

Higher English

Reading for Understanding, Analysis & Evaluation (RUAE) Homework Booklet 3

With friends like these ...
Dorothy Rowe

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 RUAE 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.

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.



RUAE Formulae

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



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.

With friends like these ...

Dorothy Rowe The Observer

5 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.

10 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.

20 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.

30 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.

40 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 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.

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 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 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 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 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.

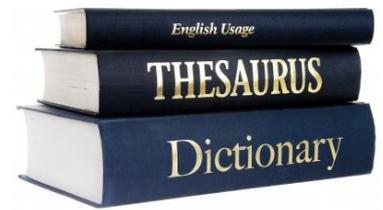
We need to use two key questions. For example, if your friend says: "My mother died when I was five," ask: "How did you feel about that?" The answer might be: "I was upset because I thought she'd died because I was naughty". From such an answer, we can understand why this person always strives to be 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 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.

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

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

Oliver Burkeman The Guardian

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
5 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...

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
10 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
15 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
20 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
25 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."

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
30 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
35 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

40 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.

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 had to worry about his Facebook privacy options (although he was ordered to commit ritual
45 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 talking in misleading generalities. "Technology" isn't good or bad for us, per se; neither is "the
50 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
95 unsatisfying. The neuroscience writer Jonah Lehrer argues that the same applies to making
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
expenditures, not small ones. And if small pleasures deliver a reliable daily mood boost, they
105 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.

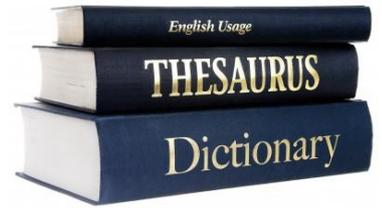
Creativity: make one small change to your workspace. Evidence continues to accumulate for
110 a curious psychological effect that's either massively dispiriting or rather encouraging, depending
on how you look at it: the way we're influenced to an extraordinary degree by subtle details of
our surroundings 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'

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 considerable) drains away once the reins of power are taken up. The current government is only
50 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. They want them locked down, maltreated and if it were possible beaten on a regular basis. They
70 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 is of a piece with the refusal to recognise that grotesque inherited privilege is something people
85 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 'nighmarish' 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)
- Identify the type of **imagery** used here. **1 A**
 - 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