

- 1 The following text describes the remains of disused tin mines. It is an extract from a book about the history of Cornwall, a county in England.
- (a) Imagine you are the education officer for a mining museum in Cornwall. You have been asked to give a speech to a group of teenage students about a day in the life of a 'tinner of the past'. Write a section of the script for your speech in 120–150 words. [10]
- (b) Compare the language and style of your speech with the language and style of the original article. [15]

The tanners of the past were an essential part of Cornwall, hunters, seekers, spending themselves in the unending quest for treasure underground. There is no difficulty in finding where they lived and worked. The chimney-stacks, naked against the sky, the ivy-covered engine-houses, the slag-heaps¹ at the foot still gritty black – these are everywhere, glimpsed from a main road or a by-lane ... lonely emblems of a once-crowded past. 5

The trackways to the mines are overgrown, sometimes impassable, but if you hack your way through the brambles and come to an engine-house, and look about you, these places have all the beauty and sadness that Nature gives to ruins. Perhaps they seemed ugly once, bare as electric pylons do today, smoke from the tall chimneys fouling the air, and instead of present silence the chug of machinery, the monotonous throb-throb of the pump. At early morning, after midday and again at evening, the bell would sound for the change of shift and the roadways, now so full of weeds and bramble, would echo to the tread of men coming to work, while from underground to the shaft-heads climbed their fellows due for relief, clothes stained with mud and clay, a candle-stump fixed to their hard-brimmed hats. 10 15

More spectacular than the small inland mines are the chimneys and engine-houses of those built above the sea, perched like nests of eagles. Botallack, near Cape Cornwall, in West Penwith, has an almost eerie grandeur, set on a peak of rock with the Atlantic foaming at its base. Here in old days, subterranean workings extended below the seabed itself, several fathoms² deep, and although no tragedy occurred the miners were forever aware of the ocean above their heads, the sinister roar of waves breaking against the distant cliffs, the seeping of salt-water into the rock crannies where they worked. This rock was their only protection from sudden death by drowning, the hot moist air about them made breathing difficult, and equally hard was the steep ascent by ladders to the cliffs when their shift was done, climbing perhaps at night through the pitch-black darkness and in winter a full gale blowing. 20 25

¹*slag-heaps*: piles of waste products from the mining process

²*fathom*: a unit of length of approximately 1.8 metres which is primarily used for measuring the depth of water

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2 Texts A and B are both about writing letters.

Text A is a transcription of a conversation on a radio show. The presenter, Graham, speaks to an English teacher called Mrs Spears and a student called Casper, who attends a boarding school.

Text B is an article from the lifestyle section of a newspaper. The writer, Kiran Sidhu, writes about the importance of handwritten letters.

Compare the language and style of Text A and Text B.

[25]

Text A

TRANSCRIPTION KEY

(1) = pause in seconds

(.) = micropause

// = speech overlap

underlining = stressed sound/syllable(s)

Mrs Spears:	we feel its very very important that we teach our children (.) the traditional erm (.) art form of the letter (.) rather than typing into a computer and sending an email that actually a letter is something to be treasured and that the person who receives it (.) its a tangible thing that they read and can reread whenever they like	5
Graham:	well look at the magic we have now when someone discovers letters from family back home in a chest in the attic (1) touching history (.) with the digital age you dont have that same sense do you of the connection	
Mrs Spears:	absolutely erm i completely agree and i think that you know (.) it takes real time and care to write a letter and that you know to be able to hold that thing in your hand erm and you know our children here receive letters every day and that ink on that page has been put there by a loved one	10
Graham:	is casper there (.) can we have a chat (1) how are you doing casper	15
Casper:	// good thank you	
Graham:	what does it mean to you to be able to write a letter home (1) and who do you write <u>to</u>	
Casper:	erm (.) in my opinion writing a letter is like sending a part (.) a part of me to home (.) and an email just feels like its stuck in a computer (1) my parents who i normally write to wont be able to take it out and use it and stick it up with as much pleasure as a normal letter so in my opinion a letter is more personal	20
Graham:	yeah i er (.) thats a really well put argument for doing it not that we need to argue over the idea of er (1) what about all your friends and all your fellow sort of students and pupils (.) how much do they enjoy it	25
Casper:	i think they enjoy it as much as anyone would (.) every sunday we're given half an hour to an hour to write home	

- Graham:** what kind of things do you actually put in your letter
- Casper:** i'll tell them about say a sports match ive played in (.) maybe a test ive done (.) all sorts 30
- Graham:** and it makes you feel good to do it (1) lets go back to mrs spears the english teacher (1) hello
- Mrs Spears:** yes im back hello
- Graham:** do you think we'll find a time in the future and i really hope it will never happen where we'll just consign handwritten letters to the skip and it will all just be electronic (1) do you know i really hope not 35
- Mrs Spears:** i like to think it might go full circle one day

Text B

Handwritten letters belong to you like your DNA

A small tug on the thread of nostalgia can unravel a whole garment. One Sunday afternoon, I came across a trove of letters in a battered hatbox in the cupboard underneath the stairs. The letters had been written in the 90s while I was at university; some were from friends, but most notably, many were from my aunt, Martha.

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I opened these quietly ageing letters, but not without trepidation; would they bring anguish or comfort? I recognised my aunt's flowery writing and how her capital As were simply larger lowercase As. I sat cross-legged on the floor as if it were story time, an adult story fragrant with childhood romance; Aunt Martha, storyteller extraordinaire.

'Kiran, it's raining outside and your mum just left my house. Your mum made pakoras¹ at mine and we laughed about how you still can't make a curry! Hurry up and come home, I'll bake a cake. Oh, yeah, forgot to tell you, I miss you!'

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It is magical how words arranged in a particular order, immortalised in a letter, can make their way through your fingertips and travel through your veins until all you can feel is heart. Her words described moments in time, now lost in space.

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These ageing and yellowing objects are the reasons I still write letters in an age where such a practice is seen as archaic. There is a joy in receiving a letter in the post, a hidden gem: a piece of someone's heart among the bills. Getting an email or text really doesn't compare: it is just another screen to look at. TV screen, computer screen, smokescreen.

I never remember the emails or texts I receive, they all eventually go in the trashcan of my mind and the cute little icon on my laptop, never to be magically rediscovered. They seem to exist only to be binned.

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Emails and texts act like the middleman between the author and recipient, technology even dictates your words by guessing them and filling them in for you. The pen, however, begs to be enslaved; it needs to belong to you. I would have never been able to enjoy my aunt's flowery writing if she had sent an email, where all of her As and Ts would have looked the same. And I wouldn't have been able to enjoy the silly face she drew as she signed off every letter. A letter is an act of creation in a way an email can never be. When someone sends you a handwritten letter, you receive a part of who they are.

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¹*pakoras*: deep-fried fritters, popular in South Asian cuisine

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