



GCSE

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MONDAY, 1 NOVEMBER 2021 – MORNING

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

UNIT 2

Reading and Writing: Description, Narration and Exposition

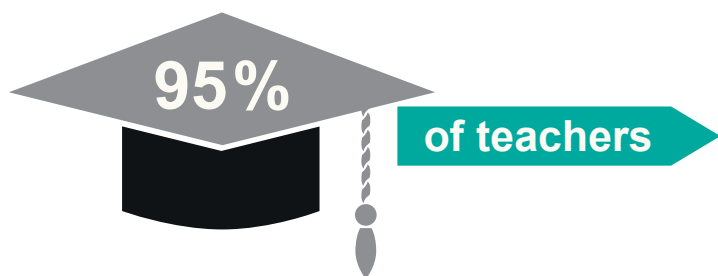
Resource Material

For use with Section A

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Text A is taken from a report into attitudes to school uniform in the UK.

The UK's first report into attitudes around school uniforms



believe that wearing uniform helps students to 'fit in', as their standardised outfits make it harder to identify social classes or family backgrounds or who owns the latest 'must have' trainers.

Helping to prevent bullying is not the only positive effect of a school uniform. Teachers also perceive other benefits from wearing a school uniform:



This could have a positive knock-on effect, transforming the school into the first choice for parents and pupils.



9 in 10 teachers



believe that a school uniform positively affects pupils' behaviour.

Text B is taken from the online news bulletin of a national television company.

Welsh schools expected to cut school uniform costs under new guidelines

Schools in Wales will be expected to make school uniforms more affordable under new guidance published by the Welsh Government.

The statutory guidance advises schools to consider ways to keep the cost of uniforms down. Previous guidance was non-statutory, meaning schools were not legally required to follow it.

The guidance recommends that uniforms should be available from more than one outlet. Schools will be expected to consider whether school logos are necessary in order to help keep costs down. In future, school logos could be offered free of charge to be sewn onto items of clothing.



School uniforms will also be expected to be gender-neutral under the new guidelines. For example, trousers would not be described as a 'boy's item'.

Text C is adapted from a newspaper article.

Wearing a school uniform is a lesson in respect



When I was growing up, I lived in fear of being singled out by Mrs Jones, the deputy head teacher responsible for enforcing the strict uniform policy at my comprehensive in South Wales. The familiar sound of her footsteps and the call of ‘You girl, come here!’ were enough to reduce even the toughest girls in school to nervous wrecks.

Yet, I wore my school uniform with pride. It wasn’t even that great: a boring grey polyester skirt from M&S, a white shirt and black blazer – onto which my mum had sewn the school badge – and of course, the compulsory tie. I remember my first day of high school,

joining the sea of similarly-clad girls making their way through the school gates and feeling like I belonged. When my confidence grew, I tried to rebel in my own small way: loosening my tie or rolling up my skirt to above my knees (Mrs Jones’ eagle eye put paid to my attempts).

As I got older, I understood that wearing the uniform was not about making me into a clone and crushing my personality. The uniform was about how small details contributed to the whole ethos of our school. Wearing a uniform also helped me fit in. I was very self-conscious about my personal image and didn’t want to be judged by what clothes I wore. At an age when everyone was into logos and designer brands, we were all equal. I didn’t feel embarrassed that I couldn’t afford the latest gear.

Years later, when I had children of my own and started to look at high schools for them, I found myself remembering Mrs Jones and the uniform policy. I was interested in how schools implemented rules and regulations. They could put on fantastic open evenings but I found myself looking at un-tucked shirts and rolled up skirts and thinking that if the uniform policy was not enforced when prospective parents were visiting the school, what did that say about the everyday school life? A smart uniform says a lot about how a school is run and how rules are enforced.

Wearing a uniform to school taught me a powerful lesson; it’s about teaching the basics of respect and discipline. Now I’m a freelancer, I wear what I want. I have tattoos and my own personal style, but if I’m going to an office or speaking at an event, I will check what the dress policy is and wear what’s appropriate – as long as it’s not a grey knee-length polyester skirt. The last one I wore was consigned to the bonfire on my last day at school. Sorry, Mrs Jones.

Text D is taken from a blog by an A-level student and aspiring journalist.

Wearing a school uniform doesn't help us learn

One school's decision this week to send hundreds of its pupils home for wearing the wrong clothes suggests that they have got their priorities wrong.

More than 200 Bradford secondary school pupils were sent home from school this week. Their crime? Uniform infringements. They weren't burning bras or tying their ties around their heads. They were wearing trainers or the wrong cut of trousers. But is it OK to deprive someone of a day of education just because they don't look smart enough?

One reason for uniform is to create a level playing field so that rich kids don't lord it over poorer ones with their flashy jumpers and designer trainers and no one is teased for not following the latest trends. But the flipside of conformity is dullness. What about budding fashionistas or those who simply want to express their individuality? A bland uniform suppresses their right to express themselves through clothes. Kids will be kids, and frankly it would take more than insisting on the right shade of blue shirt to get rid of bullying in schools. If teens want to bully others they will find their motive and means.

Schools also say that uniforms help to set high academic standards. But some of the highest-achieving countries have no uniform. Finland's schools top international league tables and don't have school uniform; while the UK has the uniforms without the stunning results.

At my school there's a strict uniform policy for Years 7 to 11 and a dress code in the sixth form. I envy a friend at another school who sat her exams in cosy leggings and comfy boots. There's nothing more distracting in a three-hour history exam than a suffocating top button. Who knows? I might have got an A* in maths if I'd been in my onesie.

And uniform is a distraction. Teachers spend time and energy policing uniform when they could presumably be teaching us. They hand out detentions, quibble over hair dye and spend far too long checking the length of skirts. In any case, there are better ways to introduce unity into schools. In the real world, communities are built on shared interests, not wearing identical kit. It's actually doing a lunchtime or after-school activity that forms bonds, rather than what you're wearing.

Uniforms may work for police officers and soldiers, but they have no place in schools. Schools should let kids wear what they want – and then everyone could get on with some actual learning.

Text E is taken from a novel set in St Oswald's School for boys. It describes an encounter between a teacher at the school and the Headmaster.

1 'Mr Straitley.'

There was so much noise that I had not heard the Head walk up behind me. Even on a Friday afternoon he was immaculate: white shirt, grey suit, tie knotted and positioned at precisely the correct angle.

5 'Headmaster.'

It annoys him to be called Headmaster. It reminds him that in the history of St Oswald's he is neither unique nor irreplaceable. 'Was that a member of your form,' he said, 'dashing past us with his shirt untucked?'

10 'I'm sure it wasn't,' I lied. The Headmaster has an administrator's obsession with shirts, socks and other uniform trivia. He looked sceptical at my reply. 'I have noticed a certain disregard for uniform regulations this week. I hope you'll be able to impress upon the boys the importance of making a good impression outside the school gates.'

'Of course, Headmaster.'

15 In view of the impending School Inspection, making a good impression has become one of the Head's main priorities. Some rebellion against the uniform is a rite of passage though, and members of the school – and of my form in particular – express their revolt by means of untucked shirts, scissored ties and subversive socks.

I tried to say as much to the Head, but was met with a look of such disgust that I wished I hadn't.

20 'Socks, Mr Straitley?' he said, as if I had introduced him to some new and previously undreamed-of horror.

'Well, yes,' I said. 'You know, Homer Simpson, *South Park*, Scooby-Doo.'

'But we have *regulation* socks,' said the Head. 'Grey wool, calf-length, yellow-and-black stripe. Eight ninety-nine a pair from the school outfitters.'

25 I shrugged helplessly. Fifteen years as Head of St Oswald's, and he still hasn't realised that no one – *no one!* – ever wears the uniform socks.

'Well, I expect you to put a stop to it,' said the Head, still looking rattled. 'Every boy should be in uniform, *full* uniform, at all times. I shall have to send a memo.'