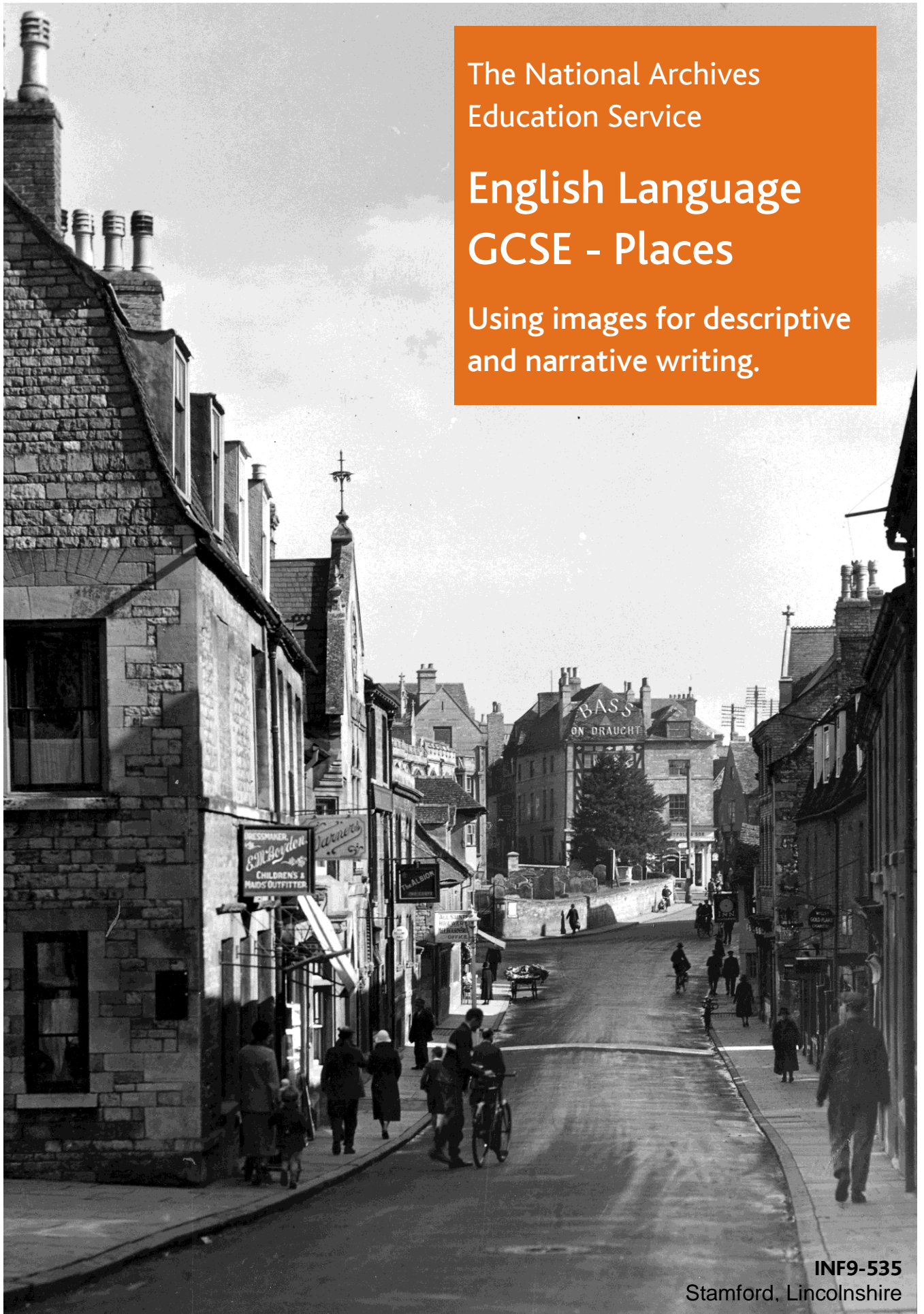


The National Archives
Education Service

English Language GCSE - Places

Using images for descriptive
and narrative writing.



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Teacher's notes

This collection of photographs from The National Archives' image library has been collated to provide a resource for English Language GCSE. The images can be used for descriptive or narrative creative writing prompts, allowing students to consider a variety of historical scenes as inspiration for their writing.

Each image has been presented as a full page spread before key areas have been extracted for close detail description and prompts for the imagination. These pages can be used as a ready-made resource or adapted to suit your own classroom purposes.

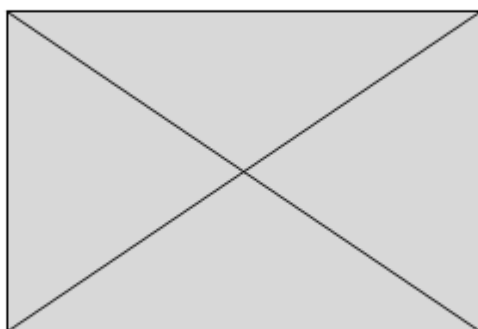
A generic question page has also been provided to allow students to focus on their own details within the photographs, rather than those pre-selected.

Whilst the resources have been designed with the English Language GCSE in mind, they can be used for other age groups to develop imagination when considering character and description.

Each image has been provided with its original document reference and description to offer some context to the image if desired, such as time period and location. However, the descriptions are deliberately brief and there are no correct answers required in creative writing. The photographs are presented as prompts only and students are not required to write creatively about actual historical places, figures or events.

Viewfinders

Some students may find a viewfinder useful when trying to describe an image. Cut out a piece of paper or card in a shape similar to the one below. Students can then move this around the photograph to discover smaller interesting scenes to describe without the distraction of the rest of the detail. Only when they feel they have described the smaller scene in depth should they move on to select another area of the image.



Questions

What can you see?

Where might this be?

Why might this photograph have been taken?

What happened just before the photograph was taken?

What happened just after the photograph was taken?

COPY1/461/577 Collapse of cliff by the Lord Nelson Public House at Lowestoft 1903



COPY1/461/577 Collapse of cliff by the Lord Nelson Public House at Lowestoft 1903



What can the man leaning over the edge see? What might he be feeling? What can he hear? What about the other people in the picture?

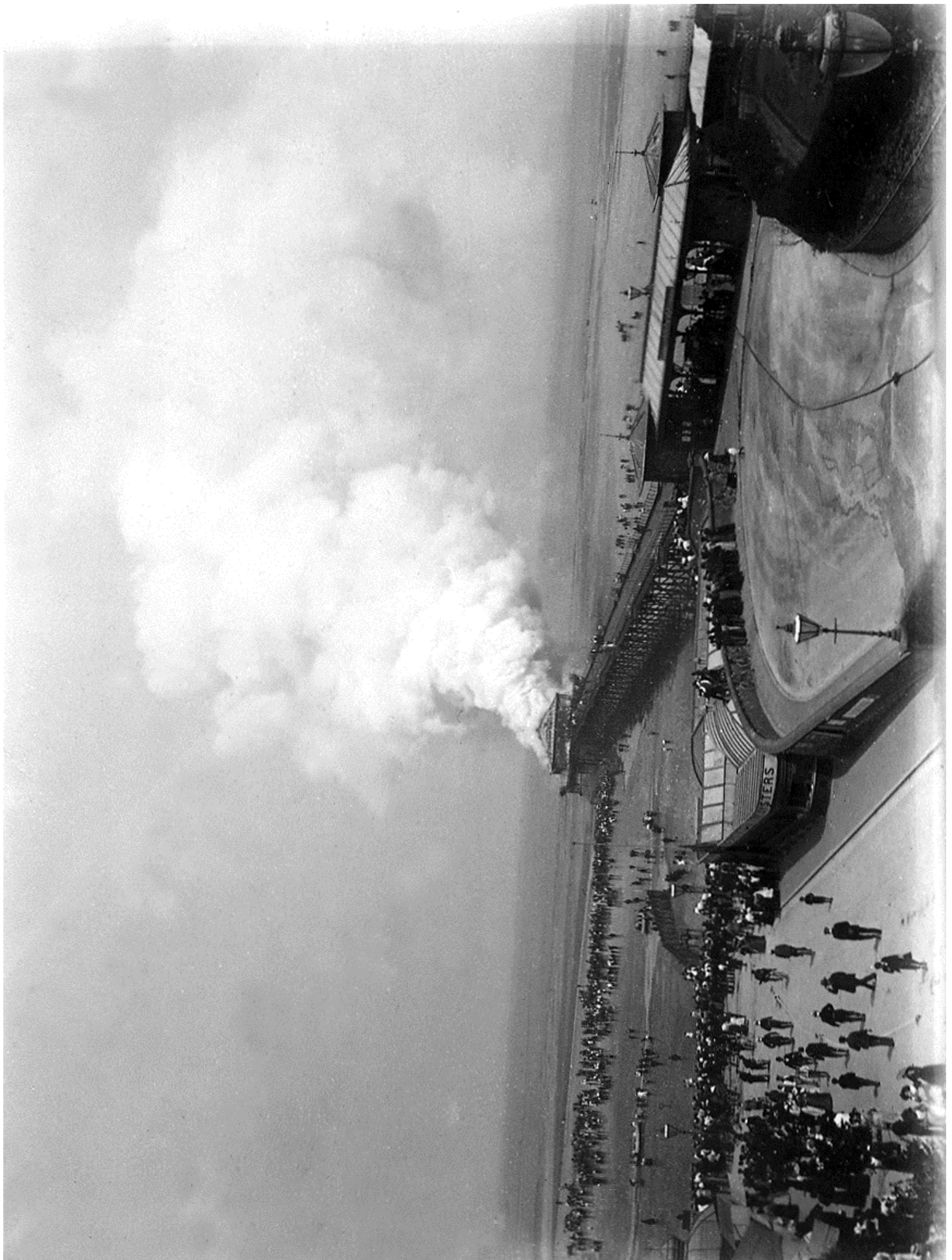


The earth has settled at the bottom of the cliff, what sound might it have made when it fell? What smell might it have? What does it look like from the beach or above?

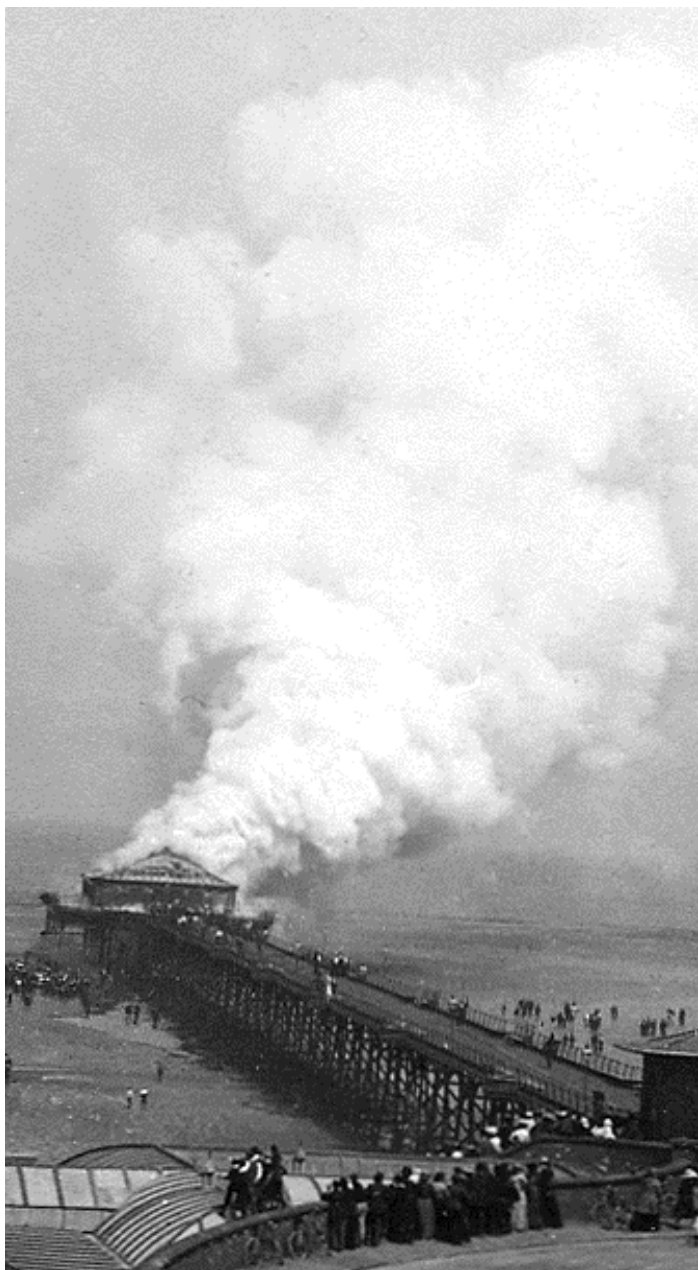


The house at the end of the row is less affected. What might you see from the windows? Can you describe the way it sits compared to the pub next door?

COPY1/463/199 Burning of Cleethorpes pier, 1903



COPY1/463/199 Burning of Cleethorpes pier, 1903



Can you describe the smoke – what does it look like? What might it smell like? What shape it is?

Can you describe the pier – what is it made of? What shapes can you see? What might it feel like if you stood on it? Does it make any noise walking along it?



There are crowds of people all over the bottom of the photograph. What might it feel like to be amongst them? What might they be saying? What might they be trying to do?

COPY 1/460/87 Men descending by aerial railway at Beachy Head lighthouse, 1903

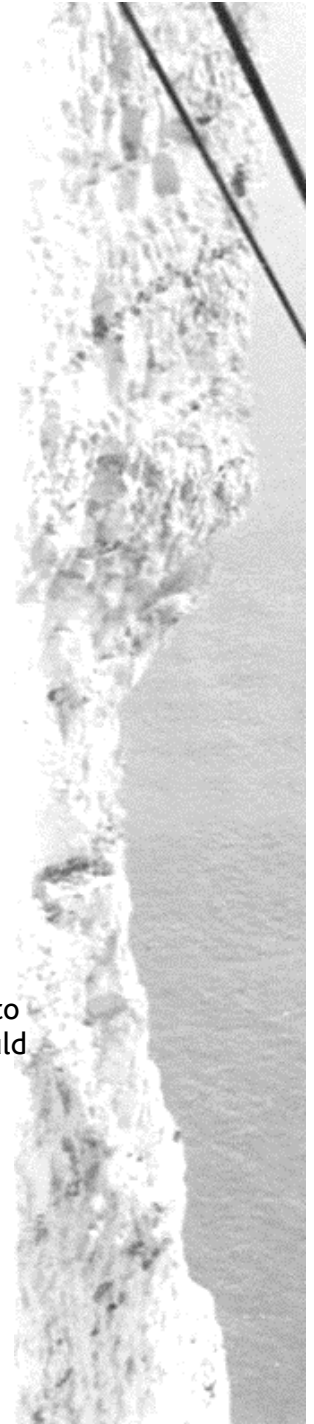


COPY 1/460/87 Men descending by aerial railway at Beachy Head lighthouse, 1903



How many people are within the railway carriage? What might they be feeling on their journey? What can they see?

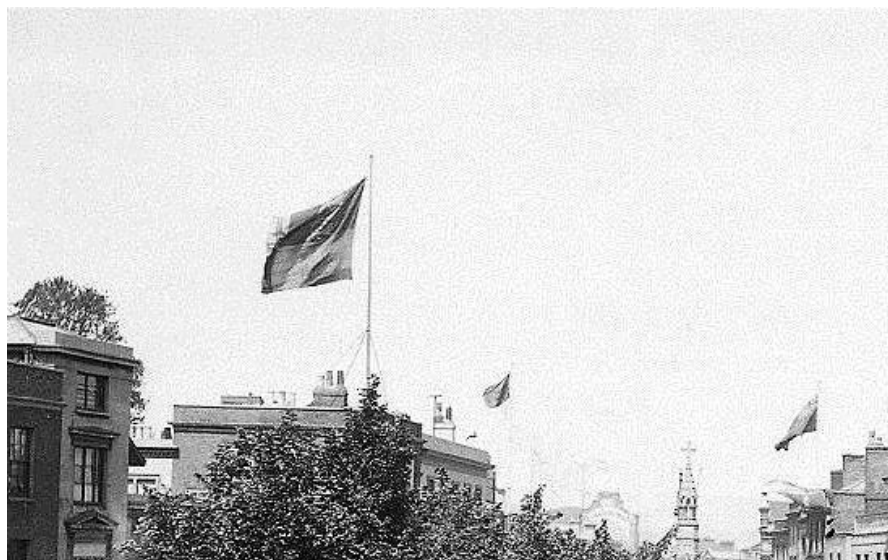
Can you describe the shape of the cliff face? What does it look like? What colour is the stone?



Can you describe the way the lighthouse sits in the sea? What might you be able to see from the top of the tower? How would you get from the landing station to the lighthouse?

COPY 1/454/252 Market day, Taunton, 1902



COPY 1/454/252 Market day, Taunton, 1902

There are flags flying on the rooftops, can you describe the weather? What noise might the flags make?

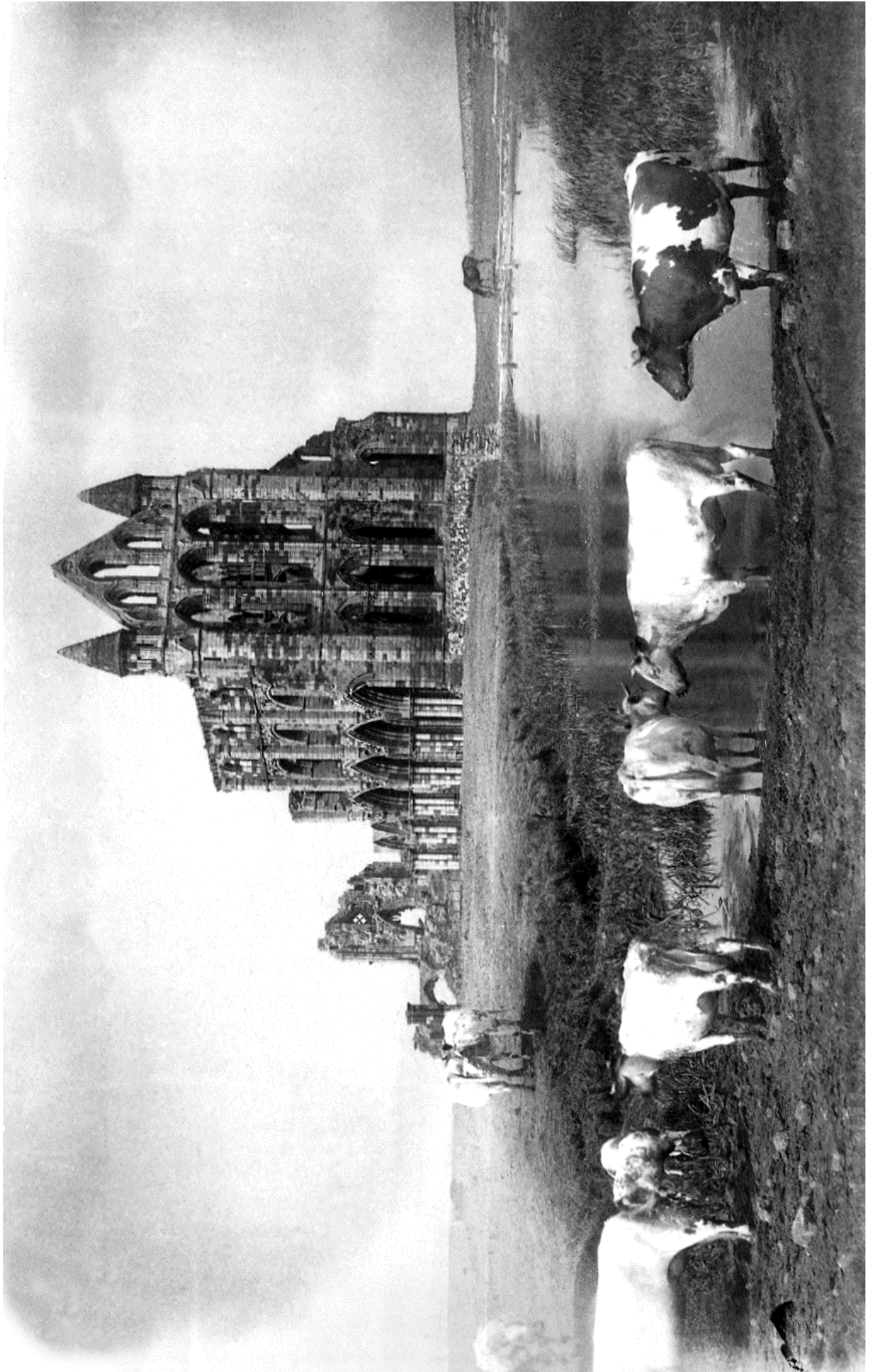


In the crowd there is a group of boys, a lady shopping and a very smartly dressed man. What might they be doing? How might they interact?

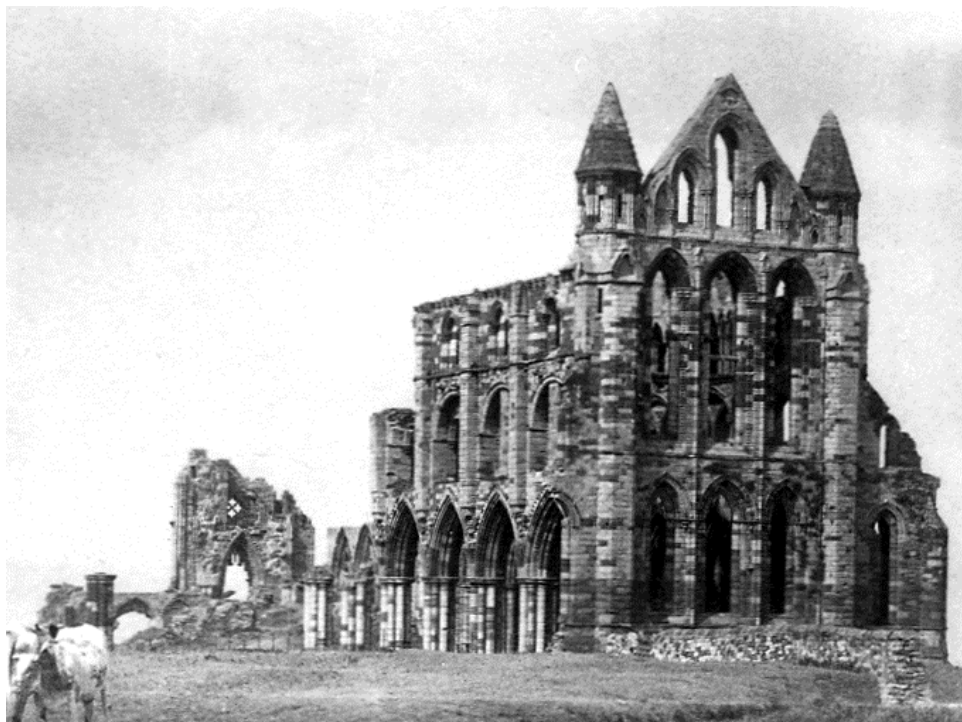


What types of products are for sale at the market? What sounds, smells, flavours and colours might there be? How might the market sellers make sure they sell their products?

COPY 1/376/116 Whitby Abbey, 1886



COPY 1/376/116 Whitby Abbey, 1886



What is the abbey made from?
What shapes can you see? What
place does the ruin have in the
landscape?



The abbey is reflected in the water – can you
describe this? Is the water calm or broken? What
atmosphere might the place have?

There are cows in the foreground of the picture – who might use this landscape. Does this match up with
the state of the church? How do the two elements fit together?



DSIR4/3628 Damage to structures by flood and gales during winter 1952-53



DSIR4/3628 Damage to structures by flood and gales during winter 1952-53



What damage can be seen on the left hand side of the building? Can you see the figure in the window? What are they looking at? How do they feel standing inside the house?

The right side of the house was completely destroyed. Can you describe what is left? How might the man feel stood inside?



The rest is rubble and dirt. Can you describe what you can see in this section of the picture? Try to use the senses to add detail.



COPY1-375 (67) Boat with house and windmill in the background, Countryside scene, P H Emerson, 1886 surveys, 1953-1954

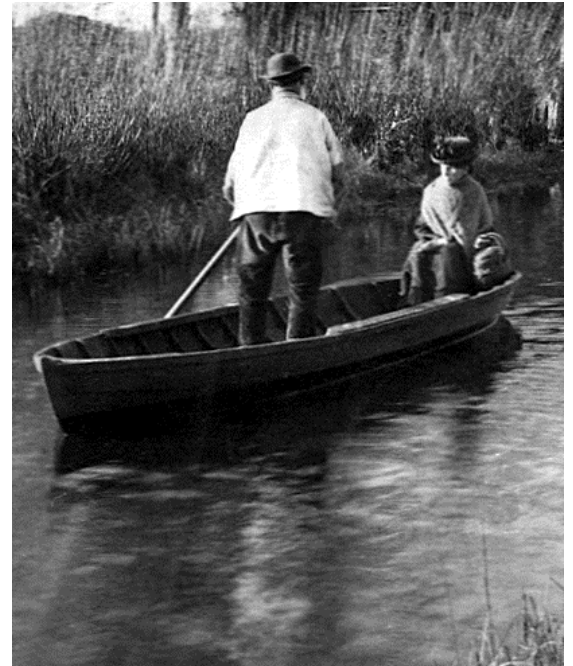


COPY1-375 (67) Boat with house and windmill in the background, Countryside scene, P H Emerson, 1886 surveys, 1953-1954



Focus on the cottage and the windmill– how does it move? Does it make noise? Can you describe it?

What do the couple in the boat look like? What temperature is it there? How do you know? Look at the water - what is the weather like?



What time of year is it? How do you know? How do the buildings fit into the landscape? What emotions are created by the scene?

INF9-706 St Ives, Cornwall, 1930s



INF9-706 St Ives, Cornwall, 1930s



What can you see? What is going on? What is the weather like? How can you tell?



How crowded together are the buildings? Can you spot the people? Can you see a flag? Describe the scene using the different senses.



What kind of town is this? What industry do most people work in? Are the people rich or poor? What view might you have from the windows of the houses?

INF9-683 Blackpool Pleasure Beach, Big Dipper and Boating Pool, 1930s

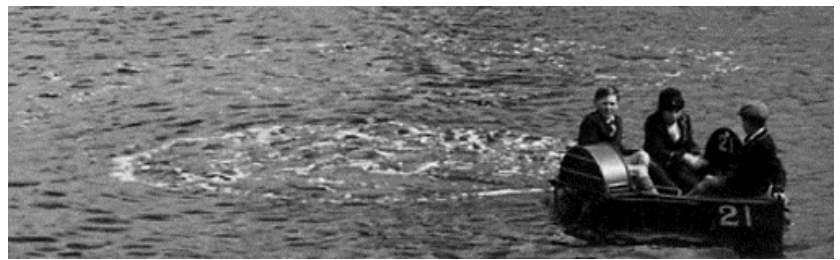


INF9-683 Blackpool Pleasure Beach, Big Dipper and Boating Pool, 1930s



Can you describe the Big Dipper? What does it look like? How might it feel to ride the rollercoaster?

Take a look at this section of the scene. How old are the people in the boat? What kind of boat is it? What sights, sounds and smells might they be experiencing?



What can you see in the rest of the image? What emotions might the people in the picture be feeling?