the rain for three hours. Where've you been?

3. Which would we choose to emphasize that as action has been repeated again and again?
I've phoned you all morning.
I've been phoning you all morning.
4. Which of the following is definitely wrong? Cross it out.
I've seen this film before.
I've been seeing this film before.

Pause for thought

Hey, didn't we say that in general we don't use the continuous form of the verb for repeated actions? In what way is the present perfect progressive an exception to this rule?

D. Just for your information, here's an odd fact about American English. Check this out:

- You **have got to** sign the paper and send me home.
- He's **got** a big house with a double garage.
- He's **gotten into** trouble again.
- Once I've **gotten out** of New York the cops will never find me.

You don't need to worry about exactly when these guys use "gotten" – and you don't have to use the word yourself. You just need to know it exists alongside "got" on the western side of the Atlantic.

Revision

Look for the mistakes in these sentences. (Watch out! one sentence is correct.)

1. When I was four it was difficult for me to tie my own shoelaces but now I am used to do it.
2. I didn't used to eat Coco Pops, but now I do.
3. On my last summer holiday we were going fishing for octopus every day.
4. Every night before I go to bed I am saying my prayers to the Holy Virgin Mary.
5. I have three years to see a priest and make a confession.
6. When I was a little boy my Dad would take me for long walks in the forest and he would tell me the names of the trees.
7. When I was a little boy we would live on the island of Patmos.
8. I've been hearing these strange voices in my head ever since I've been born.
9. When I first went to prison it took me a long time to get used to share a cell with another prisoner.
10. During this war thousands of our boys have been laying down their lives for their country. When will it end?
11. By the end of this month I will be having my new laptop.
12. I will phone you as soon as I will get the news.

Reading

A. Pre-reading discussion: We're going to read a very short story about how Billy's Dad introduced him to the sport of swimming. Beforehand, though, here's a topic for discussion:

Think of one of your hobbies, pastimes, sports or favourite teams and tell us what sparked your interest (i.e. tell us how your interest first started). (Literally, **sparks** are tiny bits of brightly burning material that fly into the air, or a spark is a small flash of light seen for instance when electricity jumps across a gap., but here we are talking about something like the match that starts the fire.) You could say: "My interest in rock climbing **was sparked** when I met/saw"

B. Here is the anecdote about Billy from the book "Slaughterhouse 5" by the celebrated American author Kurt Vonnegut:

One day little Billy's Dad took him down to the local sports center. While he was in the changing rooms with his hairy father he could smell the chlorine from the swimming pool next door, he could hear people shouting and hear the whack of the springboard as people dived in.

Little Billy was terrified because his father had said Billy was going to learn to swim by the method of sink-or-swim. His father was going to throw Billy into the deep end, and Billy was going to damn well swim.

It was like an execution. Billy was numb as his father carried him from the changing room to the pool. His eyes were closed. When he opened his eyes, he was on the bottom of the pool, and there was a beautiful silence everywhere. He lost consciousness, but the beautiful silence went on. He dimly sensed that somebody was rescuing him. Billy resented that.

Questions

1. Work out what the words **execution**, **numb** and **dimly** mean using the sentences from the passage plus these other examples:
 - Lethal injection is one method of **execution** for murderers in some American states.
 - The dentist gives you an injection to make part of your mouth **numb** before she starts drilling.
 - To create a more romantic atmosphere you might **dim** the lights.
2. We are told that Billy resented being rescued. **Resentment** is what you feel when you are bitter about having to do something that you really don't want to do. We also use it to express our bitterness about the way we are treated. (Note that the verb **resent** is followed by the -ing form of the verb.) To practise using this verb, think of answers to the following questions using the word resent:
 - a. Think of something in connection with school. What do/did you resent having to do?
 - b. People often complain about some of the things the government makes them do. What do they resent having to do?
 - c. Sometimes adolescents feel more mature than they appear to be to older people, and so they sometimes resent the way they are treated. Complete this sentence: "Adolescents often resent being treated as"

Over to you

1. It is probably fair to say that Billy's Dad did not choose the best way to introduce his young and sensitive son to the wonderful world of swimming. In your opinion, what should his Dad have done to achieve a more positive result?
2. Billy's upbringing obviously wasn't without its difficult moments. Still, he recovered and he grew up. Use your vivid imagination to try and say how you think the story of his life might have turned out. Can you imagine it having a happy end? (When you make an educated guess like this we say that you **speculate**.)

Writing

In some proficiency exams you might be asked to describe something personal such as an important event in your life or the influence that someone has had on you. Here are two such writing tasks:

A. Describe how you first became interested in something and describe how important that interest has been to you.

B. Describe a turning point in your life (an experience which resulted in your life taking a new direction) and describe the lasting effects of that change.

Tips

1. In the Michigan Proficiency candidates are expected to write between 250 and 300 words whereas in the Cambridge Proficiency the limits are 300 to 350 words. Because this is the first composition let's keep the limits down to between 200 and 250 words.
2. You can make up your story (the examination board will not contact the secret services to see if you are telling lies!) but, in general, compositions are more successful when they are based on real experiences. Feel free, though, to use your imagination to add details and expand what you have to say.
3. If you are asked to talk about your life there is absolutely no need to begin by saying something general like: "Everybody comes to turning points in their life sooner or later, and I am no exception." This is just too boring. Instead you should begin immediately by telling your personal story.
4. There are two other things which often make descriptive compositions weak:
 - a. Writers don't include enough details of their experience to make the description interesting to read.
 - b. Too many sentences begin the same way: "I did this," "I did that." You need to find alternatives to avoid this kind of boring repetition.
5. Usually it is a good idea to write at least three paragraphs (often four) because examiners want to see a clear beginning, middle and end to the composition. But the questions above have two clear parts, and because they don't need a separate introduction we can get away with only two paragraphs.

Model composition: Here's what one young student wrote in response to the first task. (It's factual in that he really is mad about photography but he used his imagination in the first paragraph because in truth his first camera was a horrible plastic thing.)

I will never forget the day I found my Dad's old camera in a dusty box in the attic. He had never been interested in taking photos and so the old camera had hardly ever been used. To me it was fascinating. It seemed to be a marvellous piece of miniature engineering, more perfectly made than anything I had seen before. There was the shiny steel body that seemed so strong and then there were the levers and buttons and rings that I desperately wanted to learn how to use. Even the leather case seemed beautiful. After my Dad told me I could have it I went straight away to the local library to find books that would explain the secrets of photography. Before long I had bought my first roll of film and was getting up before dawn trying to capture the perfect sunrise on film.

Photography continues to be an obsession. Now I have a more sophisticated camera with a selection of lenses and I even have my own darkroom to develop the prints. A few of my pictures have been included in a local exhibition and that has encouraged me even more. Despite that, people criticize me for devoting so much time to this hobby, and they keep pointing out that my studies are suffering. Instead of spending my weekends revising I often go out into the countryside trying to get the best shots of the local landscape. My teachers warn me that my final grades won't be as good as they could be, but as I see it this is a fair price to pay for something that I love. A future without photography is unimaginable to me, and I am confident that if I keep working hard then later on this will not only be a hobby but also a career.

Write it!

Choose a topic, study the model composition and write something like it about the origin of one of your passions or about a turning point in your life. Don't forget to include enough details to make the composition interesting. To do that you will almost certainly have to look up a few unknown words. Don't rush! Let's not worry about time limits at this stage. Write between 200 and 250 words.

Unit 2 Corporal Punishment

Introduction

Definition: The word **corporal** comes from a Latin word "corpus" meaning "body". Hence, we have **corpse** – a dead body – and a **corporal** in the army – a leader of a body of troops. Corporal punishment involves inflicting pain on someone as a form of discipline. This was very popular in the Middle Ages but nowadays we think that treating adults in this way would be inhumane. In the case of children, though, things are different. Some people believe that it is perfectly acceptable to use moderate forms of corporal punishment to discipline children. Are they right, or are they wrong? That is the question for this unit.

Speaking

Let's begin with a discussion about the kinds of things children might do to make their parents want to punish them. First look at the three boxes with phrases to use in your conversation. Then have a look at the list of behaviours which shows some of the things that parents might think are good reasons for punishing their children. In pairs or as a group you should have a discussion to try to agree on the three which are the most serious and the three which are the least serious. At the end of the discussion try to think of any other serious reasons why parents get angry with their children.

Language:

Ways of getting going and moving the conversation on:

- Shall we start? Which d'you think are the most serious?
- I'd say must come near the top of the list because
- What about rude behaviour? I guess that means kids being cheeky. I don't think that's serious, do you?
- Well, it depends. It could be very serious. I mean
- Let's move on to the ones that aren't serious. Any ideas?

Ways of expressing your opinion:

- As I see it,
- To my mind,
- In my experience,
- That's definitely more serious than
- Without a doubt this is the most

Agreeing and disagreeing:

- You're absolutely right. I couldn't agree with you more.
- Sorry, John, but I just can't agree with you.
- Yes, but let's not forget that
- I agree with you up to a point, but
- That's a load of rubbish, John, and you know it!

Behaviours: Things that children do that might give some parents a reason to punish them:

- being rude and disrespectful
- laziness and lack of discipline
- neglecting their studies
- not helping with the chores
- accidental damage to property
- deliberate damage to property
- doing things that could cause injury to themselves, e.g. running out into the road
- acting in a violent way towards other children
- causing embarrassment to parents in a public place such as a shop or restaurant
- staying out too late at night
- having the wrong kind of friends
- being untidy
- not living up to the parents' expectations
- wearing unsuitable clothes, make-up, jewellery, etc.

Pre-reading

To help us with the texts that follow let's have a quick look at some of the vocabulary.

Spank means to punish a child by hitting him/her with an open hand, often on the part of the body which the child sits on – the part of the anatomy referred to by many people as the "bottom".

Smack is a synonym.

Slap is a more general word which refers to hitting someone for whatever reason with an open hand. A girl might slap her boyfriend across the face, for instance, when she finds out that he has been sending romantic text messages to another girl.

Here is a little discussion point to practise two other words:

Around 2,500 years ago children born in Sparta in southern Greece were taken to the elders of the city for inspection. If the children seemed weak or sick or disabled they were thrown off a nearby cliff. Let's imagine we can go back in time and say to the elders: "Excuse me. What is the **case** for throwing sick babies off a cliff?" ("Case" means "argument" or "justification".) Can you imagine what they might have said to justify this practice?

What **objections** would we have to this practice nowadays? (An objection is an argument against something.)

In the reading passages that follow you will see that the word **case** is used in a number of different ways. Look at the following sentences and then identify the uses.

1. I will now present the **case** for corporal punishment.
2. I left my **case** on the plane.
3. In some **cases**, children who were beaten say it never did them any harm.
4. **In case** we need to punish him I always carry my cane with me.
5. Several **cases** have come to court recently in which parents have been accused of child abuse.
 - a. a trial
 - b. an argument
 - c. an instance or instances
 - d. used to refer to a possibility that explains something else
 - e. a piece of luggage

Reading

The Case for Spanking

It is the duty of parents to bring their children up in such a way that they become disciplined. Society has a moral order, and children need to be taught how to behave so that they conform to that order. There are many ways to **accomplish** this. Talking about the rules, explaining them and criticizing the child's behaviour are important methods. When the rules are broken parents must first **tell** their children **off**, and sometimes this **verbal** disapproval is enough to get them to control their behaviour. However, at other times some children can be so unruly and unreasonable that parents have to **resort to** corporal punishment to correct their behaviour.

Smacking works because it is painful. The pain is what helps the child **appreciate** how wrong his or her action was. Furthermore, when a child knows that it can be smacked this **instils** a fear of the punishment which helps to **deter** misbehaviour in the future. It also works because children can see that the punishment is for their own good. Admittedly this is not always true of older children (over the age of 10 or 11) so with teenagers smacking is not recommended unless they agree with the punishment.

Here is how one 15-year-old boy describes the way his parents have treated him:

"My parents always warn me first and then if I ignore the warning I get spanked. Looking back at the times I have been smacked I can see that I deserved it. Usually I cry, partly because it hurts but also because I regret what I have done and because I am sorry I have disappointed my parents. Afterwards, I never do it again. I know not many kids my age get spanked, but I think that maybe they should, because there are kids who go out and break the law just for fun and their parents don't do anything about it."

An older person described his experience this way:

“I have very clear memories of the smacking I received when I was little, and I am grateful to my mum for smacking me. I see lots of young people with so little self-control and self-discipline and I blame the parents for not being strict enough.”

Some people argue that because it is illegal to hit an adult who behaves badly it should also be illegal to smack a child. These people are mistaken because the comparison between children and adults is not a reasonable one. Adults are assumed to be responsible. With children it is quite different. We know that responsibility is something that their parents must teach them. It is for this reason that it would be **foolish** if parents had to treat their children just like adults.

We should all be concerned about the way children might be abused and injured by their parents, but we should not make the mistake of thinking that a parent who smacks his sons and daughters because they have been disobedient is the same as a drunken father who comes home and **beats** his children. Parents who commit **brutal** acts of child **abuse** ought to be prosecuted. Parents who use **moderate** forms of corporal punishment to educate the children that they love should be supported by the society they live in.

Vocabulary

A. Look for the following words which are not in bold type:

1. In the first paragraph, what is the adjective that means: in the habit of obeying a strict set of rules?
2. You know what it means when your parents say they “disapprove of your behaviour,” but what is the noun derived from this verb? (paragraph 1)
3. You know what the school rules are, but what is the word derived from “rule” that refers to naughty and disruptive behaviour? (paragraph 1)
4. In the quotation from the 15-year-old boy what is the phrase that means “commit an act which is illegal”?
5. You know what it means when we say “people obey orders,” but what is the adjective that refers to the behaviour of those who do not obey? (last paragraph)
6. Which verb in the last paragraph means: “formally accused of a crime and taken to a court of law”?

B. Match the words in bold with the following definitions:

- | | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|
| a. to make someone feel something | g. treatment that causes harm to a person |
| b. expressed in words (adjective) | h. not extreme |
| c. achieve | i. cruel and violent |
| d. hit | j. stupid |
| e. understand | k. persuade someone not to do something |
| f. speak to a child firmly to let them know they have done something wrong | l. switch from plan A to the less desirable plan B |

Questions

1. The first paragraph presents one argument for corporal punishment. What is it?
2. Paragraph 2 describes two of the main ways in which corporal punishment can help to improve a child’s behaviour. What are these?
3. What advice is given concerning the use of corporal punishment with teenagers?
4. There are two quotations from people who have been smacked. On the whole, how do they feel about the way they have been treated?
5. What are the three reasons mentioned by the 15-year-old boy to explain why he cries after being smacked?
6. The writer argues that children cannot have the same rights as adults because they are special. What is special about children that explains why they should be treated differently?

Over to you

1. What does the writer say that you particularly agree with or disagree with? Is there anything he says which you think is correct? Is there anything which is mistaken?
2. What is your response to the two quotations? Can you understand their point of view or does it seem odd?
3. The writer disagrees with those who want to argue that corporal punishment is a form of child abuse. What do you think?

4. In discussions of corporal punishment in English people often refer back to a very common saying: **Spare the rod, spoil the child.** (The rod mentioned here is a long thin stick or cane perfect for hitting kids across the part of their bodies they normally sit on. The meaning of "spare" in this context should be clear from this example: The Emperor is thinking of throwing you to the lions so you get down on your knees and beg him, saying, "Spare me, your Majesty!" – meaning you want him to prevent you from suffering this unpleasant experience.) So what do you think the saying about the rod and the child means?

Language extra: get

A. Did you notice the 15-year-old boy use the verb **get** to make something that looks very much like the passive voice? He didn't say, "I am spanked." He said:

If I ignore the warning I **get spanked**.

You need to be careful with "get" for two reasons. Firstly, expressions with get are often considered a little informal. The other problem is that although we often use "get" to substitute for "be" in the passive voice, this is not always possible. For instance, we can say:

- Jim **got fined** for shoplifting.
- How did the car **get damaged**?
- The cat **got bitten** on its leg.
- Two of our boys **got shot** in the attack.
- The frog **got trodden** on and died shortly afterwards.
- He succeeded in **getting elected** as leader of the party.
- Stories **get exaggerated** on the TV and in the press.
- I never **get invited** to the really good parties.

But no one uses "get" in sentences like these:

I **was born** in 1992. The house **was built** in less than six months.

Why not? Some people say we only use "get" for passive constructions that refer to unexpected events (although I am not sure how much I was expecting to be born).

B. Sometimes "get" is used instead of the reflexive form of a verb when we are describing what people do to themselves. For instance, in conversation we don't often say "I wash myself," or "I dress myself." It's much more common to say:

Before breakfast I **get washed** then I **get dressed**.

Similarly, we also say:

They **got engaged** in June and **got married** in August, but then they **got divorced** 18 months later.

Language extra: passive voice

We came across a number of examples of the passive voice (without "get") in the passage. Let's see if you remember how to use it by doing this little exercise. Transform the active sentences into passive ones and omit the original subject whenever it seems obvious.

1. My parents have often spanked me.
I
2. At the moment Dad is telling my little brother off for breaking the window.
At the moment my little brother
3. Society should support parents who teach their children discipline.
Parents who teach their children discipline
4. I want the police to arrest him.
I want him
5. I would not let the man beat his children.
I would not let the children
6. You have to smack children to teach them right from wrong.
Children
7. People said the couple were abusing their children.
The couple
8. People said the Frenchman had slapped the boy's face.
It

Talking point

Have a look at this advice taken from a website which explains how to “smack with love”, make sure you understand the meaning of the phrases in bold and then discuss what you think of the advice:

Firstly, the child must be given a clear warning that if they do something again they will get a spanking. When the child continues to be disobedient the situation may make the parent angry. **Under no circumstances** should the parent spank the child at that moment. Parents need to pause for a while to calm down first otherwise their reaction will be seen as an expression of a **lack** of self-control, not as a loving concern for the child’s moral development. Spanking without anger is the most important but also the most difficult part of “spanking with love”. The parent must quietly explain to the child what has happened and why the punishment is necessary before going to a private place where they will not be seen. It is **vital** that children are not **humiliated** in front of others when they are punished. The slap must always be with the flat open hand and never on the face or head. Immediately afterwards the parent should hug the child as an expression of love and affection and to let the child know that the “**debt** has been paid”.

Reading

The Case against Spanking

Smacking might be an effective way of controlling a young child’s behaviour but what do children actually learn when they are treated in this way? Children who are smacked learn the lesson that it is permissible for people to use physical violence to **impose** their idea of what is right. They might not be able to do this with their parents but they will find opportunities to do it with other children or with other adults when they grow up. It is not surprising that children who are smacked are more likely to use violence when they need to assert themselves in a difficult situation. In fact, 26 separate studies looking at 12,517 children all indicated that there was a clear link between corporal punishment and increased levels of aggression in **childhood**.

We should also stop and think about the kind of morality we want our children to acquire. Do we really want to teach them that what matters above all else is being obedient, or do we want to encourage them to develop a sensitivity towards and an understanding of other people’s feelings? Surely this is a more **appealing** form of morality.

To **raise** children who have a morality based more on sensitivity and understanding parents need to **maintain** a very close and loving relationship with their children in which they can communicate openly. That kind of relationship will certainly be damaged if parents resort to smacking their children. Because corporal punishment **inflicts** pain it instils fear, and this creates an emotional distance between the parent and child. Children who are afraid of their parents are likely to become less communicative. Not only does this damage the child-parent relationship but it also leaves them less able to **deal with** their feelings.

Recent research using the latest brain **scanning** techniques adds to the concern about the consequences of corporal punishment in the home. Professor Margaret Sunderland draws the conclusion from this research that parents who use fear to discipline their children can get quick results but their children pay a very high price. They are often left with increased levels of **anxiety** and social phobia which can **persist** for the rest of their lives. She warns parents that “it is all too easy to break a child.”

Since there are alternatives there really is no excuse for parents treating their children in this way. In some cases children get into a habit of behaving badly because they learn that that is a way of attracting their parents’ attention. This can be avoided if parents spend more time encouraging children when they are behaving well and make sure that children have **stimulating** things to do. Rewarding positive behaviour is much more effective than punishing negative behaviour. In those moments when young children do get out of control or refuse to listen it is often best to calmly hold them. As Professor Sunderland puts it: “Sometimes a child’s brain is too hyper-active to respond to language and a warm and loving touch is the only thing that can calm them down without conflict.”

Vocabulary

A. These questions concern phrases not in bold type:

1. You know the verb “permit” as in: “I will not permit you to do that again.” What is the adjective derived from this in the first paragraph?

2. The first paragraph talks about times when people need to **assert themselves**. Look at this second example and work out what this verb means:
 “Son, I’ve seen you with those friends of yours. You are so passive. You let them make the decisions and take the initiatives and you just do what they say. Son, you’ve got to **assert yourself** more. You don’t want to grow up to be a doormat that everyone just walks over, do you?”
3. Paragraph 1 does not say that the results of the research “showed” or “revealed” or “demonstrated” something. What verb is used?
4. What adjective derived from verb “communicate” is used in the third paragraph?
5. Often we say that someone “comes to a conclusion”. An alternative verb is used with this noun in the fourth paragraph. What is it?

B. Match these definitions with the words in bold:

- | | |
|--------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|
| a. examine | g. the time of your life before you become an adult |
| b. continue | h. attractive |
| c. keep something and preserve its quality | i. interesting |
| d. worry, nervousness | j. force people to respect something |
| e. cope with, handle | k. cause someone to feel something that makes them suffer |
| f. bring up | |

Note: There is a machine that **scans** the brain and another that scans images on paper to convert them into digital form, but when we talk about reading the word **scan** has a slightly different meaning. When your school’s examination results are published you scan the list of names quickly to find yours. Here scan means: look through quickly to find some important piece of information.

Questions

1. Briefly sum up the main point made in the first paragraph.
2. Two different kinds of morality are described. What would you say is the main difference between them?
3. According to paragraph 3 how can corporal punishment do damage to the parent-child relationship?
4. What does Professor Sunderland have to say about the longer-term psychological impact of corporal punishment?
5. Sometimes young children start shouting and behaving badly when they can’t get what they want. What advice is given in the last paragraph that would be applicable to a situation like this?

Over to you

1. Do any of these arguments seem to be persuasive? If not, what criticisms can you make of them?
2. Paragraph two criticises what might be called a morality of obedience. Isn’t it a good thing for a country to be populated by people who are obedient and do what they are told?
3. What do you think about the advice in the last paragraph? Is it practical or do you think that if your kid starts shouting in the supermarket it would be much better to give him a smack to get him to shut up?

Language extra

Before too long we will be writing a little essay about corporal punishment. As part of the preparation for that let’s practise a few things that will be useful in compositions like that.

A. We might want to talk about causes. We know how to use “cause” and “because” but how about this:

Some adults have high levels of anxiety **due to** the way they were brought up.

Let’s practise: Join these two sentences together using the phrase “due to”.

John had a strict upbringing. Now he knows right from wrong.

.....

B. We might want to talk about the purpose of actions. The simplest way of doing this is to use the infinitive with "to" like this:

I did it **to get** revenge.

But there are also these phrases to do the same job:

John's Dad was strict with him **in order to** teach him discipline.

John's Dad was strict with him **so as to** teach him discipline.

John's Dad was strict with him **so that** he would learn to be self-disciplined.

Say how you would change this sentence three times so that it includes each of the above expressions (a bit of a cruel question because now there's a negative):

They didn't want to spoil the girl so they didn't give her everything she asked for.

C. Do you remember how to use the word **despite**? Here are some examples:

Despite being smacked, Nigel turned out to be a perfectly normal adult.

Despite what people say, children can quickly forget unpleasant experiences like these.

Join these sentences together using the word "despite":

Andrew didn't have a father. He still grew up normally.

.....
People say parents have to smack their offspring from time to time. This is not true.
.....

D. Look at these other linking devices (that you've already come across in the texts on spanking):

There are alternatives to this approach. **Admittedly**, they require more patience, thought and understanding.

There is another morality based on sensitivity and understanding. **Surely** this is better.

"Admittedly" means: "I admit that," and "surely" is used to emphasize your certainty that something is true.

Look at the following linking devices and then match them to the alternatives that follow:

- John was spanked as a child. **Apparently**, he is now a normal, psychologically balanced adult.
- Some parents behave in one way and insist that their children behave in a different way. **Undoubtedly**, this will lead to conflicts.
- Some children are more sensitive and less aggressive than others. **Consequently**, if corporal punishment is used on them they are likely to turn the violence in on themselves and this can lead to self-destructive behaviours such as anorexia.
- John often got into trouble as a boy. **Nevertheless**, he has become one of the most well-respected trainee managers our local supermarket has ever had.
- Edith's religion emphasizes peacefulness and non-violence. **Therefore**, as well as being a vegetarian she is also opposed to any form of corporal punishment.
- Many people insist that an occasional smack doesn't do children any harm. **Personally**, I doubt whether this is true.
- Some parents say it is best to love a child as he or she is and not put them under any pressure. **By contrast**, there are other parents who say that you show your love for the child by making them realize how important it is to grow up and achieve something in life.
- **Understandably**, most parents are worried about how their offspring will earn their living in the future.
 - a. Despite this,
 - b. In comparison to this,
 - c. As I see it,
 - d. It seems ...
 - e. As a result of this,
 - f. For this reason
 - g. It is easy to appreciate/grasp/see that ...
 - h. It is certain that ...

FULLSPATE WRITING TUTORIAL

Your Guide to the Wonderful World of the English Essay

This book concentrates on essays because these are often the most useful form of writing for students. Exams like the Michigan Proficiency and the Cambridge IELTS ask candidates to write essays and everyone who goes to university writes lots of them. The Michigan exam might give you the option of writing a descriptive composition like the one we wrote in the first unit, but those tasks are far less common than the essay tasks.

To get an initial idea of what an essay is, let's begin with a contrast between essays and articles so that we understand the difference.

What are essays?

In general, essays are things we write for teachers at school or for lecturers at university. In them we present ideas – either our own or those of other people whose work we have been studying. They are supposed to be written in a style that shows how rational, logical and scientific we are.

What are articles?

We write these for newspapers and magazines read by the general public. Here the emphasis is on grabbing the reader's attention, so writers try very hard to think of interesting ways to begin the article and they adopt a style that is more pleasurable to read than an academic essay.

Introductions

Here are the beginnings of two different articles and essays about two different topics. In each case say whether you think it's from an article or an essay.

<p>1</p> <p>Fame isn't everyone's cup of tea. Take Kurt Cobain, for example. The lead singer of the pop group Nirvana couldn't stand the idea of coming on stage in front of thousands of fans and pretending to have a whale of a time. It all seemed so fake. And then there was the affluence. Cobain bought a Lexus but couldn't bear to drive it around the poor neighbourhood where he grew up, so he took it back. A few weeks later he locked himself in a room, put his open driving licence on the floor and shot his face off.</p>	<p>2</p> <p>The development of the mass media has helped to create what might be called a factory of fame. An industry has grown up that makes money by producing stars, and ordinary people have responded by dreaming that they too could be famous. What these people often forget is that the experience of becoming a star in the modern culture industry is not always positive.</p>
<p>3</p> <p>Globalization has meant that Western images have now spread all around the globe. Because of the popularity of western films, the power of western advertising and the growth of international trade all foreign cultures are gradually becoming more westernized. Depending on the point of view taken, this development can be seen as either beneficial or detrimental to those foreign cultures.</p>	<p>4</p> <p>Have you ever wished you were taller? You might have thought that the only solution was high heels. Wrong. Doctors in China have now developed a way of breaking the legs of Chinese women and gradually stretching them to add up to 10 cms to their height.</p>

Summary task

How would you sum up the topics of the two essays?

1.
2.

Vocabulary

Find words or phrases in the paragraphs above which are synonymous with the following words:

Introduction 1:

isn't something everyone likes
.....
a great time
not genuine; insincere
wealth

Introduction 2:

also

Introduction 3:

world
commerce (buying and selling things)
.....
advantageous
disadvantageous

Introduction 4:

making longer

Style

Think again about the six example introductions and answer the following questions (put **A** for articles and **E** for essays):

1. In which are you more likely to use rhetorical questions?
2. In which should avoid talking directly to the reader by using the word "you"?
3. In which are you more likely to begin with a very brief but dramatic story about certain individuals?
4. In which type of introduction do you usually give a preview of the topics or points of view to be discussed later?
5. In which kind of writing is it often acceptable to use contractions (e.g. don't, I'd, I've, etc.)?
6. In which is it more acceptable to begin sentences with words like **And, But, Also, So**?
7. Which style allows you to write sentences which some people would say are not complete?
8. Which style often allows you to use the colloquial expressions that are common in conversation

Different types of essay

Some essays are largely descriptive. A biology student, for instance, might be asked to write about the life cycle of the Monarch butterfly. In an EFL exam you could come across a topic like this:

Describe the causes of global warming and outline the steps that ought to be taken to stop the phenomenon spiraling out of control.

Question: Let's imagine you have to write this composition. Your essay might have four paragraphs. The first is an introduction and the last is a conclusion. What are the topics of the other two paragraphs?

In addition to questions asking you to describe phenomena there are also questions asking you to present arguments. One problem here is that some students are unsure whether and how to express their own views. Look at these two tasks:

1. Discuss the impact of television on children.
2. What is your opinion about the influence that television has on young people?

If a question says, "Discuss" or, "Assess the arguments for and against" you need to concentrate on presenting the different theories, arguments or points of view that other people have put forward and leave your personal opinion for the final, concluding paragraph.

If a question refers specifically to you and your opinions or feelings or point of view then it is often best to make your point of view clear in the introduction and then try to justify your point of view in the rest of the composition.

Task:

Below are the introductions from two essays written in response to the two tasks above about TV. From the introductions it should be clear which question each essay answers. Which is which?

<p>Essay A</p> <p>Ever since television overtook radio and cinema as the most important medium for broadcasting mass culture there has been a heated debate about the impact of the medium on children. Some criticism has come from scientists who say that there is hard evidence of the consequences of TV for children's physical and psychological development. Other critics have been more concerned with the cultural education provided by this powerful medium.</p>	<p>Essay B</p> <p>Television is undoubtedly one of the most important factors that shape a young person's outlook on life. Most children in Europe and America spend a lot more time watching TV than interacting with their parents, and they probably find TV programmes more interesting than anything they do at school. If TV had a beneficial influence, these facts would not matter so much, but unfortunately the influence of this powerful medium is far from positive.</p>
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Now read the rest of the essay A and answer the questions that follow.

Essay A

Ever since television overtook radio and cinema as the most important medium for broadcasting mass culture there has been a heated debate about the impact of the medium on children. Some criticism has come from scientists who say that there is hard evidence of the consequences of TV for children's physical and psychological development. Other critics have been more concerned with the cultural education provided by this powerful medium.

Scientific studies of large numbers of children have shown that the more TV children watch the more likely they are to be overweight. Sitting in front of a screen for long periods every day is undoubtedly unhealthy for young people who ought to be exercising sufficiently so that their bodies develop properly. Other studies have highlighted the impact on reading and writing skills. It is inevitable that a child's linguistic abilities will suffer if he or she is more occupied with images than with texts. However, there is a doubt about whether TV should be blamed for this. It is often said that parents are to blame for not encouraging their children to spend their free time more creatively.

From a less scientific perspective some critics are disturbed by the cultural influence of television. A lot of what is broadcast is foreign, which inevitably weakens the local national culture and national identity. When pupils in Greece, for instance, are asked to think of a story they are more likely to come up with a narrative about crime in New York than about local heroes. There is also a worry about the message conveyed by TV that enjoyment is everything. Some critics point out that we used to have a culture that valued hard work, patience and self-sacrifice but TV has changed all that.

After considering a number of influences like these, the conclusion to be drawn is that television can do damage to children if it is allowed to dominate their free time. As a consequence, it would seem to be advisable for parents to ensure that young people have a wide range of other stimulating experiences and interests to balance and minimize the role that television plays.

Questions

1. There are different techniques for beginning an introduction: you can say how controversial something is; you can mention some interesting statistics; you can mention a recent case in the media; or you can refer very briefly to the history of something. Does the introduction to essay A use one of these techniques?
2. Where does the introduction refer to the topic of the essay question?
3. How does the end of the introduction connect with the topics of the following two paragraphs?
4. If you had read the rest of Essay B you would have seen that the entire essay is a presentation and defense of the author's views. In essay A the author devotes most of the essay to a presentation of other people's points of view. Where does she make her personal point of view clear?
5. To give your opinion without saying "I think" you can use phrases like "it is clear that" or "there is little doubt that". Which phrase does the author use in the last paragraph?
6. It is not always easy to find things to say in the conclusion so that we don't just repeat ourselves. When talking about something that has a historical development, one technique involves saying something about what the future might hold. The author of essay A says something else though. What is it?

Language

1. In the first sentence the writer refers to children in general. In situations like this do we use the definite article ("the")?
2. In some debates people get noisy and angry. We don't call these "hot debates". Which adjective do we use instead of "hot"?
3. The first paragraph does not use the word "influence". Which synonym does it use?
4. We say that TV channels **broadcast** programmes. What does this mean? (Literally **cast** means throw.)
5. Which phrase towards the end of paragraph 2 means "it is not certain"?
6. At the end of the second paragraph in essay A the writer uses a passive construction to present a frequently expressed opinion. What is the construction?
7. We talk about someone's point of view. What alternative phrase is used in the third paragraph?
8. In paragraph 3 which verb means "communicated" or "put across"?
9. You can say you come to (or jump to) a conclusion. Instead of "come to" what verb is used in the last paragraph?
10. This particular author doesn't want to be very forceful and say "parents must do something". Which phrase does she use to sound less forceful?

Tips for Top Essays

How do we write a breathtaking essay?

In a nutshell, our advice is this: you can't write a good essay without having good ideas.

Does that mean "the right ideas"?

You don't get marks in the exam for having the "right" point of view (for instance, you don't get an extra tick for saying that denim jeans were God's gift to European fashion). Good ideas in this context are simply relevant ideas that you know how to develop into well-formed paragraphs.

How do we develop our ideas?

To appreciate how important it is to develop our ideas well, let's look at a paragraph that doesn't do this:

Scientific research shows that children who watch too much television become overweight. There are also studies that show the harmful effect of television on children's reading and writing skills. Moreover, children who watch more television tend to have a shorter attention span. Other research shows that children who watch a lot of television have a lower emotional intelligence. Their social skills are also not as well developed.

This paragraph has lots of ideas but it is just a list. Compare it with the second paragraph in essay A. How many effects of television do the two paragraphs mention?

What does the writer add in essay A to those two main ideas to develop them into a more successful paragraph?

Let's think of it this way. If you have to write about the impact of TV you could mention lots of influences, and with this approach you would go for **breadth** (covering the topic as broadly as possible) or you could give more details about a small number of influences that you think are particularly important, and here you would go for **depth** instead of breadth. Which do you think it is better to aim for: breadth or depth?

To develop my ideas are there any general techniques?

The main idea or topic of your paragraph can be developed by:

- helping to clarify it
- giving examples
- giving further details
- justifying it
- pointing to exceptions
- explaining why it is so important
- contrasting it with other ideas

So have a go.

Choose four of the following sentences and put them in the right order so that we have a good second paragraph for the essay about fame with a single topic.

..... It can also mean you lose your privacy.

..... A person who gets caught up in this business can find that one moment they are being treated like a demigod and the next like trash.

..... Perhaps one of the greatest drawbacks of being in the spotlight for any length of time is the effect that the publicity can have.

..... What is more, the busy schedule can make it impossible to have a normal family life.

..... Once you become famous hundreds or thousands of journalists and critics will begin writing and talking about you, not because they are really interested in you but because they are looking for stories that they can sell.

..... Anyone who starts to believe such conflicting accounts of themselves will end up not knowing who they really are.

The Full Works

The time has come to write a complete essay. The topic comes from the previous unit. Here it is:

What is your opinion about corporal punishment in the home? Is it perfectly acceptable for parents to smack children when they are particularly naughty, or do you feel that the practice is unacceptable? What grounds* do you have for your point of view?

(* "Grounds" means "reasons" or "justification".)

Planning

In real life writers don't always have a clear plan about what they are going to write before they start. They will certainly have an idea but not necessarily a whole plan. However, these guys probably have all morning to come up with a nice little article. They'll write something, have a coffee, think about it, rewrite it, watch a bit of telly and then finish it off. You won't have all morning (and you won't have any coffee or telly). You might only have half an hour to come up with 250—300 words. You need to get your ideas clear and in a good order so that you can write a reasonable composition at the first attempt.

How? Although it is generally a good idea to begin at the beginning, this is not the case when planning an essay. We don't begin by worrying about the introduction. We begin by trying to get the ideas clear that we want to present. If we are asked about our opinion we need to decide what that is first. Then we need to look for two (or possibly three) topics to focus on. They will be the topics of the two (or three) main paragraphs in the main body of your short, exam-length essay.

Task: You can come up with your own topics or you can choose two or three from the following. Decide now what your topics will be. Of course your choice will depend upon your point of view.

- Why corporal punishment is essential.
- The main reasons why it is wrong for parents to hit children.
- Explaining the right way to smack a child.
- Describing the alternatives and their beneficial consequences.
- Saying why those with the opposite point of view are wrong.
- A consideration of the kind of society we want to live in.

Tip 1: When you plan compositions that present your point of view don't ignore the fact that not everyone agrees with you. Remember that the strongest arguments are those that also try to show why the other guys are wrong.

Tip 2: Don't offend the Style Council!

Remember what we said about the language of essays compared to that of articles (and some of the stuff in this book, to be honest). The vocabulary is one thing you have to be careful with. Certain words are too hip for exam essays. For instance: hip, kids, stuff, dude, bro', 'hood, cops, telly, etc. Secondly, avoid contractions (ain't, haven't, don't, etc.).

The third thing is: "you". In conversation and in magazine articles we often say or write: "You should do this, and you should do that." Not in exams or for lecturers at university, though. You shouldn't tell your examiner what he should be doing. He won't like it.

Look at these examples:

This is great for a magazine: *Remember when you felt angry and just wanted to hit them?*
But in an exam this is better: *Many people can recall feeling angry and just wanting to hit their children.*

Similarly, instead of: *You should look for alternative ways of instilling discipline.*
It would be better to write: *Alternative methods should be sought.*

Instead of: *If your child starts shouting in a supermarket, you should*

It would be better to write: *Parents whose children start shouting in a supermarket should*

Help with the language

Introductions

Here we could refer to some statistics to get the essay started. (In an exam essay the figures could be entirely fictional.) Here's an example from an essay about corporal punishment in schools.

Recent statistics indicate that 15% of schools in still use some form of corporal punishment. This may only be a small minority of schools, but, as far as I am concerned, it is still a cause for concern. Although some people are prepared to defend the practice of teachers hitting students, it is clear that they simply do not appreciate how deeply this deplorable* way of treating children affects their psychology.

(***Deplorable** is a nice adjective for criticizing things that are very bad and unacceptable.)

Notice that because the essay question asks us about our view we make this clear in the introduction (usually at the end), but we keep the details about why we hold that belief for the paragraphs that follow.

The main body

To begin the two paragraphs of the main body you could choose from the following:

The most persuasive argument for/against corporal punishment in the home is

People who insist that corporal punishment works do not realize

Smacking is not the only option for parents faced with unruly children. One alternative is to

People who think too much about the rights of children forget how effective/harmless this form of punishment can be.

The conclusion

A good conclusion rounds off the essay without simply repeating what has already been said. When talking about social issues it is often appropriate to re-emphasize how urgent you think the issue is, what the priorities are, or how optimistic or pessimistic you are about the likelihood of things changing, or, alternatively, about the consequences of us not doing anything. One-sentence conclusions are to be avoided. (In general, one-sentence paragraphs in essays are unacceptable.)

For example:

In conclusion, since there are effective alternatives I can see no reason whatsoever why schools should resort to corporal punishment. Not only is it morally wrong, but it is also bad educational practice. It is terrible both for the individual and for society generally if children grow up associating education with fear.

Write it!

Write around 220 to 280 words on discipline and corporal punishment in the home following the advice from this tutorial and using language and ideas from unit 2. Don't worry about time limits at this stage. Take your time to write a well-organized composition that shows how good your written English really is.

Unit 3

POP

Introduction

Pop has a number of meanings in English. **A bottle of pop** is a bottle of a fizzy drink (the bottle makes a pop sound when you open it) but **pop** is also short for "popular" in phrases like **pop music**. In this unit we are interested in this second sort of pop. We will begin by looking at pop music but later we want to think about some other aspects of **popular culture**. First, to put the topic of pop music into its historical context here's our concise description of the distinctive character of pop music:

What's Odd about Pop

In the old days there were two very different kinds of culture – two forms of culture that belonged to two very different social groups. One group of people went to the concert hall to listen to stirring classical music or went to the theatre to see fine plays like those of Shakespeare. Everyone agreed that this was art, and to emphasize its prestige it is often referred to as **high art**. A very different form of culture could be found in rural areas: the traditional forms of music and dance which the local people created for themselves whenever there was a festival or local celebration. This is referred to as **folk culture**.

Pop music is quite different from both of these. First of all, it is aimed at a very young audience. This must be the first time in the history of civilization that a form of youth culture has become so prominent and powerful. Another difference is the fact that pop is such big business. Sometime after the Second World War some astute businessmen realized that there were huge numbers of young people with money in their pockets (allowances from their parents). Pop music was designed and packaged to help them spend it. One last distinguishing feature of pop is its mass appeal. Gatherings at village festivals were small and audiences at concert halls for classical symphonies were rarely much bigger, but pop has gone global and the crowds at pop concerts can often be measured in thousands. This is one reason why people who listen to classical music call the culture of pop **mass culture** – it is a culture for the masses who grow up in a modern urban industrialized environment.

Vocabulary

Match the words from the passage on the left with the definitions on the right:

1. stirring	a. pocket money
2. fine	b. clever
3. prominent	c. very good
4. astute	d. where people come together
5. allowance	e. moving
6. gathering	f. having an important and noticeable position

Speaking

Let's talk about pop we like and pop we don't like. First a few phrases to help us do this with style. Take it in turns to use these phrases to make up completed sentences about music.

As far as my personal tastes are concerned, I really like (Don't forget how much we really love the word "really")

I have to confess that I'm crazy about

For me, life without would be unimaginable.

One group whose music means a lot to me is

It really moves me, maybe because it expresses

There is some stuff I really can't stand, such as

I absolutely detest/ loathe

It seems to me that it is really important for us, as Greeks, to

Personally, I think it's pointless trying to put music into categories. I mean

Try to use one or two of these when answering the first of these questions:

1. Tell us a little about your likes and dislikes as far as music is concerned. Are there any groups or singers you particularly like? How would you describe the qualities that make their music so attractive? What does it express?
2. Does your society still have a folk music tradition? How important is it to you? Is it under threat? If it is in danger of becoming extinct, is this a cause for concern? What would be lost if it joined the ranks of the dinosaur and the dodo?
3. The French government was very worried about foreign threats to local music so it passed a law obliging all music stations on TV and radio to broadcast a certain proportion of French music. Would you **endorse** a policy like that in your country?
4. Have you ever listened to any classical music apart from the little bits that are used in film soundtracks and in adverts? How do you feel about it? Is it something that we should try to encourage young people to appreciate?

Pre-reading

Just to help you with the vocabulary in the passage that follows look at these sentences and make sure you understand what the words in bold mean:

- Actions which demonstrate a strong sense of morality, particularly if they remind us of old ideas about how aristocratic people ought to behave are called **noble**. Hence we can say: "It is a fine and noble thing to fight for your country."
- **Crude** oil is the thick black stuff that comes straight out of the ground. It is then **refined** to make it into substances that are more pure and valuable such as petrol (US: gasoline). We also talk about behaviour which is **crude** (too raw, inconsiderate, insensitive and thoughtless) compared to that which is **refined** (more thoughtful, considerate, civilized and sophisticated).
- A **principle** is a general rule that you think people should follow when they act. For instance some people think that a lot of morality is based on the principle that you should treat others in the way you would like them to treat you.
- A dialogue: "Perhaps you are punishing the students too severely." "Are you **implying** that I don't know how to teach?" To **imply** something is to suggest it without actually saying it.

Reading

The Barbarism of Pop

Since its emergence on the cultural scene, pop music has had its critics – individuals who clearly haven't enjoyed jumping up and down in time to the music with the rest of the crowd at pop concerts. One such person was the American philosopher and social critic Allan Bloom.

Bloom criticizes pop from the point of view of someone who was brought up on a cultural diet rich in classical music. He feels that such music made an important contribution to what might be called his sentimental education. In his experience, classical music opened up a world of feeling in which the emotions seemed to be raised to a higher level. Inspired by classical music, feelings somehow became more refined as they were **associated** with a sense of what was noble, tasteful, **profound**, **virtuous** and perhaps even **spiritual**. The music in question is, after all, art, and philosophers have long recognized that one of the **hallmarks** of art is its ability to inspire a kind of thoughtful appreciation. It is because music like this can connect the feelings of the listeners with something more rational that it is considered to **exert** a civilizing influence.

Pop and rock cannot claim to be art. Nor can they claim to be civilizing. The effect of the music is quite different. Instead of refining feelings, rock and pop rely on **amplifying** them so that they become as intense as possible. Rock music, for instance, often translates feelings of anger and aggression into a vaguely musical noise that rises to a tremendous **climax** of pure negativity. Among softer pop music the huge number of **lyrics** that talk about love also raise expectations of a climax of pure pleasure and immediate **gratification**. Shakira's hit "My hips don't lie" was a classic example. Shakira shook her hips and sang like a Siren, completely hypnotizing the boys for whom nothing mattered beyond those mind-blowing hips. Then there are the pop and rock concerts where the volume is turned up so high that the fans can feel the beat in their **intestines** – a volume that clearly aims to raise the level of feeling to the highest possible **pitch**. The **ecstasy** of the teenage fans screaming in the front row as their idols come on stage is also a sign of pop's success in **fanning the flames** of the most extreme passions.

Back in ancient Greece, Plato described human progress as a difficult journey out of a dark cave towards the light of understanding – not a narrow understanding of scientific truth but a **broader** appreciation of what is really Good, True and Beautiful. Bloom, like many other critics of pop, is disturbed by pop’s implication that we should be happy just **swaying** in time to the beat in the dark cave. **Regardless** of what the words of the songs say, pop music always **urges** us to stop thinking, give in to the moment of feeling and go with the flow. When this **mentality** becomes a way of life for a generation it represents, for people like Bloom, a step backwards in human intellectual development.

Bloom leaves us with the question: Was this the **ultimate objective** of 5,000 years of civilization?

Vocabulary

1. We say that things like patience, courage and modesty are **virtues**. What is the adjective we can use to refer to behaviour that exemplifies a virtue?
2. One of the words in bold means “making something stronger” and it is more commonly used to refer to electrical signals. Which is it?
3. A noun in bold refers to an extreme emotional state, usually a happy one, which reduces the person’s ability to think much about what is going on. Which is it?
4. Before we had air-conditioning we used to use **fans** to keep us cool in the summer. What do you do if you literally **fan the flames** of a fire?
5. The word **regardless** is used in the penultimate paragraph. What are we saying when we use this word?
6. Which noun refers to the way people see things and think about them?
7. Look for other words in bold that match the following definitions.

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. related to the soul or to religion (adj) b. energetically persuade c. move rhythmically from side to side d. the words of a song e. to have an effect f. final, highest g. deep; thoughtful; meaningful h. wider 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. the tube that joins the stomach to the part of the body you sit on j. purpose k. satisfaction l. connected m. distinguishing feature n. peak, crescendo, high point
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B. The word **pitch** has a number of 13 different uses. Of course you know where we play football, but did you know that if a place is very dark we say it is **pitch-black**? If your camp leader tells you to **pitch your tent** you are supposed to put it up. If a girl sees a snake and screams with a **high-pitched voice** we are referring to the **pitch** of the sound, which is how high or low it is. If you want to be a professional singer you have to have **perfect pitch**, i.e. you have to be able to hit every note accurately. Which of these uses is closest to the one in the passage above?

C. Be careful with the word **taste**. It has two meanings. Look at these two sentences and say what the different meanings are.

Without your tongue you would have no sense of taste.

It’s obvious from your choice of furniture and interior decoration that you’ve got great taste.

We have two different adjectives that relate to these two different uses of the word “taste”:

tasteful and **tasty**. Can you match the adjectives with the nouns?

D. How do we use the words **classic** and **classical**? Complete these two sentences.

- a. Shakira’s song is a example of mindless pop.
- b. If you like Mozart, you like music.

Questions

1. Try to sum up the contrast between the main points of the second and third paragraphs by completing this sentence: According to Allan Bloom, classical music whereas rock and pop just
2. Why do you think the author says that pop and rock cannot claim to be art?
3. More aggressive forms of rock music are said to be little more than “a vaguely musical noise”. Looking at its context in this passage, would you say “vaguely” meant “very” or “slightly”?
4. The music at rock concerts is much louder than the music at classical music concerts. What explanation for this is given in the passage?
5. According to Plato what is the highest aim of human activity?
6. In what way could pop music be said to be against the Platonic ideals?

Over to you

1. Bloom makes pop and rock sound completely mindless, but he never had an in-depth knowledge of pop. Can you think of any songs which are particularly clever and could be appreciated in a thoughtful way instead of just swaying or jumping up and down?
2. Arguably, one implication of Bloom's critique is that rock and pop fans are either **hedonists** or **nihilists**. Hedonists think that personal pleasure is the only true value in the world, whereas nihilists think that any talk about true values is just a lot of hot air – and they don't have much respect for hedonists who are happy living in their little suburban houses. Are you a hedonist or a nihilist, or do you, like Bloom, believe that there are values and ideals that it might be worth making a sacrifice for?
3. Look at Bloom's description of what he thinks the typical teenager is like:

Picture a thirteen-year-old boy sitting in the living room of his family home doing his math assignment while listening to pop on his headphones or watching MTV. Will he ever realize what made this possible? The liberties he **takes for granted** were won only after a long history of **struggle** and sacrifice motivated by high ideals. The electronic sounds and images he enjoys are also the product of a long history of scientific **endeavour**, and the comfortable standard of living that enabled his parents to buy the latest gadgets is due to the workings of an entire economic system. While he **nods** his head in time to the beat he **drifts** further away from the realm of ideas, values, principles and virtues that his world in fact depends upon.

Tell him that if we don't do something about global pollution sea levels will rise 60 metres over the next 1,000 years or try to suggest that we ought to be doing something for the one billion people who still don't have access to clean water and the chances are that he will just **shrug his shoulders**. But if you announced that the music industry was to be closed down he and his peers would be out on the streets in an instant and the local police would have a **riot** on their hands.

Is Bloom's description ridiculous or is there a grain of truth in it? Might he be right that the music industry is helping to close the minds of (some) young people so that they pay almost no attention to the more serious issues that our society faces?

4. Bloom says nothing about the social function of music. How do you think it can help to bring people together?
5. Bloom wants us to think more, but aren't there times when we just want to stop thinking about all the problems that we face? Doesn't music provide a great escape from the pressures of life?

Vocabulary revision

Use the following words to fill in the gaps below, changing their form as necessary. There are two extra words.

**riot exert endeavour regardless granted struggle
gratification implication nod ultimate drift profound**

1. We will buy tickets for the concert of the price. Whatever it costs, it will be worth it.
2. He doesn't appreciate how lucky he is. He just takes our comfortable standard of living for
3. The worst thing about life in the urban jungle is the (battle; difficulty in doing something) for survival.
4. I do not know the answer to that question, but I will (try hard) to find it out.
5. Music a powerful force on young people's lives.
6. If you want to show someone that you agree you can just your head.
7. Nigel wrote a song about philosophy. He wanted to show that pop didn't have to be mindless, and that it could be (i.e. containing deep thoughts)
8. What would you say is the (best, ideal) holiday?
9. Bob had no ambitions whatsoever. He just went wherever chance took him. It was sad to see him through life (move like someone on a boat without a rudder).
10. So much pop music conveys the message to boys and girls that life should be about the effortless of desire.

Language extra: inversions

A. Have you come across sentences like this before?

Not only does classical music educate people's feelings but it also trains people to sit quietly and listen carefully.

Under no circumstances are students to use the musical instruments without the permission of a teacher.

There are two things to notice here: firstly, the sentences begin with a special phrase ("Not only", "Under no circumstances") and this is usually negative; secondly, the following subject is placed after the verb (e.g. "are students").

Be careful: sometimes we can put the set phrase in a different position in the sentence and then we do not invert the position of the subject and the verb. We could, for instance, rewrite the first sentence above like this:

Classical music **not only** educates people's feelings but it also trains people to sit quietly and listen.

Why make our lives more complicated? One reason is that proficiency students ought to be keen to learn how to use more sophisticated forms of English like this. Another reason is that an appropriate inversion in your essay will make a favourable impression on your examiner, so in the exam you should try to create an opportunity to use one.

Here are some more examples:

Only after listening to the songs of Bob Dylan did I realize that pop didn't have to be mindless.

Only if you are a fun-loving teenager can you really appreciate how good a lot of pop music is.

In no way can pop music be held responsible for the apathy of the younger generation.

Rarely do you meet someone who is interested in both pop music and the history and traditions of their country.

Never have I heard such a stirring symphony.

Exercise: Rewrite the following sentences in your notebooks so that they include an inversion.

1. It is rare to find a teenager who prefers folk music to pop.
2. It was only after I learnt to play the clarinet that I started to appreciate all the old music from the villages.
3. I would not let my innocent son have a TV in his bedroom under any circumstances.
4. I've never seen such an amazing home entertainment system.
5. You can appreciate how varied pop music is only if you listen to a lot of it.
6. Some songs express not only a sense of alienation but also the idea that there is some special value in staying alienated and uninvolved.
7. There is no way you can blame the child for becoming a couch potato.

B. Those are the structures that are particularly useful for essays, but there are others that you also ought to be familiar with. Here is the classic trio which you absolutely must know. We come across them when people are narrating a series of events.

Here's a little sentence from a narrative about a trip to the cinema in Baghdad, which then only had electricity for a few hours a day.

The movie had only just started when there was a power cut.

We can say the same thing like this:

Hardly had the movie started **when** there was a power cut.

Scarcely had the movie started **when** there was a power cut.

No sooner had the movie started **than** there was a power cut.

NB With these structures we always use the past perfect to describe the earlier of the two events.

Exercise: Use two of these three structures to rewrite the following sentences so that they include an inversion:

1. As soon as the band started playing, a fight broke out in the audience.
2. Kurt Cobain took delivery of his huge new car and almost immediately felt guilty about owning such a massive status symbol.

NB Be careful with the word **hardly** because we use it with two different meanings and in only one of those cases can it be followed by an inversion. Can you see the difference in the meaning of the word in these two sentences?

Hardly had I shut the door when I realized I had left the keys inside.

Hardly a day goes by without me listening to the song "I don't wanna be a stupid girl" by my favourite group "Pink".

C. There are some simple inversions that you already know. Here are two of them.

There are bats in the attic. (And of course you know that with pronouns there is no inversion: "There they are!")

"I love stuffed vine leaves." "So do I."

Speaking

You are going to read a text about the influence of television (known less formally as "telly"). First discuss the following:

- What sort of things do you enjoy watching on TV?
- Does TV in the home **diminish** conversation or does it give families more to talk about?
- Is there anything about television that you would criticize?
- How would you assess the impact of TV on society? On the whole is it a force for good in the world, or is it harmless nonsense, or is it an evil influence?

Reading

The Truth about Telly

Critics of TV have focused on bad language, mindless violence and sex, and they have made these seem very significant and threatening to the social fabric. These people have looked at the content of certain TV programmes and blown it out of all proportion. The truth is that the content is relatively insignificant - that is not where the real **impact** of TV lies. Paradoxically, perhaps, the most significant feature of TV is the way it makes everything seem insignificant.

There is a **relentless** flow of things on TV: there is a story about a drought in Africa with 1,000,000 on the **verge** of starvation, immediately followed by adverts for Italian spaghetti and the latest toothpaste, then it is back to the football highlights before your favourite soap opera starts, and you are just getting involved in all the intrigues when the adverts come on again and you decide to change channels to watch the movie.

What remains from all of this as something that could have a lasting impact or that could **prompt** some deeper interest? Nothing. Absolutely nothing.

In the old days there was the chance – slim perhaps – that someone sitting beside a window in a silent room **gazing** out into the dark night might begin to wonder about the world or might even be moved to pick up a book and read it by candlelight. Nowadays if you switched the telly off and sat in silence thinking, you are more likely to be asked if something is the matter. Who would sit and think and struggle to make sense of something when you can just switch on the box, relax and be entertained?

Admittedly there are times when TV goes beyond entertainment and actually manages to generate a response. Particularly disturbing images of **emaciated** children dying of hunger, flies **crawling** over their lips, can prompt a rush of feeling but after the report few people are likely to really understand what is going on. The station won't spend too much time explaining the background because it knows it will lose viewers as they get bored and change channels. So the channel keeps things moving at a fast **pace** and pretty soon the viewers have forgotten about the starving children without ever having stopped to think much about the causes of the disaster and what ought to be done in the future. After all, the **overriding** aim of the channel is not to educate but to maximize its **ratings** so that it can sell advertising space at a higher price. For their part, the viewers **hop** from channel to channel to maximise their pleasure. It is a perfect marriage of commerce and hedonism.

Without anyone intending this, TV silently **conveys** the message that nothing really matters in the world. It trains people to leave the world exactly as it is. We have the brute facts (or some of them at least) about poverty, disasters and disease, but we have so little analysis, and we are left with the impression that that is just the way things are and that they couldn't be otherwise. Before we have time to think much or imagine how things might be different the match has started, it is our team and we have found something much more exciting to fill up our free time.

Questions

1. Look for and underline one sentence in this passage that you think sums up the most important point that the author has to make.
2. If something makes us think we say in English that it gives us food for thought. What does the passage say about the ability of TV to give us food for thought?
3. People often say that the most important function of TV is the supply of information that it offers. Looking closely at the fourth paragraph of the text, what is implied there about the most important role that TV plays?
4. In paragraph five what is the reason why the channels keep the pictures and the topics changing quickly?
5. Why are the viewers said to be hedonists?
6. Why must a TV channel do everything it can to maximize the number of viewers it attracts?

Vocabulary

1. Paragraph one refers to the idea that TV might be a threat to the **social fabric**. In English "fabric" refers primarily to cloth (material which is woven). Which of the following do you think the phrase "social fabric" refers to:
 - a) the social factory
 - b) the cloth of society
 - c) the social structure
2. Some people hear a little bad language on TV or see a little nudity and think this is an outrageous attack on our moral values. In paragraph one it says that these people **blow this out of all proportion**. Can you work out what this means?
3. In unit 2 we came across the adjective brutal. Here in the last paragraph we have the word **brute**. This word can be used to as a synonym for "beast" or "wild animal". These animals are not meant to be very clever. Hence we can use the word like this: "When the key jammed in the lock he opened the door using **brute force**," meaning that he just used his strength instead of using his intelligence to find an alternative method. Bearing this in mind, what is meant in the last paragraph when it says that TV just gives us the **brute facts**?
4. Match the words in bold with the following definitions:

a. to cause, provoke, stimulate	h. influence
b. most important	i. edge (i.e. almost in a particular state, but not quite)
c. communicate, put across	j. walk (of an insect), the movement of a person on both hands and feet
d. never ending; ceaseless	k. numbers of viewers
e. looking at something and thinking about it for a long time	l. (literally) to jump up and down on one leg
f. speed	
g. extremely thin	

Over to you

1. What is your assessment of what the writer says about TV? Is he being overly negative?
2. Can you think of programmes that helped you to understand something better and helped you appreciate how important the issue was?
3. Can you think of times when things broadcast on TV **spurred*** people to do something instead of just sitting and watching?

(* Fantastic word, by the way. **Spurs** are literally the sharp things some jockeys wear on the backs of their riding boots to dig into the horse when they want it to gallop faster.)

Vocabulary revision

As a free gift here's a little sentence transformation exercise (don't change the form of the word in bold).

1. As a result of watching the programme, would the person act? **prompted**
Would the person by the programme?
2. TV tells us that nothing really matters. **conveys**
TV that nothing really matters.
3. We change channels often. **hop**
We often to channel.
4. TV doesn't encourage people to act. **spurred**
People
5. They have exaggerated the significance of the bad language. **all**
They have blown
6. Do you think it is a good argument? **assessment**
Whatthe argument?

Language extra: arguing

The following are useful phrases for essays in which you have to present and evaluate arguments. Make sure you know how to use them.

Bloom **claims/contends/asserts/maintains** that.....

The idea that pop is mindless is a total **misconception**.

She has a **valid** point to make when she says that (It's valid because there are good arguments to back up what she is saying.)

(Note that we also say: "Your driving licence is no longer valid. It has expired.")

Bloom **hits the nail on the head** when he says that

Bloom is **wide of the mark** when he asserts that

I would **object to** any plan by the government to control the content of radio programmes. It would be **unjustifiable**.

Instead, I would **advocate** a campaign to promote local music.

Although there are a few very clever lyrics, I would **concede** that a lot of pop is indeed mindless.

Writing

Here is the topic:

Critics of popular music accuse it of promoting a culture in which young people care only about pleasure and entertainment, and care little about the more serious things in life such as their history, the virtues that sustain social life, the plight of the world's poor, and the future of the human race. To what extent do you feel that the critics are right?

Plan

1. When you have to respond to a point of view like this there are usually four different possible responses. Look at this list and decide which response you will choose to take in your essay:

- The view is correct (pop music is as bad as the critics say it is).
- The view is incorrect (pop music has positive effects on young people).
- Up to a point the view is correct (the critics are right about some popular music but they overlook other music to which their criticism does not apply).
- The view makes some dubious assumptions (e.g. perhaps it is a mistake to expect young teenagers to care much about their country's political history or about the plight of the world's poor).

It is common in exams to be given a question with an extreme point of view, and the most popular response often says that although there is some truth in the claim, there is another side to the coin which has been overlooked.

2. Now try to come up with two different ideas for the main body of your essay.

3. You need to think about how you will develop those ideas. Don't forget that you can use examples. If you want to argue that some pop music is far from being mindless, give an example of a particularly profound song – a song that strikes you as being particularly meaningful.

You can also refer specifically to some of Allan Bloom's points or use other points that came up in your discussions. In addition to those, here are some other points to consider. Decide whether or not you would like to use them.

- Even people who do care about the serious issues need to enjoy themselves from time to time, and this kind of music can create the right kind of atmosphere for that.
- Parents try to bring their children up to be responsible citizens but on their headphones those impressionable youngsters get the message that pushing things to extremes is much more exciting.
- Some music expresses and promotes a profound sensitivity that later on, as young listeners grow up, could help them respond to things like the plight of the world's poor.
- When music becomes an accompaniment to almost everything that young people do outside school there is no way it cannot have an effect on them.
- Pop is like musical chocolate cake – it's pure pleasure - and the fact that we enjoy it does not mean that we are insensitive to the suffering of others.

Model paragraphs

Introduction:

When you write an essay about a controversial social phenomenon you could begin like this:

Ever since the first fast food restaurant opened its doors to the public a debate has been raging about its effects on the nation's health. Some particularly vociferous critics have called it "junk food", as if it were a kind of edible garbage. There is some truth in this criticism, but it is important not to overlook the fact that there are forms of fast food which are quite healthy.

(Vocabulary: **rage** – to continue with tremendous force; **vociferous** – with a loud voice)

Notice that the last sentence lets the reader know what the writer's point of view is – the point of view that will be described and justified in the rest of the essay.

Main body:

We would have to admit that a lot of fast food does deserve the name "junk" especially when we consider its nutritional value.

On the other hand, we must not forget those forms of fast food that escape these criticisms.

Not only is the sandwich tasty but it is also nutritious.

Conclusion:

How will you avoid simply repeating yourself in the last paragraph? If you have been given an extreme point of view in the question and you want to argue for a more balanced approach you will want to emphasize that in the conclusion. Here's an example from the essay about fast food.

All in all, the critics of fast food have blown the issue out of all proportion. Of course we need to be concerned about our health and we need to take steps to keep ourselves as healthy as possible but there is no reason to be fanatical about this. We can be careful to eat healthily most of the time and still allow ourselves to enjoy a mouthwatering cheeseburger with French fries from time to time.

Alternatively, to emphasize how important it is to be moderate you could say that critics like Allan Bloom seem to imply that our society should follow in the footsteps of the extremist Islamic government of Afghanistan (before it was invaded by the US) which banned all popular music so that people would not be distracted from their religious and social duties. That isn't a road we want to go down.

Write it!

Try to write 230 to 280 words using ideas from this unit and not forgetting the tips from the writing tutorial. **NB** Your essay must contain an inversion otherwise it will be screwed up into a little ball and thrown into the bin. You have been warned!

Unit 4 “I don’t like Mondays.”

Introduction

You probably know the expression, “Thank God it’s Friday,” (Fridays are fantastic – you know that soon you will be out with your mates sipping milkshakes until late at night knowing that you don’t have to get up at the crack of dawn the following day), but do you know the story about the other end of the week?

On the last Monday of January 1979, 16-year-old Brenda Ann Spencer was at home in San Diego, California, looking across her street at the kids arriving at an elementary school opposite. She was holding a rifle that her father had given her as a gift. She loaded the gun, took aim at some of the children and started pulling the trigger. Soon she had shot and wounded eight children and had killed the principal together with a second man who had tried to help him.

It took six hours before she gave herself up to the police. During that time she was asked why she had done it. She said: “I don’t like Mondays. This livens up the day.” That was not the only comment she made. She also said, “It was just like shooting ducks on a pond”; and “the kids looked like a herd of cows standing around, it was really easy pickings.”

That’s a little story to introduce the topic of this unit: violence.

Speaking

Before looking at the text you should discuss the following questions about things that have to do with violence and aggression:

- There are different ways of being overly aggressive. Do you think that **verbal abuse** can be as serious as physical abuse, or do you agree with the English saying: “Sticks and stones may break my bones but words will never hurt me”?
- **Bullying** is a common phenomenon in schools. Why do you think some children become bullies? More often than not, what sorts of children are picked on?
- In English, words that end in the suffix **-cide** refer to killing. When we use the following words what sort of killing is being talked about? Match them with the descriptions of the things being killed below:

homicide	a. children
matricide	b. people killing themselves
patricide	c. fathers
fratricide	d. people in general
infanticide	e. a whole tribal, racial or ethnic group
genocide	f. mothers
suicide	g. a king or queen
regicide	h. brothers

There are two other words ending with **-cide** which we will use later in the book, but instead of describing actions they describe poisons. On the farm, in the garden and around the home we might use a **herbicide**, a **pesticide** or a **fungicide**. Which of these poisons kills which of the following organisms?

- unwanted small animals such as caterpillars and cockroaches
- a form of life of which mushrooms are examples
- unwanted plants
- There is also domestic violence, for instance between **spouses** (i.e. marital partners), between **siblings** (i.e. brothers and sisters) or between parents and their offspring. Can you imagine why a teenager might become violent towards his or her parents?

Now read a passage about an almost unbelievable act of aggression against a mother.

Reading

Matricide Out of the Blue

When Simon Geldhart's father goes to visit him in prison and asks him why he killed his mother, the young man says he can't remember. It certainly was a horrific murder. Simon, who was then only 18, picked up a heavy champagne bottle and **savagely** beat his mother to death. The **coroner** reported that every bone in her face had been broken by an estimated number of 17 blows.

What immediately **provoked** the violent and bloody **outburst** seems unbelievably **trivial**. A row started after Simon's mother refused to let him take her car to go out in the evening. Simon's reaction was totally unexpected, especially since he and his mother had been so close. According to his father, Simon used to **cling** to his gentle and **adoring** mother.

If he had a serious **grievance**, it was not with his mother but with his father – a **prominent** and successful politician who had abandoned the family when the boy was 13. Simon had complained of being neglected by the father, who spent far more time seeking **publicity** and talking on TV shows than with his wife and son. The father **recalls** the time when his son told him: "Dad you're always going away. You are never here to play with me."

Yet the boy never **rebelled**. Instead, he continued to look up to his father and tended to blame himself for his **misfortunes**, as he did when his parents broke up. He thought that if he had been a better boy or a bigger success at school, the family wouldn't have split up.

Those who knew the family say Simon was brought up in a climate of fear by a **harsh** and domineering father. When he was a lad his father took him around police **cells** and prisons, warning: "That's where you will end up if you go wrong."

It also seems that Simon was acutely aware that he couldn't hope to live up to his father's high expectations. Just before the murder he had dropped out of college, then he lost his job in a burger restaurant and was **in debt**. As his father **recollects**: "It was near to my birthday and he knew he wouldn't be able to afford a present. But he didn't dare tell us his troubles."

Looking back, the father confesses that he too was uncommunicative. "I could never communicate with Simon. I could go on TV and talk to the masses, but not to my own family. If only I had been able to do that, things might have been so different."

The father, who had been an outspoken **advocate** of capital punishment, says that the experience taught him that things are not so black and white. "I think all the time that Simon would be gone now if I'd had my way. I was **shattered** when he was **convicted** of murder. His was so clearly a case of **diminished** responsibility and what he needs is help."

In a final **twist** to the story, while the father was expressing his regret at having been so neglectful and saying "Maybe now I can succeed in being the father he needs", he was selling his story to a TV company for a documentary about the murder.

Questions

1. How did Simon kill his mother?
2. What was the immediate reason for the row between Simon and his mother shortly before the murder?
3. What do we learn about the behaviour of Simon's mother towards him?
4. What reasons did Simon have for being angry with his father?
5. Adolescents who rebel are quick to blame their parents when there are problems in the relationship. How did Simon react when there were problems?
6. What did Simon believe was the crucial reason why his father abandoned the family?
7. Why had his father taken him to visit prisons?
8. What criticism does the father make of himself?
9. How has the experience with his son changed the father's attitude to capital punishment?

Over to you

1. The title uses the phrase **out of the blue** which is used for talking about things that are completely unexpected (like a bolt of lightning out of a blue sky). Simon's action was unexpected but is it completely inexplicable or do you think we can make sense of it?
2. Do you think it was right for Simon to be convicted of murder and given the maximum sentence, or do you agree with the father that his was a case of diminished responsibility?

Vocabulary

Exercise A

1. Which of the words in bold means "cause a person or animal to respond in an aggressive or otherwise unpleasant way"?
 - a. **horrible**
 - b. **horrific**
2. What is the difference between these two adjectives?

It was a **horrible** meal.

It was a **horrific** murder.
3. How does the meaning of **blow** change in these four sentences?

She was killed by a **blow to the head**.

You can use detergent to **blow bubbles**.

The fuse blew and the lights went out.

The concert **blew my mind**. Their music was out of this world.
4. Paragraph 2 says the reason for the row was **trivial**. You have probably heard of the game Trivial Pursuit. One definition of the word "game" is: a trivial pursuit (a pursuit being an activity). Do you think "trivial" means serious or not serious?
5. Simon had a **row** with his mother. Seats in cinemas are in **rows**. You probably know how to **row** a boat on the lake. Which of these words rhymes with "how" and which with "low"?
6. The text uses a number of phrasal verbs. Look for these and explain what they mean as they are used here. (Tip: with phrasal verbs it is usually best to remember the kinds of subjects or objects they are typically used with, e.g. "school breaks up on 23rd December".)
 - look up to
 - split up
 - end up
 - live up to
 - drop out
7. The fourth paragraph uses the word **rebel**. What do you do if you rebel against your parents?
8. What do we call the rooms in prisons and police stations where suspects or convicts are held?
9. The seventh paragraph uses the word **too**. This is a simple word but you need to take care to put it in the right position in the sentence. To think a little more about this, match the first sentences on the left with the second ones on the right.

1. There is a good explanation for their bad relationship.	a. He too was uncommunicative.
2. His son was very quiet.	b. He was too uncommunicative.
3. He was a harsh and domineering father.	c. He was uncommunicative too.

10. The father says: "Simon would be gone now **if I'd had my way**." What does this mean?
11. There are two words in bold type that mean "remembers". What are they?

Exercise B

Match the remaining words in bold with the following meanings.

- | | |
|-------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. explosive expression of emotion | 9. broken into hundreds of tiny pieces |
| 2. to hold onto tightly | 10. support (an idea) |
| 3. loving | 11. reduced |
| 4. wildly, brutally | 12. bad luck |
| 5. standing out from the crowd | 13. strict; unkind |
| 6. doctor investigating suspicious deaths | 14. exposure e.g. in the media that attracts people's attention and interest |
| 7. complaint | 15. owing money |
| 8. turn | 16. found guilty and punished |

Language extra: conditionals 1

A. You should already know the standard conditionals (zero, first, second and third) like the back of your hand. Look at these two conditionals. One of them may be a little unfamiliar.

- a. If it rained, we usually stayed indoors.
- b. If it had rained, the flowers wouldn't have died.

Which describes an event or events that actually occurred and which describes an event that did not occur? What has happened to the tense of the verb "rain" to indicate that it describes an event that didn't actually take place?

Now have a look at these two sentences. Say whether each one refers to the past, the present or the future. Which tenses are used in the first part of the sentence?

- a. If you weren't here, I would be petrified.
- b. If I told him what I thought of him at the next meeting, he would sack me.

How can you tell that one of them refers to the future? They are both examples of one of the standard conditionals (zero, first, second and third). Do you know which one?

B. There are a couple of **mixed conditionals** you need to be familiar with. First, have a look at this standard third conditional:

If I had worn gloves, they **wouldn't have found** my fingerprints.

Both halves of the sentence refer to the past. But we could refer to the present consequences of the past like this (note the change of tense):

If I had worn gloves, I **wouldn't be** in prison now.

A different mixed conditional is used for explaining a past action by reference to a general state of affairs. First, look at this standard third conditional:

If I **had had** better eyesight, I wouldn't have missed the target.

Because my eyesight has always been bad and is still bad I am more likely to say:

If I **had** better eyesight, I wouldn't have missed the target.

Practice

Think of a present result for this past action:

If I hadn't lost my temper with my boss,

Think of a general state of affairs to explain this past event. (Remember: naive people are the easiest ones to deceive.)

If I, I wouldn't have been tricked so easily.

C. Here are some other constructions you need to be familiar with:

1. Instead of this standard second conditional:

If we kidnapped their son, would they pay us the ransom?

We can say:

If we **were to kidnap** their son, would they pay us the ransom?

2. Instead of just saying:

If you change your mind, let us know.

We can make it more formal like this:

If you **should change** your mind, let us know.

3. "If" can be followed by an adjective on its own or a prepositional phrase:

If possible, murder victims are not to be moved until the forensic team arrives.

If in doubt, you must request a clarification of the instructions.

Let's practise these two:

(You want to ask your Mum to do something for you but you are not sure if she can, so you say:)

If possible, can you

(You are giving instructions to trainee electricians who might not be 100% certain whether or not a wire is live. You say:)

If in doubt, do not

D. Occasionally we drop the "if" from the conditional sentence and begin with an inversion. Use this exercise to practise doing this. (Note: you will also have to use some of the constructions from section C above.)

If the bombs had gone off, at least 600 people would have died.

Had

If the government banned the sale of guns, such violence would drop.

Were

If I had a gun, I would use it.

Were

If you change your mind, let us know.

Should

If you hit me again, I'll kick your teeth in.

Hit and I'll kick your teeth in.*

(* Actually this isn't an inversion, but it illustrates another situation in which we can drop the "if" from the conditional.)

Speaking

You are going to read a text about violence in films. Before looking at it, you should discuss the following:

- What do you think of the amount of violence shown on television? Is it a cause for concern?
- How would you account for the popularity of violent movies?
- Some of the cartoons that very young children watch contain violent scenes: cartoon characters getting shot or getting squashed under huge rocks dropped from a great height. Does this matter or is it just harmless fun?
- What are the worst cases of violence at school that you have heard of?
- At the Columbine High School in American in 1999 two boys tried to blow up the canteen at lunchtime and when the bombs failed to go off they started shooting students and teachers, killing 12 and wounding another 22. Can you imagine why anyone might want to do something like this?

Reading

In the title of the following passage a **thug** is someone who is very rough and violent.

Cinema: a School for Thugs?

After John Hinckley tried to **assassinate** Ronald Reagan (the US president) back in 1981, it **came to light** that Hinckley had been obsessed with the film "Taxi Driver" – a film in which the hero tries to assassinate a politician. Some saw this as final proof that violence on both the large and small screens was a cause, and not just a **reflection**, of violence in society. There were clear signs that Hinckley had been trying to replicate a scene from the film. However, some people argued that there was no simple causal connection between the film and the act of violence. Was Hinckley violent because he had seen the film so many times, or did he watch the film so often because he was such a violent character?

Similarly, after the Columbine High School **massacre** in 1999, where the two teenagers Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold shot 34 students and teachers, there were those who tried to **attribute** the murderous tendencies of the two boys **to** a culture of violence on film and TV. Throughout their youth both the teenagers had enjoyed watching violent movies and playing violent video games.

The question for some of us is this: If people like Hinckley, Harris and Klebold had never seen a violent film in their lives, would they have grown up taking care of their pet rabbits and happily running errands for elderly relatives instead of teaching themselves how to make bombs, and dreaming of guns and death?

The psychologists employed by the FBI to investigate the background of Harris and Klebold came to the conclusion that Harris (who had been the **dominant** figure) was a psychopath – a person who was physically incapable of feeling any **empathy**. Murder for him was just

a fantastic **spectacle**, like a firework display. Other people's pain meant nothing. No one with any empathy could come to the conclusion that Harris had come to in his private **journal**: everybody deserved to die, except maybe ten people. "If I could nuke the world, I would."

By the end of the twentieth century over 3,000 research studies looking at the **link** between films and violence had been published in scientific journals around the world. Although these have helped support a number of different theories they haven't proved once and for all that anyone who watches violent films will inevitably become violent.

One theory about the influence of on-screen violence is that it desensitizes us. We do not necessarily become more violent but we care less about the suffering of other people both on and off the screen. It might then be easier, for instance, to support our country going to war without thinking much about the pain and misery that that will cause.

Another theory is that young people who grow up watching a lot of violent movies are taught that violence is an appropriate way of dealing with things that **frustrate** them. In a conflict situation there are always a number of possible strategies, including **negotiation**, **retreat** and **turning the other cheek**. These don't make for a great cinematic climax, so the typical film hero tends to go for the violent option, pulling out a gun and pulling the trigger. Without a single argument, films tell us time and again that if someone gets in your way it is perfectly reasonable to get aggressive with them and let them know that they are going to get their **ass** kicked if they try to mess with you. Although the vast majority of people say they don't feel violent after watching a violent film (over 95% in one study) it may be that in a **subtle** way they are learning to approach situations of conflict in a more aggressive way.

Questions

1. In paragraph 1 what do you think the word **replicate** means?
2. In the opinion of the psychologists in what way was Eric Harris abnormal?
3. The passage mentions two theories about the way violence on film might have a more subtle effect on viewers. Let's call the first theory the **desensitization theory**. Describe what this is.
4. Let's call the second theory the **social learning theory**. What does it say?

Vocabulary

Exercise A

1. The first paragraph mentions the idea that films don't cause violence they just reflect the violence that naturally exists in society. What does **reflect** mean here?
2. An elderly relative might ask or tell you to do a little shopping for them. What word from the third paragraph can we use to describe actions such as going shopping for a relative?
3. Spectacles can be used as another word for the glasses that those of us with poor eyesight have to wear. This is not what the word **spectacle** refers to in paragraph 4. What is the meaning there?
4. From the last paragraph, what does it mean if someone hits you and you **turn the other cheek**?

Exercise B

Find the other words in bold that correspond to these definitions:

- a. sensitivity to the suffering of others
- b. became known
- c. to kill a politician or other leading figure
- d. incident in which many people are killed
- e. to explain an event by reference to something else.
- f. to resolve a dispute by discussion
- g. causal connection
- h. most powerful
- i. make you feel very irritated because you cannot do something
- j. to go back, to withdraw
- k. not obvious; indirect
- l. (US) the part of the body you sit on; (British) donkey
- m. a kind of diary for personal notes

Over to you

A. Some points to discuss:

- Which of the two theories (desensitization and social learning theories) do you think is true: one or both or neither? To what extent are they true of you personally?
- Studies show that the children who watch the most TV are those who are most likely to become bullies, to have lower marks at school and to drop out of school or university. Is TV to blame for this, or is some other factor such as poor parenting more likely to be ultimately responsible?
- If we want to tackle violence in society how high on our list of priorities do you think films should be? Are there other things in society which ought to be changed first?
- Some people are convinced of the harmful influence of on-screen violence, and they call for more **censorship**. Here are some examples of this in the UK: some films have been banned from coming out on video and DVD because they were considered to be too violent for home viewing. With other films, certain scenes had to be cut. Would you support calls for more censorship of DVDs that children might be able to see? (Bear in mind that in the UK only one household in four includes a child under 16.) Is this an adequate justification for limiting the liberty of adults (the liberty to watch what they want)?
- Some people have remarked that TV channels seem very comfortable about broadcasting a lot of fantasy violence, but they stop their news programmes from showing any of the true horror of war. Is there an argument for showing viewers more of what is really going on on battlefields around the world?

B. The passage above mentioned two theories about the influence of on-screen violence. Here are two more. Read them carefully, make sure you understand them and then discuss whether they add anything to our understanding of the effect of on-screen violence.

The mimesis theory. Very young children simply copy behaviours that they observe, either in real life or on film. One study observed the following: Children of nursery-school age who are given a doll to play with without any TV stimulus tended to look after it and take care of it. Children who were first shown a video of an adult hitting a doll tended to do the same when they were given a similar doll.

The catharsis hypothesis. This theory goes back to Aristotle's ideas about the calming effect that theatrical performances can have on spectators. As applied to the modern situation the theory is as follows: There are days when our experiences leave us feeling frustrated and angry. If we then turn on the TV and watch a violent movie we can easily identify with a hero who expresses his anger and takes revenge. We are aroused (excited) as the action reaches a climax, but then the story reaches its happy end, the crisis is resolved and we are left with a sense of satisfaction. As a consequence, afterwards we are less likely, not more, to act in angry and violent ways towards other people.

C. If you agree that TV can have an adverse effect on younger viewers, what advice would you give to parents who would like to keep that effect to a minimum? Discuss the following ideas and try to decide what your advice would be.

- The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends no television for children under two and no more than two hours a day for those who are older. Does that sound reasonable? (The average in the US is 3.5 hours per day.)
- The same organisation also says, "Parents should understand that, just because a TV show or movie is made for kids, it doesn't mean it's good for kids."
- Educational programmes, particularly for three to five year olds, have been shown to boost academic performance. Are there some things parents should encourage their young children to watch?
- Should parents also ensure that they have a close relationship with their offspring and give them lots of off-screen cognitive* stimulation and emotional support? Could this kind of family environment diminish the effects of whatever might be shown on TV?

(***Cognitive** means "to do with knowledge".)

Language extra: links for causes and effects

When we have to talk and write about social and natural phenomena we often need to describe causes and effects. Doubtless you are hungry to learn lots of different ways of doing this in English so here are a few phrases to get your teeth into. Use your own ideas to complete the sentences.

1. **Since** we haven't got any school tomorrow
2. The match was cancelled **due to/ owing to**
3. **As a consequence of** being left in front of the telly by his extremely busy parents Bob
4. **One of the consequences of** moving house so frequently **was that** Bob.....
5. Bob's insecurity **can be put down to/ can be attributed to**.....
6. often **results in** a high level of dental decay.
7. A high level of tooth decay often **results from**
8. Ignorance about how to brush teeth effectively is **one factor responsible for**
9. often **leads to** students becoming disruptive in the classroom.
10. His obsession with computer games has definitely **had an impact on**
11. may have **played a role in** the formation of Hinckley's character.
12. Watching on TV **makes me**

One little transformation question. It shouldn't be difficult. (**Reincarnation**, by the way, is when the soul of a dead person becomes flesh again.)

13. **Because** he believed he was the reincarnation of Elvis Presley he was sure he would be famous.
Because of

Two VERY useful words: one for talking about factors that make a difficult situation less serious and one for talking about those that make it worse:

14. UNICEF tries to **alleviate** the suffering of starving children by
15. Simon's sense that he couldn't come up to his father's expectations was **exacerbated** when

Writing

You are going to write an essay on the following topic:

The debate about the impact of film violence on children continues. How much of an influence might on-screen violence have on children, and in the light of this analysis what steps should parents be taking (if any) to protect their children?

Planning

A. One technique when it comes to planning is to jot down any ideas that come into your head and then think about which to keep and which to reject. These are the ideas that one student jotted down. Decide which should be rejected then put the remaining ideas into two groups depending on the more general topic.

- Other factors more important – e.g. behaviour of parents.
- It does desensitize us.
- Lots of teenagers enjoy violent films but they aren't particularly violent.
- Some of the best movies of all time are violent, like Taxi Driver.
- Really violent people have a psychological problem not linked to viewing habits.
- We might learn to react more aggressively.
- Probably true that v. young children copy what they see.
- Parents need to set a good example and give children lots of other, more positive stimuli.
- Children should be brought up to be vegetarian (meat is murder).
- No TV in the bedroom.

B. Jot down some notes now about the main topics of the paragraphs in the main body of your essay plus a few details about how you will develop them. Then compare your notes with others in the class.

Language

A. Not sure how to begin the introduction? Here are some ideas:

How about beginning with some striking statistics? Here is one: On average by the time an American or European child reaches the age of 13 he or she will have witnessed 8,000 murders on either the large or small screen.

The outline of this introduction might be as follows:

It has recently been estimated that This raises a number of issues, one of which is Leading on from this is the question of what

If we don't have any statistics we might use the following outline:

Anyone who turns on the television will not have to wait long before
Because of the frequency of violent scenes on television it is understandable that many people have been concerned about Following on from this concern is the issue of the advice that parents ought to follow to

B. For the other paragraphs, the following phrases may be useful:

According to one theory, TV violence This seems to me to be particularly persuasive because

It has also been argued that

There are good grounds for believing that

It seems to me to be perfectly likely that

Some children are more vulnerable than others.

It is important not to get the influence of on-screen violence out of proportion.

As for the advice that parents should follow, it would clearly be wise for them to ...

Parents would be making a big mistake if they

It has been recommended that parents (do something or avoid doing something)

C. Conclusion.

In a nutshell, not only does on-screen violence, but it also However, as long as parents

Remember the second conditional without "if" when describing the expected consequences of your proposals (as you will probably do in your conclusion):

Were parents to, their children would

Write it!

Using lots of material from this unit write 240-300 words about the impact of on-screen violence on the young.

Unit 5 Another Brick in the Wall

Introduction

Back in 1979 the pop group Pink Floyd made a record that became a classic in the world of pop and an obvious reference point in any discussion of education. The chorus of the song went like this:

We don't need no education,
 We don't need no thought control,
 No dark sarcasm in the classroom.
 Teachers,
 Leave them kids alone.
 All in all it's just another brick in the wall.
 All in all you're just another brick in the wall.

The song raises a number of issues which are worth discussing:

- Because this was such a popular song it seems fair to assume that some people at least thought that the words of the song said something true about education. Presumably they saw schools as educational factories making kids yet more bricks for the wall. Have you got any idea what might have made some people feel this way?
- The song also refers to thought control. Why might some people think that the educational system exercises a form of thought control (also known as **brain washing**)? Is this an absurd accusation?
- In countries like England and China it is still common for students to have to wear uniforms. If you were able to ask the British Minister for Education why this is, what do you think he might say?
- If you were to praise your education system what would you say was its greatest strength?
- Are there parts of the lyric that set a bad example as far as English grammar is concerned? Have another look at the first, second and fifth lines.

Vocabulary

Match the words in bold with the definitions below.

1. A **conventional** approach to education assumes that pupils should quietly learn what the teacher tells them.
2. A more **progressive** approach wants to encourage and assist pupils to discover things for themselves as much as possible.
3. A student-centred approach to education is more aware of the psychology of students and more concerned to find ways to **motivate** students to learn without simply threatening them.
4. Because of their systems of **assessment**, for instance, it seems inevitable that schools will set up a **hierarchy** in which some pupils are made to feel superior and others inferior.
6. A common form of punishment in British schools is **detention**. Badly behaved students are detained in a classroom where they must sit and work during lunchtime or after school.
7. Most British schools have an **assembly** before the first lesson at which the headmaster can address the whole school.
8. Teachers are not free to decide what they will teach because the government has already drawn up a national **curriculum**.
9. Some subjects such as English, maths, science and a foreign language are **mandatory** while others, like history and geography, are optional.
10. Schools are institutions which aim to turn unruly children into law-abiding citizens by **fostering** a respect for the kinds of principles and values on which society is based.
11. After obtaining a Bachelor of Arts or Science (BA or BSc) degree some students choose to do a **postgraduate** course.

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. doing things which are new and innovative (adjective) b. compulsory, obligatory c. a vertical order with the best at the top and the losers at the bottom d. ordinary, typical, traditional e. leading to a Master of Arts or a Master of Science degree or a PhD 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> f. the list of topics that ought to be covered at each stage g. make someone want to do something h. encourage someone to feel something i. identifying a person's level of ability j. gathering k. keeping someone in a place
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Reading

Down with School

Anyone looking for controversial ideas about education won't find anything much more controversial than those of the philosopher and social critic **Ivan Illich** (1926-2002). **In a nutshell**, his claim is that the obligation to attend school constitutes a **breach** of the human right to learn. Governments are committing a **grave** immoral act in compelling children to go to school because the schools they are forced to go to are generally not places where a child's **spontaneous** love of learning can **flourish**.

Illich has a very clear idea of what education ought to be like. Beginning with a child's natural curiosity each person ought to be given the help and the stimulation they need to discover their personal interests – things they want to learn about. The direction and the pace of that person's education will then be determined by the individual's motivation. Illich is optimistic that this kind of education will cultivate a **genuine** love of learning that is likely to continue throughout life. It is very important for Illich that through this form of education individuals not only learn something about the world but they also develop a more profound awareness of their autonomy since they are the ones in the driving seat, as it were.

Conventional schools do not **foster** this kind of learning. Rarely do young people discover a genuine love of a subject in schools where the teachers **dictate** what must be learnt. When they come to the end of an intensive course in literature, for instance, how many students quietly say to themselves, "I never want to open a book like that again"? The compulsory nature of the activities, the exaggerated attention to detail, the insignificance of a personal response, the distractions of the classroom and, not least, the emphasis placed on marks, exams and the **dreaded** final assessment can all kill a subject that might otherwise have become an **enduring** passion.

The examination system has a crucial role to play in the process described by Illich. At school we readily accept the idea that the real point of education is the **attainment** of certificates, which inevitably means that students end up giving less significance to their growing personal understanding. The idea of carrying on learning outside school then seems pointless because there would be nothing to show for it. Students who carry on in the education system are likely to do so, not because they love learning, but because they need yet more certificates before they can start the job of their choice.

The examination system has other effects: it teaches pupils to accept that society is hierarchical and that they have an officially recognised place on that social **ladder**. The winners come away **smug** and self-satisfied, pleased at the thought that they are better than the rest. The majority of students are not so lucky and their fate is to be given an **official** statement of their inferiority. This is a lesson they usually **take to heart**, and it helps keep them quiet for the rest of their lives.

Illich would not agree with Pink Floyd when they sang, "We don't need no education." We certainly need to learn, to grow and to flourish intellectually. The question is whether we need an education system whose school-leavers are no longer interested in learning **for its own sake**.

Questions

1. In one sentence using your own words, how would you sum up the most important distinction between Illich's ideal of education and the sort offered by conventional schools?
2. In addition to their understanding of the world, what does Illich want children to develop?
3. The third paragraph refers to courses that "kill a subject". What is meant here?
4. What does Illich say about the impact of the examination system on students at school?
5. According to Illich exams not only assess students but they also teach them something. What is the lesson learnt by the majority of students?

Vocabulary

Exercise A

1. The first paragraph talks about a **spontaneous** love of learning. The opposite idea would be that the interest in learning is something children acquire because of the influence of parents and teachers. So what does "spontaneous" mean in this context?
2. Some people look forward to exams but most people **dread** them. What does this mean?

- The social hierarchy is also described as a kind of **ladder**. You could use a ladder to climb up to your first-floor window. What is this?
- We only use the noun **graduate** to refer to people who have left university. Which word from the last paragraph (not in bold) do we use to refer to those who have come to the end of their secondary education?
- The last paragraph refers again to people who might be interested in learning **for its own sake**, as opposed to being interested in it for the sake of the certificates and the fact that it can help with their career. What does this mean?

Exercise B

Match the following definitions with the remaining words in bold.

- | | |
|-----------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| a. lasting | g. to be affected deeply |
| b. in brief | h. serious |
| c. an infringement, a violation, a break (of a law) | i. getting |
| d. to be overly pleased with yourself | j. real |
| e. to encourage to develop; to cultivate; instil | k. coming from someone in authority |
| f. to develop; to thrive | l. to order someone to do something |

Exercise C

Complete the following sentence transformation exercise. Do not change the form of the words in bold.

- You have to go to school. **mandatory**
Attendance at
- Little Johnny is making great progress at his new school. **flourishing**
Little Johnny at his new school.
- When he told us his scuba-diving story he made the shark seem a lot bigger than it was. **exaggerated**
When he told us his scuba-diving story he the shark.
- Schools try to get kids to do what they are told. **foster**
One of the aims of schools obedience.
- Most pupils think that getting certificates is what really matters. **attainment**
The priority for most pupils certificates.
- To sum up, the primary function of school is social control. **nutshell**
....., the primary function of school is social control.
- The love of learning ought to last a lifetime. **enduring**
The love of learning ought to passion.

Over to you

- Illich claims that schools tend to put people off the idea of learning after they leave the education system. Do you agree that school can have this effect on people?
- Illich objected to the compulsory nature of education. Would it be possible, though, to increase the amount of choice in schools?
- Elsewhere Illich argues that schools prolong the period of childish immaturity and irresponsibility. He implies that it might be good for some young people over the age of 13 or so to start work and then return to education when they are older and have a clearer idea of what exactly they want to do. Does that sound like a crazy idea?
- Illich maintains that traditional systems of assessment in school can have an adverse impact on many pupils. Are there any alternatives? When correcting essays, for instance, the teacher could avoid putting a mark or grade on the student's papers and concentrate on writing comments and advice so that the student understands the strengths and weaknesses of their piece of work. Would this be a step in the right direction or not?
- Illich objects to the emphasis many schools place on the attainment of certificates. In English language education, is there anything more important than the certificate you will get at the end of your course?
- Another of Illich's criticisms of school is that it denies young people the opportunity to teach. Is there anything to be said for the idea of older pupils regularly helping younger ones to learn? Would you benefit from spending an hour or so every week helping younger students to improve their English?

Language extra: comparisons

The social hierarchies that Illich referred to only exist in virtue of comparisons made between people. Hey, what a great excuse to take a closer look at this little area of language!

A. Are you familiar with this structure? Complete the slightly more straightforward version beneath:

Tracy is **as good a student as** anyone else in the school.

As a student, Tracy

Sometimes we can use the structure **...so....as...** instead of **...as....as...** Use the following two examples to work out when it is permissible to use the "so" structure.

The standard of teaching at the school is **as high as** anywhere else.

However, the laboratories are not **so/as** well equipped **as** those of other schools.

B. What is the difference in meaning between these two sentences? (Who hates whom?)

You hate her as much as I.

You hate her as much as me.

C. In comparisons like the next four sometimes we use **like** and on other occasions we use **as**. Look at these examples and work out what the rule is. (Clue: look at the kinds of words used after "like" and "as".)

She walks **like** a man.

He treats me **like** a child.

You do not love this place **as** I do.

You are becoming a great student, **as** I was in my youth.

One of the following is used to describe a similarity whereas the other is used to describe a function or role that something plays. Which is which?

She worked **as** a plumber after leaving school.

She worked **like** a slave for three years before she started to make good money.

D. With the following construction there is a contrast between appearance and reality. What are the contrasts in these two cases?

Anne is behaving **as if/ as though** she were everyone's best friend. Doesn't she realize what the others really think about her?

Some men have a tendency to look upon women **as though/ as if** they belonged to a different species.

E. The word **as** has a zillion different uses. Match the following with the meanings or descriptions below.

1. People regard the university **as** one of the most prestigious.
2. **As** I was half-listening to something the teacher was saying, I was staring at the girls outside playing netball.
3. **As** I was not paying attention, the teacher sent me out of the classroom.
4. **Just as** I closed the door and started standing in the cold corridor the girls appeared, walking back to the changing rooms.
5. **As** I see it, it is unrealistic to expect a teenage boy to be more interested in English grammar than in girls playing netball in short skirts on a windy day.
6. **As for** skydiving, that is one of the few things that takes my mind off everything else, girls included.
7. **Just as** every rose has its thorns, **so** love is bound to have its moments of pain.
 - a. to introduce a new topic
 - b. to describe the way something is viewed (2 examples)
 - c. at the same moment
 - d. while (to introduce a longer activity)
 - e. because
 - f. in the same way

F. Think about how aggressive boys are in comparison to girls and complete the following:

Many boys are quick to resort to violence **whereas**

Girls tend to avoid conflict **while**

G. Odds and ends: Read through the following and make sure you can explain the meaning of the phrases in bold.

Diane is **by far the best** athlete in the school.

On **the very same** day that his results came out his pet cat was run over by a passing car.

She looks **just like** her grandmother did when she was a child.

The two look **very much alike**.

It was a **fairly** good film.

The essay must be **no longer than** 350 words.

They look **more or less** the same.

The curry was **much too** spicy. I couldn't eat it.

Reading

You are going to read a text about a **boarding school** – this is a school where the students live during term time. This particular school is unusual in that it does not force pupils to go to lessons if they don't want to.

Point for discussion: What is your initial reaction to the idea of giving pupils the freedom to decide whether or not to attend lessons?

Summerhill:

a pioneer in education or a school on the lunatic fringe?

Summerhill School in Suffolk, England is well-known around the world for its **novel** approach to education. The original idea came from its **founder**, A.S. Neill, who set up the school in 1921. He was an experienced teacher who had become dissatisfied with the **rigid** hierarchy, the **compulsion**, the **repression** and the consequent unhappiness of children he saw in conventional schools. Neill insisted that young people ought to enjoy learning and that schools ought to foster the independence, self-confidence and self-esteem of pupils, and these are precisely the values that the **close-knit** community of about 120 pupils and teachers has **striven** to promote ever since.

The teachers organize a timetable of lessons but the pupils only attend if they want to do so. Records of pupils' progress are kept but reports are only sent to parents with the child's permission and no one is forced to do any exams. The school has rules that everyone must **abide by** but these are **determined** at regular school meetings where pupils and teachers have an equal vote. The aim, though, is not to let children just do what they want, but to welcome them into a community where they feel recognized as equal members – a community that supports them and encourages them to develop and **mature**, both in the classroom and out of it.

Although this would sound to many like a recipe for disaster, in practice it works well. New pupils soon realize that they have to take responsibility for their education and they begin attending lessons, and the final academic results are at least as good as those achieved by pupils in conventional schools. This is despite the fact that many children are sent to Summerhill because they have experienced problems coping with school and have already fallen behind academically.

One study of the views of parents and **ex-pupils** revealed that parents were entirely satisfied with the education provided by the school. Turning to the most controversial aspect – the non-compulsory lessons – the researchers found that the overwhelming majority of **former pupils** were grateful for the experience. One woman who went on to complete a university degree and work for a national television station said, "**Prior to** Summerhill I had hated school and was constantly anxious. Non-compulsory lessons gave me the confidence to make my own decisions and let me feel trusted." Another former student, who **subsequently** went to work for the "Times" newspaper, was equally positive: "People learn best when they are personally motivated. It is much better to **arouse** children's curiosity than to compel them to **absorb** a list of facts. Anyway, making students attend classes doesn't ensure an education. But to **instil** excitement about learning creates an interest that will last a lifetime."

Questions

1. The first paragraph highlights three aspects of the contemporary education system that A.S. Neill was very critical of. What are they?

2. What does the first paragraph imply about the effect conventional schools in 1921 were having on the self-esteem of pupils?
3. What do we learn about Summerhill that makes it less hierarchical than other schools?
4. Can you find anything either explicit or implicit in the passage that makes the school less **repressive**? (By the way, you feel **repressed** when you feel that there is something stopping you expressing yourself.)
5. What is implied in the third paragraph about how some new people behave when they first join the school?
6. Often in these cases how does their behaviour change with the passage of time?
7. What is said about the reason why some parents send their children to Summerhill?
8. How do the two former pupils who are quoted in the final paragraph feel about non-compulsory lessons?

Vocabulary

Exercise A

1. You know the verb "to find" but do you know the verb "to found" (a regular verb)? A synonym is the phrasal verb "set up". E.g. "The Volkswagen company was **founded** by Adolf Hitler in 1938."
2. Literally, you **knit** (silent "k", by the way) when you take some wool and two long needles and start to slowly make something like a scarf or a jumper. Bearing this in mind, what do you think a **close-knit** community is?
3. The word **striven** at the end of the first paragraph is the past participle of the verb **strive** (strive, strove, striven). You are doubtless striving to improve your English. What do you think this lovely English verb means?
4. The third paragraph says that Summerhill's approach will sound to many like a **recipe for disaster**. What do you think this means?
5. What is the word in the last paragraph (not in bold) that we use to describe a majority when it is very big?
6. **Ex-pupils** and **former pupils** are the same thing. Which school are you an ex-pupil of?
7. At the end of the last paragraph two of the words in bold have very similar meanings. Which are they? One of them means make someone feel something (probably for the first time) whereas the other has more to do with making a feeling stronger or more intense. Which is which?

Exercise B

Match the remaining words in bold plus three words from the subtitle with the following definitions:

- | | |
|----------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| a. follow (the rules) | g. to take in (like a sponge) |
| b. an innovator | h. margin, edge, outer limit |
| c. new, original | i. crazy, insane |
| d. force | j. afterwards |
| e. what stops people expressing themselves freely (noun) | k. decided on |
| f. inflexible, stiff | l. no longer childish |
| | m. before |

Exercise C

Another little sentence transformation exercise.

1. Every effort has been made to boost the self-esteem of pupils. **striven**
We the self-esteem of pupils.
2. Pupils are obliged to follow the rules. **abide**
Pupils must rules.
3. People were sure the plans would lead to chaos. **recipe**
People were sure the plans would disaster.
4. Only a small minority of ex-pupils had their doubts about non-compulsory lessons. **overwhelming**
The ex-pupils were clearly in favour of non-compulsory lessons.
5. Teachers ought to make children curious about the workings of the universe. **arouse**
Teachers ought to about the workings of the universe.

Over to you

1. How surprising is it that the academic results of Summerhill are on a par with those of many conventional schools? Do you think your academic performance would suffer if you were not forced to attend lessons and take exams?
2. Does it make sense to let pupils have an equal say in the formation of school rules? Is school an appropriate place for this degree of democracy?
3. We are told that a number of Summerhill pupils had previously had serious difficulties in a conventional school. How might the Summerhill approach benefit pupils like these?
4. The approach at Summerhill seems to work, but the school is very small and it is one where the students live together. Are these important factors in its success? Why/why not?

Pre-reading

1. There have been criticisms that the subjects taught at school are too academic and theoretical for many pupils. Do you agree that the education system is biased towards theory and the traditional academic subjects? If so, what could be done to improve the situation?
2. In English, if you don't go to school for a short period of time we say you **play truant**. Is this (or was this) a problem at your school? Why do pupils play truant?
3. Do you know of anyone who has **dropped out** of school?

Reading

Picking up the Drop-Outs

Isn't it better for kids to be learning how to fit **exhaust** pipes and change tyres instead of playing truant and **hanging around** town? This is the idea behind one scheme in the UK – called the "Cool Project" – designed to get kids who play truant or who have been **expelled** back into learning. The 14-to-16-year-olds are **exempt from** the demands of the national curriculum and are offered instead a range of more practical training opportunities outside school for three days a week (the other two days being spent doing traditional lessons back at school). Pupils can learn how to become car mechanics, **plumbers**, **bricklayers** or house painters, for instance.

Philip Stroud, 15, one of the pupils on the new scheme confesses: "I didn't like school. Teachers'd just give you long lectures about something boring or they'd **pick on** you." He appreciates the different approach taken by the instructors. "I never used to listen to my teachers. They **got on my nerves** and I got on theirs. But here I listen because the stuff we do is interesting."

Philip has begun to learn how to fit tyres and exhausts, and hopes to get a **vocational** qualification. "It means that I can get a job when I'm older, instead of doing exams and stuff."

Those who run the project acknowledge that teenagers who don't have a talent for or any interest in academic subjects often have problems at secondary school because they are **turned off** by the traditional diet of maths, physics and foreign languages. "An academic education may be appropriate for the vast majority of youngsters, but we have to accept that work-related learning can **reap** benefits for the rest." Explaining their approach, one of the project leaders said, "Our first priority is to **boost** their self-esteem, and then we have to get them to realize how rewarding it can be to learn a new skill."

Questions

1. In your own words, what is the aim of the "Cool Project"?
2. Why didn't Philip like the teachers at school?
3. What is his immediate ambition now?
4. What is implied in the last paragraph about the effect that their previous schools had had on the way these teenagers felt about themselves?
5. Literally **reap** means "to harvest", i.e. to collect in the fruit and the vegetables on the farm when they are ripe. Some people may also be familiar with the figure of the **grim reaper** – a representation of death in a black cloak carrying a scythe (which is normally used to cut things like wheat). What do you think it means if you **reap the benefits of** something?

Vocabulary

1. You have probably heard the phrase "You really **turn me on**" in songs (used when boys or girls are talking about how sexy someone else is). In the passage we read about boys being **turned off**. What do you think that means here?
2. Match the remaining words in bold with the following definitions.
 - a. to repeatedly make fun of someone, or blame them
 - b. to send a pupil away from school
 - c. to spend time somewhere without having any in particular to do
 - d. to increase significantly
 - e. to not have the obligation to do something
 - f. to irritate, annoy
 - g. a builder
 - h. the pipe under a car carrying fumes away from the engine
 - i. someone who installs the pipes and the rest of the system for a building's water supply
 - j. professional, directly related to work

Note: The adjective "vocational" can be used in reference to any kind of work-related activity, but the noun **vocation** has a more specific use. You will see it contains a reference to the word "voice". We use it to refer to professions that people feel called upon to do. Some people would say that medicine is their vocation if they feel inspired to save people's lives. Others feel that being a missionary is their vocation since they feel called upon to save the souls of unbelievers.

Over to you

If you were the minister for education in your country's government would you agree to implement a scheme like this? If so, should it be a scheme any pupil can choose to join, or should it only be for pupils who are identified by adults in authority as having a particular problem in mainstream schools?

Language extra: get

A. The passage uses the word **get** in four different ways, what are they?

B. Why not look up **get** in the dictionary? There are loads of phrases using this word. Here's our little selection:

- Some teachers and public speakers have difficulty **getting their point across**.
- Sorry, but I didn't **get around to** doing my homework.
- Summerhill doesn't let pupils **get away with** breaking the rules.
- Let's stop wasting time. Let's **get down to business**.
- Character is more important than qualifications in determining whether you will **get ahead** in business.
- Sorry for not laughing, but I just don't **get the joke**.
- I'm sick of the way he keeps **getting at** me all the time. Every time I make a little mistake he makes a huge fuss about it. (= pick on)
- The monks have **got to** the stage in their spiritual development at which the pleasures of this life seem insignificant compared to those of the life to come.
- I didn't manage to **get a good look** at Shakira because the car she was in drove by so fast.
- After three years of sending demonstration tapes to record companies I gave up trying to become a pop star because it was obvious I was **getting nowhere**.
- You don't need to work much if you just want to earn enough to **get by**.
- Boys (over 16, of course) don't like it when girls **play hard to get**.
- When she broke off the engagement I was devastated. I still haven't really **got over** it.
- **There's no getting away from** the fact that that was our one big chance for success and we blew it.

NB As we have already said, phrases with **get** are often considered a little informal and are best avoided when writing academic essays.

Complete the more formal alternative for this sentence: The goal is to get a certificate.

The goal is to ob_____n a certificate.

Writing

Here you have a choice of topics:

A. The education system regularly comes in for a lot of criticism. What are the criticisms you would make of the system? Is there room for improvement? What reforms ought to be made?

B. The education system regularly comes in for a lot of criticism. What is your assessment of the main strengths and weaknesses of the kind of school that you have attended?

Choice of topic

Choose one of the two topics and explain why you made that choice.

Planning

Using ideas from this unit plus your own ideas you either need to isolate two or three failings of the system or you need to think of one or two strengths and one or two weaknesses. Try to decide now what those will be. Then discuss your choice with the rest of the class.

Language

The introduction: You could begin by referring to recent reports in the media to make your discussion sound more topical:

Recently reported cases of have reignited the debate about (Give some details of the cases – real or imaginary but believable.)

Anyone with any experience of what actually goes on in schools cannot doubt that.....

To introduce a more balanced discussion you could begin with a very brief reference to the history of your country's system of education. Alternatively you could begin with a few signs that there are flaws in the education system and then end the paragraph on a positive note:

It is not uncommon in Greece for students to occupy schools and for teachers to go on strike to express their grievances. Clearly there are those within the education system who feel that things are not as they ought to be. At the same time commentators in the press have voiced their criticism of the failings of schools. In my experience, although there are flaws in the education system it is important not to forget that

The main body: Here are a few ideas for the central paragraphs:

Although the standard of education offered to young people has improved tremendously over the last fifty years, there remains a problem with

No one can deny that great strides have been made in the provision of education over the last fifty years. Schools/Teachers ought to be praised for their ability to ...

The conclusion: If you are going to suggest reforms that need to be made these can be the focus of your last paragraph.

In the light of all this, there is a clear need for/to

Another wise move would be to

Were the government to,

Key words for the strengths and weaknesses of things:

the greatest strength, the most praiseworthy aspect, an admirable feature

failing, defect, flaw, fault, weak point, imperfection, shortcoming

Write it!

Write around 240 to 300 words on discipline in schools using language and ideas from this unit.