



Oxford Cambridge and RSA

Tuesday 5 November 2024 – Morning

GCSE (9–1) English Language

J351/01 Communicating information and ideas

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 **8** pages.

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Details of text extracts:

Text 1

Text: adapted from *Wonderful Adventures of Mrs. Seacole in Many Lands*

Author: Mary Seacole (1857)

Text 2

Text: adapted from *The Language of Kindness: A Nurse's Story*

Author: Christie Watson (2018)

Text 1

In her autobiography Mary Seacole remembers a time when she was travelling through Central America and a serious disease affected the town where she was staying.

It was late in the evening when the largest mule¹-owner in town came to me and implored me to accompany him to his enclosure where some of his men were dying. He was most selfishly anxious for his head muleteer², and he promised me a large remuneration if I should succeed in saving him. It must be understood that many of those who could afford to pay for my services did so handsomely, but the great majority of my patients had nothing better to give me than their thanks.

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Our journey was not a long one, but it rained hard, and the fields were flooded, so that it took us some time to reach the long, low hut which he called his home. I would rather not see such another scene as the interior of that hut presented. Its roof scarcely sheltered its wretched inmates from the searching rain; its floor was damp, rank turf, trodden by the mules' hoofs and the muleteers' feet into thick mud.

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Around, in dirty hammocks, and on the damp floor, were the inmates of this wretched place, the strong and the sick together, breathing air that nearly choked me. The groans of the sufferers, and the anxiety and fear of their comrades, were so painful to hear and to witness that I felt an almost uncontrollable impulse to run out into the stormy night and flee from this plague-spot.

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But the weak feeling vanished, and I set about my duty. The mule-owner was so frightened that he did not hesitate to obey orders, and so, by my direction, doors and shutters were thrown open, fires were lighted, and every effort was made to ventilate the place.

Then I applied myself to my poor patients. Two were beyond my skill – death alone could give them relief – but the others I could help. No words of mine, however, could induce them to bear their sufferings like men. They screamed and groaned, not like women, for few would have been so craven-hearted, but like children, calling, in the intervals of violent pain upon Jesus, Mary, and all the saints of heaven.

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I stayed until midnight, and then got away for a little time but I had not long been quiet before the mule-owner was after me again. The men were worse; would I return with him? The rain was drifting heavily on the thatched roof, and I was tired to death, but I could not resist his appeal. With some difficulty I again reached the enclosure. I restored some order with the help of the bravest of the women and fixed up rude screens around the dying men. But no screens could shut out their awful groans and cries for the aid that no mortal power could give them.

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And so the long night passed away; first a deathlike stillness behind one screen, and then a sudden silence behind the other, showing that the fierce battle with death was over, and who had been the victor.

¹mule – a mix of a donkey and a horse

²muleteer – a person who works with mules

Text 2

Christie Watson was a nurse for twenty years and here she describes one of the experiences she had while working in a hospital.

Betty is getting worse. Her face looks concave and her teeth are chattering. She is the colour of the sheet behind her head. It looks as though she is disappearing into a cloud. I tuck the blanket around her, careful to move slowly: her skin is paper-thin and she has bruises at different stages patterning her arms like late-summer roses. The blanket is blue and scratchy, but she is still shivering.

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Betty's temperature is not extreme, but it's still dangerously low. She's been at home, with no heating, I suspect. There are millions of people living in fuel poverty who cannot pay their bills. 'Betty, I'm going to get you a bear-hugger. It blows hot air over you and warms you up a bit. It's very cosy.'

'Thank you, love. I'm all right, though. I don't want to be a nuisance. I can see how busy you are.'

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'You're not a nuisance at all. That's what we're here for.' I smile at her and take her hand, giving it a gentle squeeze. 'Now can I get you a cup of tea and a sandwich?'

Betty smiles. 'You're so kind,' she says. 'They don't pay you girls enough.'

I push the bear-hugger back to Betty, picking up an egg-and-cress sandwich on the way. The sandwich looks dry and unappealing. Its edges curled and uniform. I would love to have cut Betty a thick slice of fresh bread, and to have served it with real butter and jam.

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The bear-hugger is made of billowing white paper like fabric, and, once plugged in, it encloses her in what looks like a hot-air balloon. Her temperature should increase by one degree an hour, and her blood-sugar should rise to normal levels after the sandwich and sweet tea.

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Betty half smiles. 'This material,' she says, 'reminds me of my wedding dress. We had no way of getting proper material, but we did have parachute silk. We had egg-and-cress sandwiches then, too. I remember the taste.'

Betty is completely alone in her flat now, which explains her state of health and her chest pain more than any machine can. And the way she wolfs down her dry sandwich in gulps. Her colour improves as she speaks, and she becomes more alert and sits up. I stand listening to her, holding her paper-thin hand, which is almost as crumpled as the fabric around her.

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I can't stay for long. There's too much to do. But I stay another minute and close my eyes for a while and listen. And, if I listen hard enough, I stop seeing a frail old woman alone on a hospital trolley, and instead see a young woman in a dress made from parachute silk, dancing with her new husband, Stan.

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