

# Higher English

## *Close Reading*

### Homework Booklet 3

No democracy should declare free speech an absolute right.

*Yasmin Alibhai-Brown*

Hollywood shuns intelligent entertainment.

The games industry doesn't. Guess who's winning?

*Charlie Brooker*

With friends like these ...

*Dorothy Rowe*

The monarchy moves in mysterious ways.

*Paul Vallely*

Celebrity redemption is even more sickening  
than celebrity excess.

*Julie Burchill*

Abandon resolutions. Stop looking for a soulmate.

Reject positive thinking.

*Oliver Burkeman*


Prisons don't work.

*Will Self*






This booklet contains articles taken from broadsheet newspapers, as the Higher Close Reading paper is always based on quality journalism (in particular, articles with a strong line of argument).

 Accompanying each article there is a **Vocabulary Builder** task.

Start a vocabulary bank in a jotter or notebook and add the Vocabulary Builder words, as well as any other unfamiliar words you encounter. It would be useful to have access to a quality dictionary at home for this purpose. Alternatively, you could use [www.dictionary.com](http://www.dictionary.com).

*When looking up definitions, pay particular attention to words' 'part of speech' (noun, adjective, verb, adverb, preposition, pronoun, conjunction, determiner or interjection), as this will help you work out how to use the word in new contexts. Blindly copying out the definition without truly understanding the word's meaning or usage is pointless.*

 **General Knowledge** questions follow the Vocabulary Builder task. Use appropriate reference sources to find out the answers and widen your cultural awareness.

*Your teacher may run a 'pub-quiz'-style revision competition based on these questions after all passages have been completed.*

**?** The **Questions** for each passage are designed to:

- Familiarise you with the styles and structures of quality journalism
- Increase your reading pace and fluency
- Improve your ability to summarise a writer's argument
- Familiarise you with close reading formulae


Please do not mark this booklet, as it will be used by others after you.

If you find annotating the passage helps you (indeed, this is strongly encouraged with close reading papers) then you should photocopy the passage first.

Your teacher may also be able to direct you to an online download of this booklet that will enable you to print your own copies.



# Close Reading Formulae

<p> <b>UNDERSTANDING QUESTIONS</b></p> <p>This type of question is designed to check you understand the meaning, language and ideas of the passage. Understanding questions are marked with a (U) code.</p>	<p><b>Own Words (U)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Find the correct lines.</li><li>• Check number of marks.</li><li>• Re-write in your own words.</li><li>• Check you haven't copied key words from the passage.</li></ul>
<p><b>"Quote" (word/phrase/expression) (U)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Find the correct lines.</li><li>• Check whether the question asks for a word or phrase.</li><li>• Write down exactly as it is in passage.</li></ul>	<p><b>Context (U)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Find 2 words or phrases from the surrounding sentence(s) that clarify the meaning.</li><li>• Explain what 'clues' they give you about the word's meaning.</li><li>• Write down the word's meaning</li></ul>
<p><b>Link (U)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Summarise what the previous section is about.</li><li>• Quote words from the link sentence which refer back to this.</li><li>• Summarise what is being said in the section following the link sentence.</li><li>• Quote a word or phrase from the link sentence which introduces the next section.</li></ul>	<p><b>Summarise (U)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Identify the key points / issues from the relevant section.</li><li>• Change these points into your own words.</li><li>• Bullet point if appropriate.</li><li>• Check the marks available as a guide to how many points you are required to summarise.</li></ul>



## ANALYSIS QUESTIONS

This type of question is designed to check you can identify specific literary techniques being used. You must also analyse them (break them down) and evaluate how they add to the reader's understanding of the passage's meaning.

## Word Choice (A)

- Quote the word and give its basic meaning
- Give the word's connotations (associated ideas)
- Explain how the word's connotations develop the reader's understanding of the passage

## Imagery(A) (Simile, Metaphor, Personification)

- Identify the type of image
- Quote it
- Say what is compared to what
- Use "just as... so too..."
- Say what the comparison adds to the reader's understanding of the passage.

## Contrast (A) (2 opposing ideas, words, images...)

- Pick out one side of the contrast and summarise it. Support with a quote.
- Pick out the other side of the contrast and summarise it. Support with a quote.



## Sentence Structure:

You may be asked to comment on:

- Punctuation
- Sentence length
- Sentence types
- Sentence patterns

## Sentence Structure (A)

- Identify the feature of structure being used.
- Comment on the effect of the structure on the reader's understanding of the passage.

## Tone (A)

- Identify the tone.
- Quote words or phrases that create this tone
- Analyse how those words/phrases create the tone.



## Tone Bank

Informal; Humorous; Light Hearted; Whimsical; Gently Mocking

Sarcastic; Mocking; Ironic

Formal; Questioning; Outraged; Angry; Critical; Sinister

Nostalgic; Reverential; Reflective; Awed

Disappointed; Uncertain; Doubtful



## EVALUATION QUESTIONS

This type of question can ask you to consider:

- How well a paragraph or line acts as an introduction or conclusion.
- How a title relates to the passage.
- How an anecdote, image, illustration or other technique helps convey the writer's overall argument or attitude.

## Evaluation (E)

The key to answering these questions is to identify an appropriate feature or technique and show how it relates to the writer's purpose, attitude or overall line of argument.



## QUESTION ON BOTH PASSAGES

**This final question tests your ability to summarise and compare the main ideas in both passages.**

**3 of the 5 available marks are awarded for identifying similarities and/or differences.**

**A further 2 marks are available depending on the quality of the comments you make, and any supporting evidence you use.**

[Write your answer as 'developed bullet points'.]

- Check if the question is about areas of *agreement* or *disagreement*.
- Identify at least 3 overall ideas on which the passages agree/disagree.
- Bullet point these areas, then add further explanation to each bullet point by identifying specific *ideas, images, anecdotes, illustrations, statistics or analogies* which support these areas of agreement/ disagreement.  
When developing your bullet point, you may quote or paraphrase from the passages.

# No democracy should declare free speech an absolute right.

Yasmin Alibhai-Brown

*The Independent*

Monday, 11 April 2011

5 Too many states use brute force to quell and gag their people. In our western democracies, governments withhold information, stop legitimate protest, control speech and even thought. All wrong, must be resisted, agreed. Most of us, though, will not speak with one voice on the burning of the Koran by Sion Owens, a BNP candidate for the Welsh assembly. And what about the website that sells cheeky Jihadi, al-Qa'ida baby T-shirts and maternity clothes? Tory MP Robert Halfon is apoplectic and wants the site closed down. Are you with or against him? Do we teach children that words can wound or that their entitlement to speak trumps everything else?

10 Freedom of speech is endlessly discombobulating and testing. In the unspoiled meadows of ideals or unbound skies of philosophical postulations, it is easy to be unequivocal. Some in the real world, too, are enviable absolutists who believe the slightest tremor of concern is a concession and invitation to authoritarianism. Their god is Voltaire, who decreed that even when one hates what is being said by somebody, one must "fight to the death" for the right of that person to hold forth. (Noble rhetoric. Correct me if I am wrong, but I can't think of a single such martyr).

15 A protracted and violent struggle against mental tyranny was fought by Europeans and today in the Arab lands citizens are inspired by the same emancipatory, human impulses. However, Voltaire's spiritual children can be fundamentalist, thoughtless and irrational, blind and deaf, unresponsive to the complexities of modern life, of individual and group psychology, inequality and power. Freedom of expression is not black and white, but a thousand shades of grey. Its meaning and practice need to be unpacked. Each situation demands exhaustive and exhausting analysis before informed positions can be arrived at.

25 I was on a panel at the Oxford Literary Festival last week trying to do just that with journalist David Aaronovitch in the chair, and John Kampfner, chief executive of Index Against Censorship, and the blogger Guido Fawkes, who has (inexplicably) become an unaccountable and scary political force. For Fawkes anything goes. Easy, though not for those he picks on. Kampfner is an indefatigable campaigner against legal and official curtailments, the use of money by the rich to enforce censorship through the courts and unjust control. I agree with him most of the time.

30 When the powerful come down heavy on citizens or communities and vigilantes do the same, they must be resisted. It is intolerable that artists are inhibited, imprisoned or killed as just was Juliano Mer-Khamis, the exceptional Jewish, Israeli- Palestinian actor and founder of the Freedom Theatre in Jenin. Members of Hamas are allegedly behind this barbarism. And here our very own local religious hoodlums have threatened to kill Usama Hasan, a lecturer and London imam, because he refuses to reject evolution.

35 Come away from dramatic confrontations and the law to more intractable conflicts. Then it gets awfully complicated. The web is a wonderful liberator but also a nameless, shameless sniper. Professional blogger Lorraine Van Fossen rightly warns that when people express anything and everything, "... there are consequences, the right to react, that other freedom." That other freedom – disrespected by most libertarians. Saul Bellow complained much about the closing down of public discussion in the US: "We can't open our mouths without being denounced as racists, misogynists, supremacists, imperialists or fascists." He blamed the media. But those respondents

were exercising their right to react, through verbal means. As I do, to the fury of many who would say they are righteous free speakers.

45 Frankie Boyle will, I expect, feel put upon by Ofcom, which lightly slapped his wrist for grotesque TV "jokes" about the disabled son of Katie Price. The FA is deciding what to do with Wayne Rooney, who swore horridly on TV. The footballer – who has apologised – must be crying into his champagne. I hope he gets his comeuppance. The public space is shared and most people watch what they say to make it less fraught and more liveable. We stop ourselves and our kids from saying rude and nasty things because we understand there have to be some social  
50 constraints on speech. And if you don't watch your mouth, you have to take what follows.

In 1919, the US Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes decreed that the only limits to freedom of speech were words that activate immediate danger, like a man shouting "fire!" in a crowded theatre. But what about when individuals set out calculatedly to provoke unrest and anger, which then happens? Like the burning of the Koran. Of course the offended should not rage and die for it –  
55 but that was the intention. The inciters are surely as culpable as the man in the theatre. They raise hatred, which eventually leads to violence. Jewish people, Tutsis, Bosnian Muslims, and millions of others were slain easily because words had taken away their humanity. The right-wing press has so demonised asylum seekers that today the UK Borders Agency presumes all applicants are liars unless they can prove otherwise. Words have institutionalised a grave injustice.

60 Young people bullying others through social network sites don't want the victims to try to kill themselves, but many do. It is not immediate, but still evil. Internet abusers never have to pay for the breakages they cause. Kierkegaard worried that newspapers, "a dreadful, disproportionate means of communication", could send "any error into circulation with no thought of responsibility." How much more wanton is new technology. Those protecting the wild web from  
65 "regulation" should attend to the severe restrictions on free speech imposed by libel laws, confidentiality agreements, injunctions, and litigious individuals. We are not as free as we think, and to argue as if we are is disingenuous.

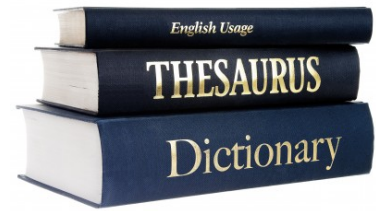
Another thing to consider is that most of us are biased. We want some words to be free, and others not. Will the Koran burner be backed by libertarians, atheists and Muslim bashers? Or will he face the same opprobrium as those Muslims who burnt Salman Rushdie's book? I await Fay Weldon and Ian McEwan's beautifully expressed outrage.  
70

Buddha said: "The wise fashion speech with their thought, sifting it as a grain is sifted through a sieve." We need to be wise to use and preserve our precious freedoms. Sadly, we are not wise.

## Vocabulary Builder

Look up the definitions of these words from the article and add them to your word bank.

Along with each entry you should write a sentence of your own using the word in a new context.



**discombobulating**, line 8

**indefatigable**, line 26

**culpable**, line 55

**disingenuous**, line 67

**biased**, line 68

**opprobrium**, line 70.

## General Knowledge

- What do *Salman Rushdie*, *Fay Weldon* and *Ian McEwan* have in common?
- For what are *Voltaire* and *Kierkegaard* famous?

## ? Questions

1. How does the writer's **word choice** in the opening sentence engage the reader's attention? **2 A/E**
2. Read lines 11-13. Explain **in your own words** what the philosopher Voltaire argued. **2 U**
3. Look at lines 22-28. **In your own words** explain what John Kampfner campaigns against. **2 U**
4. Look at lines 29-34. How does **the writer's language** convey her strength of feeling towards those who abuse their power and "come down heavy on citizens"? **2 A**
5. a) Look at line 36. Show how the writer uses **imagery** to convey what she sees as a positive aspect of the internet? **2 A**  
b) Show how her use of **imagery** in the same line conveys a danger of the internet. **2 A**
6. "*The footballer – who has apologised – must be crying into his champagne.*" (lines 46-7) How would you describe the **tone** of this sentence? **1 A**
7. Look at lines 48-50. According to the writer why do we watch what we say? **Answer in your own words.** **2 U**
8. Look at lines 51-52. What, according to Oliver Wendell Holmes, are the limits of "freedom of speech"? **Use your own words.** **2 U**
9. In lines 72-73, last paragraph, what did the Buddha say we should do with our words? **Answer in your own words.** **2 U**
10. "*Sadly, we are not wise.*" How would you describe the **tone** of this final sentence? **1 A**

**Total - 20 marks**



# Hollywood shuns intelligent entertainment. The games industry doesn't. Guess who's winning?

Charlie Brooker *The Guardian*, Monday 23 May 2011

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

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

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

Consider two of the biggest video games of 2011 thus far. The first is *Portal 2* a darkly humorous science fiction . . . what? Story? Puzzle? Game? "Experience" seems like the best word to use, even though typing that makes me feel like shoving my fist in my mouth to punch my brain from an unexpected angle. The game mechanics of *Portal 2* are almost impossible to  
20 describe without diagrams, but I'll try: you wander around a 3D environment trying to escape a series of rooms by firing magic holes on to the walls or floor - holes you can walk or fall through - so that if I fire a hole on to the ceiling, and another on to the ground, I can jump through the ground and re-appear falling through the ceiling. Simple, no? Well, this simple dynamic provides the basis for a series of fiendishly clever puzzles you find yourself working through –  
25 all of it tied into a humorous narrative that unfolds with more confidence, charm and sophistication than was strictly necessary. And before you whine about the solitary nature of games, it also includes a cooperative two-player mode in which you and a friend play through a parallel game together. The whole thing is stunningly clever and immensely enjoyable.

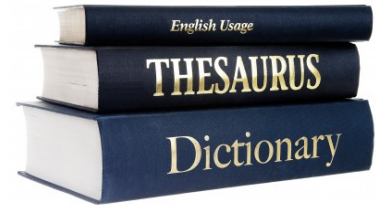
And then there's *LA Noire*, the James Ellroy-inspired crime drama, which has caused a stir, and  
30 rightly so, with its firm focus on narrative and staggering new facial animation technology. I'm a massive dweeb who keeps up with the latest gaming developments, and even I was astounded at what they've pulled off here. You're watching actors give genuine performances – within something that is still defiantly and unapologetically a video game. The lead character is played by Aaron Staton, AKA Ken Cosgrove from *Mad Men* – and is instantly recognisable, not just  
35 from his likeness, but also his facial mannerisms. Amusingly, plenty of his fellow *Mad Men* cast members also show up throughout the game (as well as faces familiar from shows such as *Heroes* and *Fringe*), reinforcing the overall feel of the game – which is like working your way through a hard-nosed HBO police procedural miniseries set in Los Angeles in the 1940s. If you've never played a game, or you think you hate them – but my description sounds vaguely  
40 appealing, give it a spin. Just watch someone else play it for a while if you like. I guarantee you'll be surprised.

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

*Portal 2* is essentially a demented series of puzzles – like being stuck inside a physics-based logic problem designed by the Python team; *LA Noire* is a trad adventure game – like reading an  
50 epic novel in which you are the protagonist. Indeed, adventure games used to be as close as gaming got to fiction. They started out as interactive text-based shaggy dog stories (a prime example being Douglas Adams's fantastic *Hitchhiker's Guide Infocom* adventure), transformed into point-and-click comedies (such as *Monkey Island*), and then largely went away for a while,  
55 as the gaming industry focused on gung-ho shooters aimed at teenage boys. The size, scope, and sheer self-assurance of *LA Noire* marks a major comeback for adventure games – for interactive fiction – and, potentially, a huge leap forward for wider acceptance of the medium as a whole.

And both these games – both of these entirely different, utterly unique creations – are a huge commercial success. In cinematic terms, it's the equivalent of films of the intelligence and quality of *2001: A Space Odyssey* and *The Maltese Falcon* not just being released to great fanfare in  
60 2011, but actually going on to smash box office records. Somehow *Portal 2* and *LA Noire* manage to be more cinematic than a great deal of contemporary cinema – while being something entirely different, something with the phrase "I LOVE VIDEO GAMES" embedded in their DNA like a cheerful slogan through a stick of rock. This new breed of games are imbued with  
65 their developers' passion for the genre: they are drenched in the passion for pixelated perfection which flows in their geeky creators' veins. These games are not replacements for films, but something thrillingly different. Gaming's ongoing push into the mainstream consciousness has entered a bold new phase – by appealing to the players' intelligence and imagination, it's starting to make Hollywood look embarrassing.

## Vocabulary Builder



Look up the definitions of these words from the article and add them to your word bank.

Along with each entry you should write a sentence of your own using the word in a new context.

randomly, line 9

quirky, line 11

sensibility, line 12

panache, line 13

migrated, line 14

contemporary, line 61

## General Knowledge

- Who or what is 'King Lear'?
- For what kind of writing is James Ellroy famous?
- Who are 'the Python team' referred to in line 59?
- Which legendary cinematic figure directed the film *2001: A Space Odyssey*?

## ? Questions

1. Look at lines 5 and 6. Comment on how the **writer's language** conveys his attitude to typical fictional cartoon characters. **2 A**
2. Read lines 5-10. **In your own words**, explain Brooker's opinion of rom-coms. **1 U**
3. "...a lightshow for cattle" (lines 9-10) Comment on how the **word choice/imagery** of this phrase conveys Brooker's opinion of:
  - a) the films shown in cinemas today **2 A**
  - b) the audience who go to see them **2 A**
4. Read lines 11-15. ("About once a month [...] to video games.") Show how this paragraph acts as a **link** in the article's overall line of argument. **2 U**
5. Read lines 19-23. Comment on the effect of the writer's use of **sentence structure** when describing how the game *Portal 2* works. **2 A**
6. Read lines 29-33. **Summarise** in your own words *three* aspects of the game *LA Noire* which impressed the writer. **3 U**
7. Read lines 48-50. How does the **sentence structure and imagery** in these lines convey the **contrast** between *Portal 2* and *L.A. Noire*? **4 A**
8. Read lines 60-65. How does the **context** help you understand the meaning of the word "imbued"? **2 U**

**Total - 20 marks**

# With friends like these ...

*Dorothy Rowe The Observer, Sunday 8 March 2009*

We value friends, but the path of friendship, like love, rarely runs smooth. We may feel jealous of a friend's achievements when we want to feel happy for her. We might find it hard to give friends objective advice, unrelated to the person we want them to be. We can be reluctant to allow each other to change, sometimes falling out in a way that is painful for all involved. And yet, friendships are vitally important; central to our enjoyment of life.

More fundamentally, friendships are essential to our sense of who we are. Neuroscientists have shown that our brain does not reveal to us the world as it is, but rather as possible interpretations of what is going on around us, drawn from our past experience. Since no two people ever have exactly the same experience, no two people ever see anything in exactly the same way. Most of our brain's constructions are unconscious. Early in our life our stream of conscious and unconscious constructions create, like a real stream, a kind of whirlpool that quickly becomes our most precious possession, that is, our sense of being a person, what we call "I", "me", "myself". Like a whirlpool, our sense of being a person cannot exist separately from the stream that created it. Because we cannot see reality directly, all our ideas are guesses about what is going on. Thus our sense of being a person is made up of these guesses. All the time we are creating ideas about who we are, what is happening now, what has happened in our world, and what our future will be. When these ideas are shown by events to be reasonably accurate, that is, our ideas are validated, we feel secure in ourselves, but when they are proved wrong, we feel that we are falling apart.

Friends are central to this all-important sense of validation. When a friend confirms to us that the world is as we see it, we feel safer, reassured. On the other hand, when we say, "I'm shattered", or "I'm losing my grip", we might not be using clichés to describe a bad day but talking about something quite terrifying that we are experiencing: our sense of who we are is being challenged. So terrifying is this experience that we develop many different tactics aimed at warding off invalidation and defending ourselves against being annihilated as a person.

We are constantly assessing how safe our sense of being a person is. Our assessments are those interpretations we call emotions. All our emotions relate to the degree of safety or danger our sense of being a person is experiencing. So important are these interpretations to our survival that we do not need to put them into words, although of course we can. Our positive emotions are interpretations to do with safety, while the multitude of negative emotions define the particular kind of danger and its degree. Joy is: "Everything is the way I want it to be"; jealousy is: "How dare that person have something that is rightly mine". We can be invalidated by events such as the bankruptcy of the firm that employs us, but most frequently we are invalidated by other people. A friend told me how her husband had used her password and pin to drain her bank account and fund his secret gambling habit. Losing her savings was a terrible blow, but far worse was her loss of trust in the person she saw as her best friend. When she described herself as falling apart, I assured her that what was falling apart were some of her ideas. All she had to do was to endure a period of uncertainty until she could construct ideas that better reflected her situation.

Friendship can be rewarding but, like all relationships, it can also be risky. Other people can let us down, insult or humiliate us, leading us to feel diminished and in danger. Yet we need other people to tell us when we have got our guesses right, and, when we get things wrong, to help us make more accurate assessments. Live completely on your own and your guesses will get further and further away from reality. The degree of risk we perceive from our friends relates directly to

45 the degree of self-confidence we feel. When confident of ourselves, we feel that we can deal with being invalidated; when lacking self-confidence, we often see danger where no danger need exist. Take jealousy, for example. Feeling self-confident, we can rejoice in our friend's success at a new job; feeling inferior, we see danger and try to defend ourselves with: "It's not fair". We can fail to see that our friendship should be more important to us than our injured pride.

50 Our levels of confidence also relate to how ready we are to accept change, and how able we are to allow our friends to change. To feel secure in ourselves, we need to be able to predict events reasonably accurately. We think we know our friends well, and so can predict what they will do. We create a mental image of our friends, and we want to keep them within the bounds of that image. Our need to do this can override our ability to see our friends in the way they see  
55 themselves. We do not want them to change because then we would have to change our image of them. Change creates uncertainty, and uncertainty can be frightening.

However, an inability to allow change can lead to the end of a friendship. Falling out with a friend shows us that our image of them, from which we derive our predictions about that friend, is wrong; and if that is the case, our sense of being a person is threatened. If we lose a friend, we  
60 have to change how we see ourselves and our life. Each of us lives in our own individual world of meaning. We need to find friends whose individual world is somewhat similar to our own so that we are able to communicate with one another. The people who can validate us best are those we can see as equals, and with whom there can be mutual affection, trust, loyalty and acceptance. Such people give us the kind of validation that builds a lasting self-confidence  
65 despite the difficulties we encounter. These are our true friends.

When we seek to understand another person, we can do this only through discussion where we do not judge the other person, but ask for clearer descriptions of how he sees himself and his world. Psychologists are experts only in so far as they use their theory as a framework for asking such questions. All the research aimed at finding which, among all the therapies, is the most  
70 effective shows that what matters most is not the particular theory that the therapist uses but the nature of the relationship between the client and the therapist. A good therapeutic relationship is a kind of friendship where there are boundaries that do not exist in ordinary friendships but, like friendships, trust, loyalty, acceptance and affection are important. This is why a friend can be our best therapist.

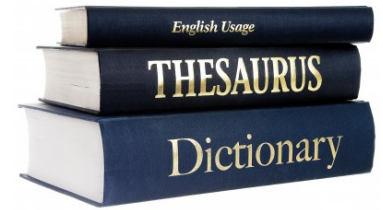
75 We need to use two key questions. For example, if your friend says: "My mother died when I was five," ask: "How did you feel about that?" The answer might be: "I was upset because I thought she'd died because I was naughty". From such an answer, we can understand why this person always strives to be especially good. If your friend says: "I always send friends and family birthday cards", ask: "Why is it important to you to send birthday cards?" Always include  
80 the words "to you". That way, the reply has to be a statement of one of the principles whereby the person lives his or her life. Asking such questions of those people we feel we know best can often surprise us as we find how wrong we were. Discovering that someone we thought we knew well sees things differently from us can lead us to feel lonely.

85 Yet is it not the differences in our perceptions that ultimately make life interesting? And isn't the art of friendship based on knowing and accepting our differences?

## Vocabulary Builder

Look up the definitions of these words from the article and add them to your word bank.

Along with each entry you should write a sentence of your own using the word in a new context.



**fundamentally**, line 6

**interpretations** line 7

**validation**, line 20

**annihilated**, line 25

**diminished**, line 41

**therapeutic**, line 71

## General Knowledge

- What is a neuroscientist? What is a psychologist?
- What are the differences between a neuroscientist and a psychologist?
- “neuro-” is a prefix (which comes from the Greek “neuron” meaning ‘nerve, sinew or tendon’) List as many other words that start with this prefix as you can.
- “psycho-” is also a prefix of Greek origin (“psukhe” meaning ‘breath, soul or mind’). How many other words can you think of which begin with this prefix? List them.

## ? Questions

1. “*We value friends, but the path of friendship, like love, rarely runs smooth.*” (line 1)  
How does the **sentence structure** of the first paragraph help to clarify this point? **2 A**
2. Read lines 4-6. Why, according to the writer, are friends important? **Use your own words.** **2 U**
3. Looking at lines 6-9, explain **in your own words** what neuroscientists have discovered about our brain. **2 U**
3. How does the writer’s use of **imagery** in lines 10-15 help to illustrate the relationship between our conscious and unconscious thoughts? **4 A**
4. Look at line 20: “*Friends are central to this all-important sense of validation.*” How does this sentence act as a **link** in the writer’s argument? **2 A**
5. Re-read lines 29-31.
  - a) **In your own words** explain what the writer thinks our positive emotions link to. **1 U**
  - b) **In your own words** explain what she thinks our negative emotions link to **1 U**
6. Look at lines 34-39 and **in your own words** explain the writer’s advice to her troubled friend. **2 U**
7. What does “change” do, according to the writer in lines 55-56? **Use your own words.** **2 U**
8. Show how effective you find the writer’s use of **imagery**, in lines 71-74 to convey her feelings about friendship? **2 A**

**Total - 20 marks**

# The monarchy moves in mysterious ways

Paul Vallely: *The Independent* Sunday, 1 May 2011

5 When I was a boy, my mum used to go to weddings without being invited. It wasn't just her. Lots of people in Middlesbrough did. If you vaguely knew the bride, and the wedding was in your local church, you would slip in at the back to have a look at the dress and stay for the service, and maybe even the photos in the garden afterwards, and then leave discreetly before the reception.

10 We all like a good wedding. That much was evident from the wide-ranging collection of new nuptial poems which Carol Ann Duffy brought together in *The Guardian* last week. Even that temple of sophisticated royal-wedding-sneering had to suspend its wilful disbelief in the face of what the Poet Laureate and her fellows celebrated – the exchange of vows by a young couple in love. It offers a little window on eternity. And everyone is royal on their wedding day.

15 Still that doesn't fully explain why we boarded a train to London on Thursday. Not much chance of slipping into Westminster Abbey at the back. But we wanted to walk the busy streets beforehand, amid crowds as giddy as a field of horses with the wind blowing into their nostrils. Then afterwards to watch it on the telly with friends near St Paul's before enjoying a street party (inside if wet) and then down to Inner Temple gardens to watch the fly-past.

20 I wouldn't exactly call myself a monarchist. I managed to resist the lure of the royal edition of Hello! and its coverline "Kate's Last Days as a Single Girl". But I'm certainly not a republican. I am persuaded by a withering two-word argument on that: President Thatcher. Of course we could get a virtuous president. Of course the republicans have all the best arguments. Monarchy is offensive to the principle of equality which underpins so many virtues. It colours how we see ourselves in relation to entrenched power, as subjects rather than citizens. It is a potent symbol of the enormous gap between the rich and powerful with the Queen the largest landowner in Britain. It is an affront to democracy, republicans can explode, with high-octane undergraduate debating society indignation.

25 You wouldn't start from here, as the man in the Irish joke says. But the reality is that here is where we do start, with an anachronistic dispensation which nicely keeps the head of state out of politics and needs no recourse to all that over-intense saluting of the flag they do in the States. It ensures a continuity which encompasses change, as is shown by the way we have clamped down on hereditary peerages with no collateral damage to the monarchy. Yes, it enshrines privilege, but it is privilege with a heightened sense of duty, which is widely acknowledged in the Queen, 30 but is also evident in the impressive work of her son and his Prince's Trust, and is emerging in the personality of Prince William. And, yes, the Queen lives in palaces, but our celebrity culture celebrates conspicuous wealth among a whole class of individuals far less deserving; and at least the Queen has Tupperware on her breakfast table.

35 The great paradox at the heart of the republican argument, of course, is that 80 per cent of the population have rejected it. How democratic can you get? The only way the high-minded ideologues have of getting round this is to suggest that the public are somehow too stupid to understand the arguments, when in reality they have been understood and found wanting.

40 "He seems a decent bloke, young William," said my taxi driver as I headed towards the wedding. The ad hominem argument that William is a good chap is, of course, as invalid as the obverse that we should scrap the monarchy when the Queen dies because Charles's eccentricities have rubbed too many people up the wrong way over the years. A strong institution can cope with the occasional dodgy office-holder. Bad kings do not invalidate monarchy any more than bad popes do religion. But the monarchy offers something more, something intangible. I am not talking

45 about transcendence or the divine right of kings but something which was summed up in the days  
when Queen Victoria couldn't be bothered turning up for every state opening of parliament and  
sent her crown instead. It is a reminder of something mysterious at the heart of the British  
constitution, something unquantifiable. Our monarch has a residual power but it's a passive  
power. Yet its very amorphous existence prevents worse things from rushing into the vacuum. In  
50 modern history, constitutional monarchies tend to be on the side of the angels; Hitler, Stalin,  
Mao and the rest were nurtured in republics. Having a head of state who stands above politics –  
and who is nominally head of the armed forces, the judiciary and the church – creates a tamper-  
proof area in the constitution. If you were starting from scratch you would not invent what has  
evolved. But it is woven into our national identity.

55 I didn't know that, aged five, when I went with the rest of my class down to St Paul's to wave our  
little paper Union flags at the Queen as she drove swiftly past in a big black car. I only know that  
she looked out at us, smiled serenely and waved her inexorable slow graceful wave.

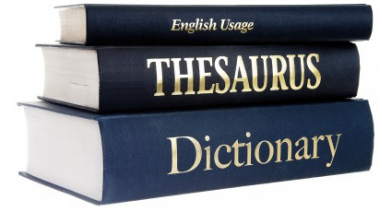
In the end, we default to the important things in life. Family, fun and festival. With all the  
banners and bunting, crowds and carriages, trestle tables, jams, jellies and champagne, we were,  
60 as a friend put it, making memories for our children. What they make of it all will be for them to  
decide.



## Vocabulary Builder

Look up the definitions of these words from the article and add them to your word bank.

Along with each entry you should write a sentence of your own using the word in a new context.



**republican**, line 17

**anachronistic** line 26

**dispensations**, line 26

**collateral damage**, line 29

**conspicuous**, line 33

**intangible**, line 44

## General Knowledge

- Who is Carol Ann Duffy?
- In what year was Queen Elizabeth II crowned?
- Name the four previous monarchs who also ruled during the 20th century.
- St Paul's Cathedral is mentioned twice in the article. This iconic London building is considered the masterpiece of which historical architect?

## ? Questions

- 1) How effective is the opening sentence in engaging the reader's interest? **1 E**
- 2) Show how the sentence "*Still that doesn't fully explain why we boarded a train to London on Thursday*" (line 11) acts as a **link** in the writer's argument. **2 U**
- 3) The writer calls the sight of two young people in love "a little window into eternity" (line 10). Explain **in your own words** what he means by this. **1 U**
- 4) How effective is the writer's use of **imagery** in lines 11-15 in showing the excitement of the crowds? **2 A**
- 5) "Of course the republicans have all the best arguments." (line 19). **Summarise** the four arguments against the monarchy mentioned in this paragraph. **4 U**
- 6) How does the writer's use of **sentence structure** and **word choice** in lines 16-24 help to convey the strength of feeling held by some republicans? **4 A**
- 7) Read lines 25-27. How does the writer's **word choice** convey her attitude towards the Americans show of patriotism? **2 A**
- 8) Comment on how the writer's **use of language** in lines 29-34 emphasise her views on the monarchy. **2 A**
- 9) In the writer's opinion, how important is a king or queen's individual personality when deciding whether the monarchy should continue or be disbanded? Your answer should make close reference to the text. **2 U**

- 10) How does the **context** of lines 44-49 help you understand the meaning of “intangible”?  
(Line 44) **2 U**
- 11) Read lines 49-53. **In your own words** explain what the writer thinks about the monarchy at present. **2 A**
- 12) “*But it is woven into our national identify*” (line 54).  
How effective do you find this **image** in summing up the points made by the writer in the preceding paragraph (lines 39-54)? **2 A**
- 13) How does the writer’s **word choice** in lines 55-57 convey his respect and admiration for the Queen? **2 A**
- 14) How effective do you find the final paragraph as a conclusion to the article? **2 E**

**Total - 30 marks**

# Celebrity redemption is even more sickening than celebrity excess

Julie Burchill     *The Independent Thursday, 14 April 2011*

I've been thinking about 'Reformed Characters' this week, as Russell Brand and the Duchess of York – and their little Venn baby, Tara Palmer-Tomkinson – all variously parade their guilt and redemption as though they were the latest designer lust-haves. It's certainly a very popular pose right now – even more so with the falling away of faith in this country. Which goes to prove that  
5 clever old GK Chesterton got it right when he said: "When a man ceases to believe in God he does not believe in nothing, he believes in anything."

That's why I can never watch films by all those Italian-American directors: as surely as Keira Knightley is going to pout and Matthew McConaughey is going to get his pecs out in any given silver-screen situation, so an American director with an Italian name is going to serve up  
10 redemption just at that point when you're starting to wish you hadn't bought such a super-size popcorn but on the other hand can't see any point in not finishing it. Interestingly, Italian cinema proper never much went in for this – can we imagine what the Am-Its would have done with *La Dolce Vita*? But Fellini trusts the audience – and his characters – to draw their own conclusions about the meaning and desirability of sin and morality.

It's a cliché now that when celebs get caught with their hand in the cookie jar, or their nose in the sherbet, they go to rehab. But sadly, just as all junkies are one atom of the same vast (dishonest, self-pitying, boring) entity so Reformed Characters are identically dull. From Kerry Katona to Will Self, from Russell Brand to Tara P-T, Not Doing Drugs becomes as central and boastful in their lives as Doing Drugs once was; they still can't bear not to be stage-centre (an addiction to  
20 the spotlight is the one habit they will never forego), but now they expect respect for their abstinence rather than their indulgence.

Reformed Characters typically become all about the work, throwing themselves into it in order to distract themselves from the demons they once found so deliciously irresistible. But I've got to say I've never seen an example of anyone in any field producing better work once they've given  
25 up their drug of choice – Russell Brand, in our faces 24/7 promoting the awful-looking remake of *Arthur*, is a prime example. And then, alongside the rubbish output of the RC, comes the double whammy of boring the public senseless with the ceaseless self-back-patting while on the publicity trail, or simply as they go about their daily rounds. For example, I remember T P-T professing her solemn intentions to reinvent herself as everything from a high-brow novelist to a  
30 concert pianist. But now she's given up the gag, all she ever seems to bang about is her nose; she's desperate to get it done because "I don't want to be picked on. I read somewhere last week someone said they wanted to vomit when they saw it."

Why on earth would anyone care about the opinion of a stranger? No one this weak-minded will ever be at peace with themselves, new nose or no nose. But then RCs are by their nature weak  
35 characters, who couldn't hack their hedonism-of-choice without screwing up their lives. Their protestations of self-love invariably ring hollow, too. Hear the wretched Fergie this week declaring: "I have learnt to love myself... I love my hands and wrists and ankles and hair and eyes." What about your brain and your ethics, you grasping, money-mad moron – do you love them too?

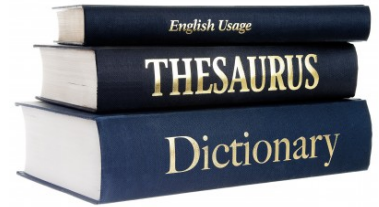
Surely either loving or hating oneself is equally silly and hysterical? The healthy way is to feel  
40 totally at ease with oneself, yet to see every ridiculous thing about oneself. When I look in the mirror, I neither smash it nor repeat positive mantras; instead I laugh and say "Not you again!"

45 Though the guilt and redemption route is the approved alibi that enables erring public figures to  
earn forgiveness, there remains a quite understandable fascination with people who refuse to  
follow its feeble code. For all his vileness, Charlie Sheen's point-blank refusal to grovel his way  
to rehab has won him a lot of fans who admire his sheer bloody-mindedness – the same with the  
ludicrous Silvio Berlusconi's refusal to step down. And of course Nigella, blamed this week by  
Professor Klim McPherson – and wouldn't he be fun at a house party, from the sound of him –  
50 for the very welcome trend of young women finally easing up on worrying about their weight.  
Nigella, one feels, would only ever have time for Guilt and Redemption if it was the name of a  
new dessert creation – the Unreformed Character's equivalent of Death By Chocolate. Bring it  
on!

## Vocabulary Builder

Look up the definitions of these words from the article and add them to your word bank.

Along with each entry you should write a sentence of your own using the word in a new context.



**redemption**, line 3

**abstinence** line 20

**indulgence**, line 20

**hedonism**, line 34

**mantra**, line 41

**erring**, line 42

## General Knowledge

- What is a Venn diagram used for?
- Who was G K Chesterton?
- What is *La Dolce Vita*, and who is Fellini?

## ? Questions

- 1) The article focuses on “Reformed Characters”, introduced in the opening sentence of the article. What does the writer mean by a “Reformed Character”? **1 U**
- 2) How does the writer’s **use of language** in the opening paragraph convey her disparaging attitude towards ‘Reformed Characters’? **4 A**
- 3) What, **in your own words**, is the cliché (line 15) that has become common with celebrities? **2 U**
- 4) By referring to lines 15-20, how does the writer’s use of **imagery** convey her cynicism towards ‘Reformed Character’? **2 A**
- 5) Read lines 21-22. Explain **in your own words** why celebrities “become all about work”? **1 U**
- 6) a) Read lines 28-32. What is the writer’s opinion of Tara Palmer-Tomkinson? **1 U**  
b) How does the writer’s use of **contrast** convey this opinion? **2 A**
- 7) Show how a **tone** of exasperation and irritation are created in lines 33-39. **2 A**
- 8) Explain **in your own words** what the writer means by “the guilt and redemption route is the approved alibi that enables erring public figures to earn forgiveness”? **2 U**
- 9) Show how the first sentence of the final paragraph (“Though the guilt...feeble code”) acts as a **link** in the writer’s argument. **2 U**
- 10) Explain **in your own words** how Charlie Sheen, Silvio Berlusconi and Nigella [Lawson] differ from the other celebrities mentioned in the passage. **1 U**

**Total - 20 marks**

# Abandon resolutions. Stop looking for a soulmate. Reject positive thinking.

Oliver Burkeman *The Guardian* Saturday 1 January 2011

5 New Year's Day, when you stop to consider it, hasn't been very well thought through: the day traditionally assigned for the turning over of new leaves is also the day many of us are far more likely than usual to be waking up hung-over, or at least seriously late, and generally without the energy for launching effortful new self-improvement projects. The gym's probably closed; new year resolutions rarely work out anyway. Then again, on some level, who doesn't want to be a bit happier, more productive and generally a better person? Allow me to suggest a few modest, down-to-earth, evidence-backed ideas for the year ahead that might actually work...

10 **Abandon your new year resolutions – today!** If you've made any new year resolutions, steal a march on the rest of the world by abandoning them today, rather than waiting a week or two for the moment when everyone else's will inevitably collapse in a quagmire of failed hopes, self-reproach and packets of Pringles. The lure of making a "complete fresh start" can be hard to resist, and gleaming-eyed self-help gurus pander to that urge. In fact, aiming for across-the-board change – to get fitter, eat better, spend more time with the family and less time playing Angry Birds, all at the same time – is exactly the wrong way to change habits. Willpower is a unitary, depletable resource, which means investing energy in any one such goal will leave less remaining for the others, so your resolutions will, in effect, be fighting each other. Far better to aim for one new habit every couple of months or, better yet, to manipulate your surroundings so as to harness the power of inertia, so you needn't spend your precious reserves of willpower at all. (It's infinitely easier to watch less television when you don't have one, or to use your credit card less when it's locked in a cupboard.) Making things automatic, not consciously and continually striving hard to be better, is the key here, as Alfred North Whitehead recognised back in 1911: "It is a profoundly erroneous truism... that we should cultivate the habit of thinking of what we are doing," he wrote. "The precise opposite is the case. Civilisation advances by extending the number of important operations which we can perform *without* thinking about them."

30 **Stop looking for your soulmate.** Relationship gurus expend untold amounts of energy debating back and forth whether "opposites attract" or, conversely, whether "birds of a feather flock together" – largely, it seems, without stopping to reflect on whether relying on cheesy proverbs might be a bad way to think about the complexities of human attraction. Should you look for a partner whose characteristics match yours, or complement yours? The conclusion of the Pair Project, a long-term study of married couples by the University of Texas, is... well, neither, really. "Compatibility", whether you think of it as similarity or complementarity, just doesn't seem to have much to do with a relationship's failure or success, according to the project's founder, Ted Huston. Compatibility does play one specific role in love, he argues: when couples start worrying about whether they're compatible, it's often the sign of a relationship in trouble. "We're just not compatible" really means, "We're not getting along." "Compatibility" just means things are working out. It simply renames the mystery of love, rather than explaining it. According to the US psychologist Robert Epstein, that's because a successful relationship is almost entirely built from within. All that's really required is two people committed to giving things a shot. Spending years looking for someone with compatible qualities may be – to evoke another cheesy proverb – a classic case of putting the cart before the horse.

40 **Overhaul your information diet (but don't starve).** We've been worrying about information overload for millennia. "The abundance of books is distraction," complained Seneca, who never

45 had to worry about his Facebook privacy options (although he was ordered to commit ritual  
suicide by bleeding himself to death, so it's swings and roundabouts). But it's been a year of  
unprecedentedly panicky pronouncements on what round-the-clock digital connectedness might  
be doing to our brains – matched only by the ferocity with which the internet's defenders fight  
back. Yet as one team of neuroscientists pointed out, writing in the journal *Neuron*, we've been  
50 talking in misleading generalities. "Technology" isn't good or bad for us, per se; neither is "the  
web". Just as television can have positive or negative effects – Dora The Explorer seems to aid  
children's literacy and numeracy, a study has suggested, while Teletubbies seems not to – what  
may well matter more is what we're consuming online. The medium isn't the only message.

The best way to impose some quality control on your digital life isn't to quit Twitter, Facebook  
and the rest in a fit of renunciation, but to break the spell they cast. Email, social networking and  
55 blogs are like Pavlovian conditioning experiments on animals: we click compulsively because  
there might or might not be a reward – a new email, a new blog post – waiting for us. If you can  
schedule your email checking or web surfing to specific times of day, that uncertainty will  
vanish: new stuff will have accumulated, so there will almost always be a "reward" in store, and  
the compulsiveness should fade. Can you, as the blogger Paul Roetzer suggests, make a new  
60 habit from unhooking yourself from the digital drip for four hours a day? Three? Two? What  
matters most isn't the amount of time, but who's calling the shots: the ceaseless data stream, or  
you. Decide when to be connected, then decide to disconnect.

**Volunteer (even though David Cameron wants you to).** It's frequently tempting to ignore  
centuries-old advice on happiness in favour of cutting-edge research and clever new tricks. The  
65 all but incontrovertible truth is that donating your time (and, to a lesser extent, your money) is  
one of the most reliable short cuts to happiness, reduced stress levels and enhanced physical  
health. Studies in the UK have shown correlations between high levels of "informal voluntary  
activity" and better health, higher GCSE grades and lower burglary levels; coupled with  
laboratory studies on the hormone oxytocin, which causes the "helper's high". The most  
70 dependable sources of happiness, as the Harvard psychologist Tal Ben-Shahar puts it, are those  
that lie at "the intersection of pleasure and meaning", and volunteering sits squarely at that  
crossroads.

**Reject positive thinking.** These are troubled times for the leading proponents of positive  
thinking (though presumably they're not feeling glum about it). The social critic Barbara  
75 Ehrenreich struck a chord, in her book *Smile Or Die*, when she argued that our current financial  
crises may be at least partly attributable to a blindly optimistic, failure-is-impossible ethos in the  
financial services industry. A Canadian study suggested positive affirmations – such as "I am  
a lovable person!" – actually have a negative effect on the moods of people with low self-esteem,  
who you might have thought would benefit from them the most. According to practitioners of the  
80 increasingly popular approach of "acceptance and commitment therapy", one of several  
philosophies opposed to conventional positive thinking, neither positive thinking nor negative  
thinking is a particularly useful goal: a better plan is to learn to fixate less on the whole matter of  
cultivating this or that mental state. That's reflected in the timeless and exceedingly effective  
anti-procrastination mantra that "motivation follows action", not the other way around. Wait until  
85 you feel like doing something, and you could be waiting for ever. "Inspiration is for amateurs,"  
the artist Chuck Close is fond of saying. "I just get to work."

**Make dinner, make furniture, make an effort.** "The Ikea effect" seems an inappropriate name  
for the notion that we derive greater enjoyment from things we've worked harder to create. You  
can see the rationale of the researchers who coined it – there's a unique pleasure to successful  
90 self-assembly – but they'd clearly had only atypically trouble-free encounters with Billy  
bookshelves. Yet, more generally, this cognitive bias is now well-established, and provides  
another persuasive explanation for why great material wealth has such a small impact on  
happiness: the effortlessness of having everything fall into your lap is somehow fundamentally  
unsatisfying. The neuroscience writer Jonah Lehrer argues that the same applies to making

95 dinner, at least by analogy with experiments on mice, who develop long-standing preferences for snacks they've had to labour harder to obtain.

**Don't take frugality too far.** Being bombarded daily by messages of financial catastrophe probably makes it easier to save money and avoid self-sabotaging shopping splurges. But it's also an invitation to fall into the psychological trap known as "hyperopia", or the opposite of  
100 shortsightedness: the tendency to deny oneself present-moment pleasures to a degree one subsequently comes to regret. Personal finance writers love to preach the benefits of cutting back on daily hedonistic expenditures – the overpriced latte; the delicious, but financially crippling, breakfast croissant. But the most efficient way to save money, obviously, is to cut out big  
105 expenditures, not small ones. And if small pleasures deliver a reliable daily mood boost, they may be better value, in terms of their cost-to-happiness ratio, than more pricey occasional purchases such as gadgets or clothes. It's all too easy to mistake the daily feeling of self-denial for the idea that you're making significant savings, when in truth the two may not be closely related.

**Creativity: make one small change to your workspace.** Evidence continues to accumulate for  
110 a curious psychological effect that's either massively dispiriting or rather encouraging, depending on how you look at it: the way we're influenced to an extraordinary degree by subtle details of our surroundings we might never consciously notice. (In one experiment, the mere presence of a briefcase, a symbol of corporate life, in a roomful of participants caused people to behave more competitively and less cooperatively.) The downside of this, of course, is how much the current  
115 configuration of your home or office might be holding you back without your realising it. The upside is you can exploit the phenomenon. Even the slightest hint of greenery – even as computer wallpaper – appears to aid concentration. High ceilings are associated with abstract, unconstrained thinking, claim researchers at the University of Minnesota, lower ones with more focused tasks. So switch rooms when you need to, if you can. Or step outside. If you work from  
120 home, or otherwise have plenty of control over your office layout, consult the compelling if frequently envy-inducing blog *From The Desk Of*, where writers and artists reveal their workspaces.

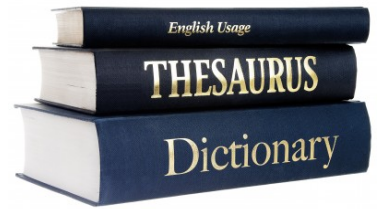
Instead, or as well, consider working standing up. According to a rash of news reports last year, based on a handful of studies, too much sitting down is the single most unhealthy, and potentially  
125 life-shortening, activity in which most of us engage. Expensive standing desks are available; for instructions on building your own check the net (during your pre-planned hours of connectivity, of course!) Perhaps you'll become the next Philip Roth, who famously works at a lectern. It's true that Donald Rumsfeld did, too. But we really don't need to dwell on that.



## Vocabulary Builder

Look up the definitions of these words from the article and add them to your word bank.

Along with each entry you should write a sentence of your own using the word in a new context.



**quagmire**, line 10

**self-reproach** line 10-11

**to put the cart before the horse**, line 41

**correlations**, line 67

**proponents**, line 73

**frugality**, line 97

## General Knowledge

- Who was Seneca?
- What did Russian physiologist Ivan Pavlov discover?
- Who is Donald Rumsfeld?

## ? Questions

- 1) How does the writer establish an informal, conversational style in the opening paragraph?  
**2 A**
- 2) How does the **context** help you work out the meaning of the phrase “steal a march on the rest of the world.” **2 U**
- 3) Read lines 8-25.
  - a) Explain, **in your own words**, the main reason why people fail to maintain their resolutions. **2 U**
  - b) What two suggestions does the writer make instead? **2 U**
- 4) In lines 26-32, how does the writer’s **use of language** convey a cynical or scornful attitude towards “relationship gurus”? **4 A**
- 5) How does the writer’s use of **sentence structure** in lines 49-52 serve to emphasise the point that the issue requires a more balanced, nuanced analysis? **2 A**
- 6) Read lines 53-62. From the writer’s use of **imagery**, what can we deduce about his attitude towards online communication? **4 A**
- 7) **Using your own words**, explain the advantages of volunteering as described in lines 63-72. **3 U**
- 8) What is meant by “anti-procrastination mantra” (line 84)? **2 U**
- 9) Read lines 87-91.
  - a) Explain what is meant by “the Ikea effect”. **2 U**
  - b) Why does the writer object to the term? **1 U**

- 10) How does the context help you understand the meaning of “daily hedonistic expenditures”? **2 U**
- 11) Consider the passage as a whole. It is a light-hearted piece in which the writer makes regular use of humour. Identify one such example of humour, and explain how it is created through the use of language. (You may wish to consider word-choice, contrast, sentence structure, hyperbole, or any other feature you think is relevant...) **2 A**

**Total - 30 marks**

# Prisons don't work.

*Will Self*      *BBC Radio 4 'A Point of View'*      7 October 2011

5 If you stand on a main road in a British city and wait for long enough several kinds of vehicle will pass you by. Naturally, there will be the relentless snort and grumble of cars and lorries, the snarl of motorcycles and the hiss of buses. But also with unflagging regularity nowadays there comes the demented wail of police cars, ambulances and fire engines weaving through the stalled traffic.

10 However, there's another kind of vehicle that may well escape your attention: boxy, four-square vans of the sort used by security companies to transport cash and other valuables, but painted white and with anything from two to eight opaque windows ranged along their hard riveted hides. Next time you see one of these distinctive vans stopped by a traffic light, why not go up close to the windows, wave, and mouth the words of a silent greeting because inside, unseen yet able to view a tinted world, will be sitting a human being just like you, but in all probability shackled.

15 In prison slang these vans are known as "sweat-boxes" because the tiny individual cells they house, which are furnished with unpadded plastic seats, can grow intolerably hot. The occupants of the sweat-boxes may be being transferred from prisons to courts, or taken on some other more or less rational journey mandated by their confinement. However, often they will simply be being "ghosted", another apt slang term that perfectly captures the condition of inmates shifted from one prison to another, without warning, on a senseless go-round seemingly designed to disorientate and pacify.

20 It was Dostoevsky who said: "The degree of civilisation in a society is revealed by entering its prisons." But in contemporary Britain you don't even need to do this, you can simply stand on a street corner and wait for the ghosts to come flitting past in order to appreciate its parlous condition. We now have the highest prison population in Europe by a considerable measure, and following the London riots in August 2011 there is no likelihood of it decreasing. Of course, we aren't quite at the levels enjoyed by our closest allies, those prime exponents of the civilising mission the United States, whose extensive gulag now houses, it is estimated, more African American men than were enslaved immediately prior to their Civil War - but we're getting there.

30 Then again, should you have cause to actually enter one of Her Majesty's prisons - as I have on many occasions as a prison visitor - you'll be in a position to appreciate the extent to which it is a decoction of modern urban Britain, what with its high numbers of ethnic minorities, alcoholics, drug addicts and the mentally ill.

35 Like society at large, I've discovered that prisons are beset by endless rules administered by petty-minded, management-speak-spouting bureaucrats - rules, programmes and so-called initiatives that result in the wastage of taxpayers' money. Also in common with the wider world, prisons are benighted by an almost breathtaking hypocrisy. In their case this is summed up by the stentorian signs by the barred gates warning visitors about to be searched that the penalties for attempting to smuggle in contraband items such as drugs, weapons, mobile phones take the form of yet more custodial sentences.

40 It's breathtaking hypocrisy because the very prison officers who frisk you just might be trafficking the drugs with which the system is awash. Time and again addict inmates I've spoken to have told me that it's easier to obtain heroin in jail than out.

Contrary to the view of prison as a deterrent and a way of keeping criminals off the streets, almost all enlightened opinion now concurs in the following: not only does prison, for the vast majority of those who endure it, not work, either as punishment or as rehabilitation, but there is  
45 no escaping the conclusion that it functions as a stimulant to crime, rather than its bromide.

The current chief inspector of prisons for England and Wales recently warned that the latest pupils to enrol in these £30,000 per-annum malefaction academies are being recruited by criminal gangs, and will almost certainly reoffend upon their release - if not before.

And yet what political will there is to deal with the problem when in opposition (and it's often  
50 considerable) drains away once the reins of power are taken up. The current government is only the latest whose stated determination to sluice down the Augean stables of Wandsworth, Strangeways and Parkhurst has resulted in an ineffectual piddle. The question is, who's treading on the hose?

Certainly there is the dead weight of the prison bureaucracy, a Kafkaesque interleaving of public  
55 service boondoggling and private sector lobbying, whose raison d'etre is not the reduction of the prison population but its increase. Then there are the ministers who, by definition strangers to the seamier side of life, find themselves on inspection visits, face-to-face with scary inmates either hopped-up on illegal drugs, or zombified by prescribed ones. And who are told by heavy-set, authoritative men and women that this is a powder keg only prevented from going off by the  
60 sheer weight of their boots.

But a far more important choke on reform is that a significant portion of the great British public, already infuriated by the sums spent on prisoners, bitterly resent the notion of spending still more. They are right. Much more spending would be required to effectively separate sheep  
65 capable of being herded in the right direction from goats that simply have to be confined. Much more money would also be needed to put in place comprehensive drug and alcohol treatment programmes that actually work. And still more cash would be necessary to treat mentally ill prisoners, teach illiterate prisoners and make unskilled prisoners employable. Whatever cost-benefit analyses are presented to them, the public, or at least that vocal section of it whose cries for law and order make penal reform electoral suicide, resent this expenditure.

But anyway, it appears they don't really want prisoners rehabilitated, they want them punished.  
70 They want them locked down, maltreated and if it were possible beaten on a regular basis. They require convicted prisoners to be scapegoats for all that is wrong with society, while paradoxically desiring them to pay their debt to it, as if spending 23-hours a day in a cell watching television could possibly equate with turning up for work, paying taxes and otherwise  
75 doing your bit. These people erroneously believe that punishment works and point to the happily virtuous past to prove it.

Certainly, if we go back a hundred years we find remarkably law-abiding citizenry and only  
80 15,000 or so in prison as against today's ninety-odd, but perhaps this was because society for the lower orders, as they were then dubbed, was already a form of imprisonment? There was little opportunity or energy to commit crimes when you were already doing hard labour for six-and-a-half days a week, nor was there any need for additional confinement when so much of the workforce was already banged-up below stairs.

The sort of nostalgia that attaches itself to the serialised class layer-cake that is Downton Abbey  
85 is of a piece with the refusal to recognise that grotesque inherited privilege is something people have struggled hard to do away with. Not without accident are our prison cess-pits nominally possessed by the Queen.

I'm not such a bleeding-heart liberal that I don't recognise the need for imprisonment when someone has been convicted of a violent crime, but unless an individual represents a credible

physical threat I'd far rather he was set to work in the community to pay back what he has taken.  
90 In those cases where redistributive justice is impossible because the offender is already so socially inutile, their rehabilitation must consist precisely in assisting them to be the responsible citizen they have heretofore failed to become.

The raw meting out of punishment solves nothing. And although there are some psychopaths who may have to be confined indefinitely, the Manichaeian belief in the unbridgeable rift  
95 between sanctity and evil that shadows so much of our thinking about prison should play no part in its actual administration, any more than should a belief in ghosts.

## Vocabulary Builder

*Will Self's writing is well-known for its use of complex and often unusual vocabulary. He often uses words that convey his meaning perfectly, but may be unfamiliar to many readers because they are arcane, obscure or specialist. While some readers find this off-putting, this verbosity (look it up!) is an important part of his writing style.*

*As such you will have to look up far more words than usual to get the full meaning of the passage. Words which are marked with an asterisk(\*) are the words which are more commonly used. You should ensure you understand, and can use, these words in particular.*

\*apt, line 17

\*pacify, line 19

parlous, line 22

\*gulag, line 26

decoction, line 30

benighted, line 35

stentorian, line 36

contraband, line 37

\*bromide, line 45

malefaction, line 47

boondoggling, line 55

\*raison d'être, line 55

\*cess-pit, line 85

\*bleeding-heart, line 87

## General Knowledge

- Who was Dostoyevsky?
- What are Wandsworth, Strangeways and Parkhurst?
- King Augeas was a character in Greek Mythology. For what was he famous?
- Which character in Greek Mythology solved King Augeas' problem?
- Who was Kafka?
- Why does the adjective Kafkaesque mean 'nightmarish' or 'oppressive'?
- Upon what basic conflict is the religion of Manichaeism based?

## ? Questions

- 1) How does the writer establish his uncompromising, gritty and pessimistic **tone** in the opening paragraph? **2 A**
- 2) Read lines 16-19
  - a) Explain **in your own words** what the process of being “ghosted” involves. **2 U**
  - b) Suggest one reason why the writer finds this metaphor “apt” (fitting). **1 U**
- 3) Identify the **tone** of lines 24-27 and explain how it is created. **2 A**
- 4) How does the writer's **word choice** in lines 32-38 convey his attitude towards prisons? **2 A**
- 5) Explain, in your own words, the “hypocrisy” that the writer describes in lines 39-41. **1 U**
- 6) How effective do you find the **image** in line 45 in conveying the writer's point? **3 A/E**
- 7) Identify the **extended imagery** used in lines 49-53 and explain what point(s) it conveys. **4 A**
- 8) How does the writer's **use of language** in lines 54-60 convey his critical **attitude** towards those who in charge of running prisons? **2 A**

- 9) *“Much more spending would be required to effectively separate sheep capable of being herded in the right direction from goats that simply have to be confined.”* (lines 63-64)  
a) Identify the type of **imagery** used here. **1 A**  
b) Explain what the writer means by these words. **2 U/A**
- 10) *“These people erroneously believe that punishment works and point to the happily virtuous past to prove it.”* (lines 75-76)  
Show how this sentence acts as a **link** in the writer’s argument. **2 U**
- 11) Read lines 77-82. Explain, **in your own words**, the two reasons suggested by the writer for why prisoner numbers were lower a century ago. **2 U**
- 12) Consider the passage as a whole. How effective do you find the final paragraph as a conclusion to the passage? **4 E**

**Total - 30 marks**