



Oxford Cambridge and RSA

Date – Morning/Afternoon

GCSE (9–1) English Language

J351/01 Communicating information and ideas

Sample Insert

Time allowed: 2 hours



INSTRUCTIONS

- Use the Insert to answer the questions in Section A.
- Do **not** send this Insert for marking. Keep it in the centre or recycle it.

INFORMATION

- This document has **4** pages.

The two texts that follow are:

Text 1: Adapted from *Walks in and around London* written in 1884 by Uncle Jonathan

Text 2: Adapted from *This Boy* written in 2013 by Alan Johnson

Text 1

'Uncle Jonathan' wrote a famous account of the lives of poor children in 19th century London. Here he describes a playground that has been built for the poor children to enjoy.

A playground in East London, with its throng of children wheeling in and out, and jostling one another in their uproarious merriment. It is a scene of constant motion but with just a little of sadness running through the whole. We seem to look through their merry play and see into the home-life of many of these poor little ones. 1

We, who revel in our cosy nurseries and play-rooms, who tread with slippered feet on soft carpeted floors, who feast our eyes with bright pictures and cheerful books, and who lie snugly tucked in with warm blankets on downy beds, know and feel the full meaning of the word 'home'. 5

But how different it is with many of these poor little ones of outcast London! To them 'home' is often full of bitterness. Shoeless feet, bare boards, perhaps a few shavings or bits of straw for bed, and rags for coverlets are their home comforts. They are more used to kicks than kisses, to blows than fond embraces, to angry words and horrible oaths than gentle voices of love and prayer. 10

A little while ago this bright spot was a sad, dull and melancholy waste. Maybe it was an old churchyard with every grave filled, its stones, in memory of folks long since forgotten, now crumbling with age, and railed in all around to keep out children, large and small. But wise and kind-hearted people have levelled and laid it out as a garden and playground for the little ones. 15

Here, strolling along its sanded walks, which go winding around beds of bright-looking and sweet-smelling flowers; or stopping to watch the jet of water flung into the air from the fountain and dropping back into the basin where the gold and silver fish dart to and fro; or leaning back in the comfortable seats like real ladies and gentlemen, myriads of children from the courts and alleys around come to forget the hardness of their life in the beauty and the merriment of the playground. 20

Here, too, come the little mothers carrying their babies, and looking after brothers and sisters with as much care and anxiety as though they were real mothers. And the little workers with busy fingers stitch and knit and crochet the articles which mother gets from the warehouse, and which must be worked at early and late to earn enough money to live. 25

And so we leave this happy scene, glad that the poor children have this fine place of enjoyment. And when we romp about in our comfortable homes and play with our toys, we will think kindly of these poor little ones and, when opportunity comes, help them as best we can. 30

Text 2

Alan Johnson has written several books about what it was like growing up in London in the 1950s. He lived with his sister Linda, his mother Lily and his father Steve. Here he describes what life was like for young children on the streets of London at the time.

Although I joined in competitive games in the playground, away from school I rarely ventured out to engage in the rough and tumble of the streets. I was a much more solitary child than my effervescent sister, who was usually to be found outdoors, often upside down, doing handstands against a wall or skipping with a rope. I preferred playing indoors in our bedroom where I created my own imaginary world. 1
5

While Lily was happy to allow Linda to take her skipping rope out into the road, she was determined to make sure that I was not roaming the streets, principally, I think, because of a belief that, while girls were safe, boys were likely to 'get into trouble' or to be attacked by other boys. In truth, preventing me from straying into dangerous territory didn't take much effort.

Casting my mind back now, I don't think I ever felt safe on those streets. While there was a genuine sense of community on our streets, the threat of violence that bubbled perpetually beneath the surface was a part of our everyday lives. It erupted frequently. Gangs of boys, keen to prove how tough they were, would attack if provoked. And it didn't take a lot for them to be provoked. Sometimes it was enough to make the simple mistake of looking at them. 10

Steve tried to teach me how to box. These little tournaments scared me and upset Lily, but he insisted they were necessary to toughen me up. Lily, who was used to taking his punches herself, was always hovering on the periphery like a demented referee trying to end the bout. If she thought I'd been hurt too much, she'd push herself between us. I suppose it was as a result of these bouts that I began to see Steve as a foe rather than a friend. Someone who, to use a boxing analogy, wasn't in my corner. 15
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Like Lily, many women were unconvinced of the virtues of teaching boys to fight, but this had more to do with their aspirations for their sons than any objections to them being 'toughened up'. To fight in the streets or in the playground was 'common'. Not fighting was a sign of gentility, of prosperity, of the different more refined life they wanted for their boys.

But it was rare in my experience that any adult sought to stop a fight if it was between two boys of roughly equal size and age. It was thought to be healthy and natural to let them get on with it. So there were playground fights, classroom fights and neighbourhood fights. It's not surprising then that I was largely compliant with Lily's mission to keep me off the streets. 25

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