

Functional Skills English

Level 2



Learning Resource 5
Reading for Understanding

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Information**Understanding Main Events of Text**

Long passages of text are usually divided into **paragraphs**. These divisions do not occur haphazardly whenever the writer thinks there are enough sentences in one paragraph to warrant starting a new one. Each paragraph normally includes one main idea around which the whole text of that paragraph is written. In this newspaper article, there are 6 paragraphs.

Exercise 1

Pick out the *main idea* from each of them and in the space below the article, write down *one sentence* to convey the main point of each paragraph. To help you, you may wish to highlight important words, phrases or whole sentences as you are reading.

**BABY GENDER SELECTION
RULED OUT**

The Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority (HFEA) have asked the government to rule on sex selection techniques so that British parents would not be allowed to choose to have a boy or girl purely for social reasons. At the moment some of these techniques are not regulated, including those that involve sperm sorting.

Their decision comes as a result of a year-long consultation, funded by the Department of Health, with experts and the general public, together with research on scientific, social and ethical issues. Through this consultation, it was found that 80% of people are against sex selection techniques for other than health reasons.

If the ruling, which has already won the backing of the Health Secretary, is put into place by the government then only those people in Britain with a serious sex-linked disorder in the family, such as Duchenne's Muscular Dystrophy, a disease that only affects boys, will be able to select their baby's sex.

Doctors are able to determine the sex of a baby in two ways, through genetic testing or through sperm sorting. Genetic testing enables female embryos to be identified before being placed in the womb. Sperm sorting involves separating sperm depending whether they carry male or female chromosomes, then placing the ones chosen into the woman's womb or using them to create embryos in the laboratory.

A spokesperson from the HFEA, in a written statement, said that the decision to keep the gender selection ban had been difficult but that after long consideration it had been decided that people should not be able to select the gender of their child for social reasons only. This ruling will be of greatest significance to some ethnic minorities whose women receive praise and acceptance by the older members of their community if they bear a boy child. The birth of a girl can be seen as inadequacy on the part of the woman.

However, the HFEA has accepted that some families will be disappointed at the ruling as some British parents ask for this treatment if their children are all of one sex and they particularly want a baby of the opposite sex. The HFEA admit that it would be impossible to prevent people seeking the treatment abroad. Last year, a clinic in America helped six British couples to choose their baby's sex, all of whom did it to "balance" their families.

Main Points

Paragraph 1

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Paragraph 2

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Paragraph 3

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Paragraph 4

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Paragraph 5

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Paragraph 6

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Exercise 2

- Do the 6 main points you have listed above give enough information to provide the **gist** of the text to someone who hasn't read the newspaper article?
- Do the 6 main points you have listed above give you enough information to **retell** in some detail the newspaper article to someone who hasn't read it?
- Do you need some specific information from the article along with the main points to be able to **retell** it to someone who hasn't read it?
- Can you make assumptions about the **opinion of the writer** of this newspaper article? If so, how? If not, why not?

Information**Persuasive Text**

Some pieces of writing are designed purposely to **persuade** us to buy a particular product, take a holiday or do some activity. Several methods are used to encourage us to indulge; not only are there glossy pictures to attract us, but also advertisers are extremely competent at choosing very **persuasive language**. This often comes in the form of complimentary adjectives.

Exercise 3

While reading this extract from a flyer produced by a local theatre, *highlight* all the words that the advertisers have used to try to persuade you to go to this musical production.

Our sparkling young company of gifted soloists and enthusiastic chorus will once again be delighting audiences at our intimate theatre next month. This new production will star most of your local favourites, with our own Richard Button and Samantha Wade in the two principal parts. Richard has spent the last six months at the Royal College in London where he has had voice training with the world renowned John Bateson. He made quite a name for himself while he was there, winning the “most improved learner of the year” award. Samantha has not been without her successes either; she took first place in a nationwide music competition held in Birmingham to find the most outstanding young female artist in amateur theatre.

So, together with these two most successful artists and our very talented ladies and gentlemen of the chorus, we can look forward to an entertaining family show full of lively dancing and superb singing. We are also fortunate in having the help of Kirbyfield Art College final year learners who have produced for us a stunning set and gloriously rich costumes. To keep the whole show in order, we have our energetic resident musical director Karen Baker, who will be conducting a full orchestra of splendid instrumentalists, and our inspirational producer, Jo Turner. A spectacular event that you **must not miss!**

Exercise 4

Look at the words you have *highlighted*.

What kind of words are they?

Why are so many of these words used in this type of advertising material?

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Do you think that such persuasive language would encourage people to see the show?

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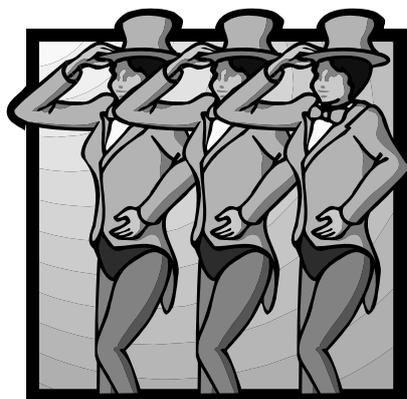
Exercise 5

Now read this article by an arts critic who has written a review of the same musical production for the local paper.

This amateur musical production was just that; although there was some talent on show, in the main the singing was out of tune, the dancers did not coordinate with each other and the whole show was rather flat. I was impressed, however, with the beautiful set that had been created by local art learners and especially the way they used the backdrop for all the scenes no matter where they took place. The costumes also were very colourful and with good use of lighting effects, the visual picture was quite stunning – a pity about the sound!

Richard Button and Samantha Wade, in the lead roles, have both had successes recently in gaining awards for their singing. It must have been a bad night last night, especially for Samantha, or else the other participants in the competition weren't up to much either, as she missed several top notes, which even to my untuned ear were more than obvious. However, if you are going to see this production, look out for the small boy in the street scene – we may hear more of him in the future.

- What do you think the arts critic of the local paper thought of the show?
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.....
- Why? Pick out some words and phrases from the article that leads you to that opinion and write them in the space below.
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.....
- Do you think that people would be persuaded to see the show after reading this critique? Why?
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Exercise 6

This next extract is also a piece of persuasive text. It comes from a holiday brochure promoting weekend breaks in European cities.

As before, *highlight* the words and phrases that the company uses to promote the attraction of the holiday destination.

Florence

For works of art and the finest treasures of the Renaissance period, look no further than the beautiful city of Florence, the cultural capital of modern Italy. This is the home of the famous Michelangelo statue of David, amazing paintings by da Vinci and Botticelli in the Uffizi Gallery and the magnificent Duomo, just one of the many splendid churches to visit. Enjoy a romantic evening stroll on the mediaeval Ponte Vecchio, a photographer's paradise. Climb Giotto's bell tower for a wonderful panoramic view of Florence.

If you want a change from its cultural history, then visit the many small specialist shops and markets for stunning leather goods, gold jewellery and, of course, clothes. Florence, after all, is also a city of fashion, choice and taste. After a full day of touring the sites or scooping up all those bargains, what could be better than a traditional plate of pasta and a glass of Chianti at one of the many welcoming bars in the piazzas, or for an authentic flavour of Florence you could do no better than choose a Steak alla Fiorentina and while away a balmy evening watching the world go by.

Back at your 4* luxury hotel in a quiet suburb of Florence, yet only 10 minutes from its heart, you can indulge in the luxuries of the indoor pool and health club, sip cocktails on the terrace while admiring the magnificent views over the rooftops or enjoy live entertainment in the grotto bar before retiring to your spacious air-conditioned room. Wake up refreshed and ready to enjoy another packed day of sightseeing and absorb the wonderful atmosphere that is Florence.

How do advertisers persuade you about their product?

- Look at the words you have *highlighted* and once more notice how many of them are descriptive adjectives.
- In the table on the next page are several techniques that advertisers may use to encourage us to indulge in their product. Which ones have been used in the above example from the holiday brochure?

Exercise 7

Read the article again, and give examples from the text as you find them.

Advertising Techniques	Examples
Verbs written in 2nd person (you).	
Imperative form of verb (command or order).	
Use of positive words for description.	
Names of must-see places/works of art.	
Words to induce positive feelings in potential holidaymaker.	
Words to tempt potential holidaymakers.	



Exercise 8

Now read the following letter from holidaymakers who went to Florence on a weekend break as advertised in the brochure extract above. While you are reading, look for answers to these questions about the letter. All the information that you need may not be *explicitly stated* in the text. You may have to “read between the lines” or *infer* meaning.

- Were the holidaymakers persuaded to go on the holiday by the advertisement from the brochure? Which words from the letter tell you this?

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.....

- What is their opinion of their holiday now? Which words from the letter tell you this?

.....
.....

Dear Sir,

It was with eager anticipation that my wife and I set off on our weekend break to Florence with your holiday company. We were looking forward to visiting the fine treasures and splendid churches of this beautiful, cultural city. But because this was a **weekend** break, we found much of the culture closed to us especially as the churches tend to be used for services several times during the weekend.

When they were open for visitors, the crowds were so great, with everyone trying to take in the amazing paintings and famous statues while they could, that we had to wait in long queues and could not get near enough to see the works of art in any detail. Nor were we told until we got to Florence that the weekend we chose was a public holiday, hence there were many more crowds than usual, but less public transport, limited shopping hours and some public services not functioning at all.

Our hotel was certainly only 10 minutes from the heart of Florence, if you took a taxi or rode a bicycle. As the former were very unreliable and expensive and the latter was not an option for us, we had to use public transport or walk. Either way, the journey into the centre of Florence took nearer 45 minutes rather than the 10 we had been led to believe it took.

I would like to suggest that you review the details of the holiday and perhaps give more accurate and up to date information, maybe even suggesting that future holidaymakers start their weekend break on a Tuesday so that they are safely back home in time for the weekend.

Yours faithfully,

E. J. Brown

Exercise 9

In the space below, summarise the text of the holidaymaker's letter so that you can retell the main details to a partner. Remember – one idea from each paragraph should be enough to use as a summary.

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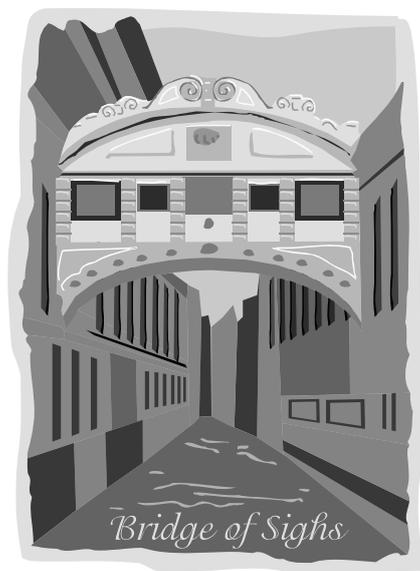
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Information**Identifying the Main Points**

In this scientific article from a news website, as well as the main title, each paragraph has been given a subheading. This writing strategy helps a reader to decide whether a particular paragraph can be just skimmed or whether it demands more careful reading.

Exercise 10

Skim read the article quickly, *highlighting the main points* of each paragraph as you read. This may be just a phrase or a whole sentence. The subheadings should help you.

SOLAR FLARES**Confirmed as biggest**

Solar scientists have confirmed that last Tuesday's explosion on the sun was by far the biggest flare ever recorded. Powerful flares are given an "X" designation; last week's weighed in at X28, the previous biggest being X20. The blast sent billions of tonnes of super hot gas into space, some of it being directed towards Earth.

Build-up

Astronomers had been watching the build-up to this huge explosion as several smaller explosions had taken place during the preceding fortnight, particularly in the two days immediately before Tuesday's flare. They had also been on the look out for spectacular aurorae in the night skies. These dancing polar lights are generated when fast moving particles from the sun are trapped in the magnetic field around the Earth.

Huge energy

Space weather forecasters have also been on the alert during this past fortnight as they tracked the impact of geomagnetic storms on Earth. As a result of the magnetic force from these storms, aircraft crossing the North Atlantic Ocean have been flying along a narrow corridor to minimise radiation exposure; astronauts on board the International Space Station confined their activities to its most protected section while they passed through high magnetic latitudes and two Japanese satellites were affected so badly they stopped working. A cloud of charged particles also hit the Mars Express but astrophysicists were not concerned as they say it was designed to withstand such eventualities.

Scientists are warning that this spurt of dramatic solar activity may not yet be over, although the sunspots have now moved so that Earth is no longer in the firing line.

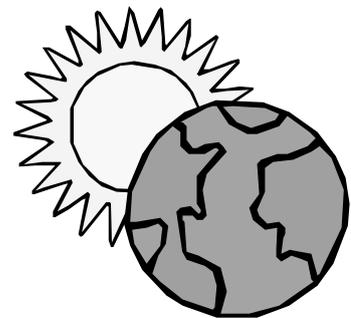
Simulated flare

In order to more fully understand the secrets of solar flares, scientists have simulated one in laboratories near Oxford. They have recreated the super-heated cloud of gas seen on the sun, known as a plasma, which behaved like a mini solar flare. They hope that this will enable them to study the explosive events that are taking place on the sun's surface.

Now read the text again, but this time more carefully, and *highlight the important details* in the text. *Important details* include information that is necessary to understand the news item, but not those that only add bulk to the text.

Choose the *three* most important points from the article, note them down in the space below and, from your notes only, explain to a partner what the story is about. *Remember* – important points are the ones around which the whole story hangs. These *may* be the paragraph headings, but not necessarily.

- 1)
-
- 2)
-
- 3)
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Exercise 11

While reading in detail the following newspaper article about drug use in sport, *highlight* the main point of each paragraph. When you have finished reading, write a subheading for each paragraph on the dotted lines above it, like the examples in the article about Solar Flares.

DESIGNER DRUG DETECTED

American athletics chiefs have confirmed that several US athletes have tested positive for a new anabolic steroid, tetrahydrogestrinone (THG). The US Anti-Doping Agency (USADA) would not name the athletes but some were believed to be international stars. Some of the positive samples came from tests done at the US Championships in June.

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The International Olympic Committee (IOC) thinks that the use of THG is probably not widespread, as it is a very sophisticated drug created by chemists. However, it appears that athletes from sports other than athletics have also tested positive, including stars from American baseball, boxing and American football players. They all seem to have been customers of a particular laboratory that supplies nutritional supplements.

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A spokesman from USADA was pleased that this "intentional doping" had been discovered. He thought that the athletes who had taken THG believed that they would not be found out as the drug was undetectable by doping experts until very recently. Although the effects of the drug could last for months, the detection of the steroid in the body would only last for three to seven days.

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In October 2003, British athlete, Dwain Chambers, tested positive for the banned steroid THG in a drugs check. Chambers received a two year athletics ban and a lifetime Olympic ban. He also had all of his racing accomplishments since 2002 annulled, wiping away his European sprinting record.

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Exercise 12

This next text is a medical report from an A&E department of a local hospital. It contains information about an elderly patient who was taken ill and admitted to hospital by ambulance.

Imagine that this patient is your elderly relative. You have an appointment with their G.P. to discuss their state of health and future care plan.

Read the discharge letter carefully and *highlight* any information that you do not completely understand, or anything that you would like the G.P. to explain. *Make a note* of any questions that you would like to ask the G.P.

Patient Details			
Name	Brown Samuel	D.O.B Age	13.04.1920 88
Arrived A & E	19.35	Date	11. 1. 2009
Time seen	19.45	Casualty Officer	M. G. Rogers
Referred by	Carer	Arrived by	999
B.P.	130/60	Temp.	35.3
Time taken	19.50		
Medication	Co-danthramer	Lactulose	Thiazide

Discharge Letter

Patient attended as usual at 18.45 by carer. Patient complained of feeling unwell, dizzy and cold although house warm. On rising from chair to visit toilet, was in danger of collapse. Carer lowered patient to ground and covered with blanket. Contacted 999, ambulance attended at 19.10. Because of age and body temperature, paramedic immediately referred to A&E. Carer said patient probably had had no food since breakfast as meal still in oven from lunchtime (meals on wheels) and tea prepared by morning carer still in fridge. Evening medication not given.

On arrival, patient drowsy, cold, speech slurred. Patient denies having taken any drugs apart from prescribed medication. Pulse erratic. Ankles and legs swollen. Possible hypothermia?

Bloods taken - 20.15 - awaiting results.

Normal checks - 30 min. intervals.

Admitted overnight to coronary care unit for further observations.

Contacted next of kin.

Information**Fact or Opinion**

When reading either for pleasure or for work, it is important that you can 'read between the lines'. By this, we mean that you need to read or listen carefully to a statement and before accepting it as the truth you decide whether it is an **opinion** or a **fact**.

'This wine is too dry.'

This is an **opinion** based on the drinker's preference for a sweeter wine. It is not a fact. Written as a **fact**, the statement should be:

'This is a dry wine.'

Opinions come from individuals and may not always be based on facts (or all the facts). A fact is based on what is accepted as the truth because it can be proved.

Example

'In 2008, this company had two hundred and twenty two employees.'

This can be proved through employment records – thus it is a fact.

Information**Bias**

Take a statement such as:

'All schools should reduce other sporting activities and offer extra football coaching, because all young boys like football.'

If a football coach made the above statement we might consider that the statement was biased (prejudiced in favour of football). We appreciate, without being told, that the statement is not a fact and that the person saying it is so passionate about the game that s/he is prone to make biased statements in favour of football.

Information**Inference**

Take a statement such as:

'I've got two sons. I looked after my sister's little girl yesterday. Little girls are such hard work!'

Are they? Is this a statement of fact? You could say this is true because most people say that looking after young children is hard work. However, the statement says 'Little girls are such hard work!' This infers that little girls are harder work than boys. It is not said, it is inferred because the emphasis is on little girls being hard work (not little children).

Reading and understanding, therefore, means more than taking everything we read at face value. We need to consider:

- the writer - is s/he biased/prejudiced?
- the message - is there some hidden meaning which is inferred but not stated?
- the statement - is it a fact or an opinion?

When we start to 'read between the lines' our response to what we have read can change.

Exercise 13

Read this extract from a letter, sent to a local paper, in opposition to the building of a new hypermarket.

'...The plans show that the hypermarket will come to the bottom of our garden. Soon, we will be over-run by shoppers' children getting through the fence. It has always been a pleasant area and we object strongly to this new building. We would like to hear from anyone else who objects to this plan so that we can form a group to oppose it. ...'

- 1) Highlight the sentence based on opinion.
- 2) Highlight the sentence which infers that the area will not be pleasant after the building of the hypermarket.
- 3) Highlight the sentence based on fact.
- 4) Is the letter writer biased?
- 5) Write a summary of the letter including all its points but making sure that you make it clear which are facts and which are opinions.

6) Give 5 examples of factual statements (on any topic).

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7) Give 5 examples of biased statements (on any topic).

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8) Give 5 examples of statements of opinion (on any topic).

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9) Give 5 examples of how something can be inferred without it actually being said.

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Information**Fact v Opinion**

News articles, whether in newspapers, journals or on the Internet are often a mixture of **verifiable fact** and **opinion**. Sometimes it is necessary to separate the fact from the opinion in order to establish your own personal views about a subject. Much of this article about T.B. and badgers is verifiable fact, in other words the facts have been proved and cannot be argued with. However, there are also sections of the article that express opinions. While reading it, **highlight** the areas of text that are **stating facts in one colour**, and the areas of text that **express opinions in another colour**. You may find that there is more than one opinion expressed in this article in which case you may wish to use a **third colour to identify the two different opinions**. The sub-headings above each paragraph may help you.

BADGERS AND TUBERCULOSIS**What is T.B?**

Tuberculosis is a very serious disease affecting both humans and animals. It is caused by various species of bacteria called "Mycobacteria".

History of T.B.

During the 1930s, dairy cows were often kept in crowded, poorly ventilated cowsheds near large cities to enable their populations to have fresh milk. Many cows developed infections, which spread quickly because of the confined conditions. As milk was then often drunk untreated, T.B. spread easily to humans, with over 50 000 new human cases being recorded each year during this time.

Resulting Government Action

- The government of the day began testing cattle and slaughtering any that tested positive.
- Cattle were not allowed to be moved from farms infected with T.B. to avoid spreading the disease.
- Since the 1930s, most milk has been pasteurised to reduce the risk of T.B. to humans.

Connection With Badgers

For farmers who have cattle with T.B., the disease can be devastating with animals having to be slaughtered. One of the main areas of concern amongst people who live in the country has been the possible connection between bovine T.B. and badgers who have been blamed for the spread of the disease.

History Of Badger Controls

In 1971, a dead badger infected with T.B. was discovered on a farm that had suffered bovine T.B. giving credence to the theory that badgers are a cause of T.B. in cattle.

The Badger Act of 1973 protected badgers from being persecuted while at the same time allowing licences to be issued permitting individuals to kill badgers to prevent the spread of T.B.

The 1975 Conservation of Wild Creatures and Wild Plants Act ordered that only staff under the control of the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (MAFF) would be allowed to cull badgers, by means of gassing.

In a review by Lord Zuckerman in 1980, it was concluded that badgers were probably a significant source of T.B. contrary to the views of many nature lovers. Gassing was believed to be an inhumane way of culling so cage trapping, followed by shooting, was introduced.

The Protection of Badgers Act 1992 made it an offence to:

- kill, injure or take a badger;
- cruelly ill-treat a badger;
- interfere with a badger sett.

Licences for badger culling could still be applied for and would be issued to individuals by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) after satisfying certain conditions.

DEFRA Study

For the past five years, DEFRA have been studying the possibility of a connection between bovine T.B. and badgers and the effect on the occurrence of T.B. if badgers are culled. The trial was split into three parts, with differing amounts of interference with the badger population involved:

- localised culling of badgers where there has been an incidence of T.B. in cattle;
- more widespread culling regardless of outbreaks of the disease;
- areas where no badger culling takes place.

Badger Cull in Cornwall 2002

In an example of the second part of the DEFRA trial where more widespread culling took place, almost 700 badgers had been culled in an area of Cornwall by October 2002. The West Cornwall Badger Group (WCBG) claimed that the whole exercise was a total waste of money with the cost of policing the cull standing at tens of thousands of pounds. The group questioned how the effect on the incidence of bovine T.B. could be measured when cattle were still being moved in an area where all badgers had been culled. If, after badger culling had taken place, cattle were not moved then, the WCBG suggested, the cause of bovine T.B. could perhaps be made more conclusive; whether badgers are to blame for spreading the disease or whether it is transmitted from cattle to cattle. Until definite scientific proof has shown which of these possibilities is correct, many farmers will continue to ask for badgers to be culled and many badger supporters will believe that badgers are blameless.

Exercise 14

Now that you have highlighted the relevant sections of text in their varying colours, look through the article again.

- Are there any words or phrases that occur in those parts of the text that concentrate on fact, but not so much in the rest of the article?

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- Is this language more positive in its mood? Why?

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- Are there any words or phrases that are used in those parts of the text that concentrates on opinion but not so much in the “fact” sections?

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- How would you describe this language?

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- What are your opinions on badger culling? Do you think there is sufficient evidence from the article to show that badgers are a cause of the spread of T.B? Do you think that those farmers who promote this belief have a right to kill badgers they find on their land? Or do you think that badgers should be left alone to roam the countryside freely?

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- Discuss your ideas with a partner or in a small group. Write down your collective thoughts in the space below. You may wish to visit one of the news web-sites or web-sites connected to DEFRA, the BBC's programme "Countryfile" or one of the official wildlife groups to find the latest information about this topic.

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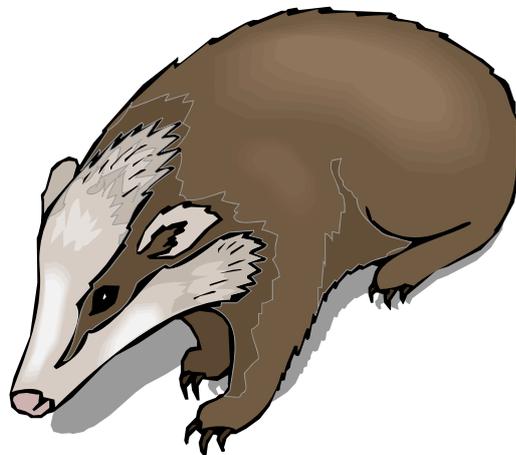
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Information**Fact and Opinion**

Frequently in written news items and newspaper articles, the **facts** of the issue under discussion are interwoven with **opinions** from either the writer or people who are in some way involved with the issue.

In December 2003, government legislation was passed to prevent drivers from using hand held mobile phones while at the wheel. The next extract is about this issue. In it there are both facts and various people's opinions. However, all the opinions express the same viewpoint.

Exercise 15

While reading the article, try to separate the facts from the opinions and in the margin write "F" where you consider you are being told facts and "O" where you consider an opinion is being expressed.

Drivers Prevented From Using Mobiles

Government legislation has meant that motorists should no longer be making or receiving phone calls or text messages from hand held mobile phones while they are driving. Research has shown that drivers are four times more likely to have an accident if they drive while using a mobile phone.

Before this legislation came into force, motorists holding a mobile phone could only be stopped by the police if they were driving "without due care and attention". Now they can be stopped no matter how careful they are being. At the present time, motorists who are caught using a hand held mobile phone will receive a fine of £60 and three penalty points on their licence.

People who have been victims of accidents caused by drivers talking on their mobile phones are asking for further penalties to be handed out, such as higher fines and having phones confiscated. They would also like to see vehicle manufacturers being asked to construct vehicles with devices that would not allow a driver to use any mobile phone while the car engine was switched on.

The present legislation does not as yet include hands free sets although Road Safety experts would like this to change as they feel that driving while using any mobile is dangerous, risking road users' lives. They feel that drivers are distracted by the conversation they are holding and are therefore not concentrating 100% on their driving. Even with hands free mobiles, there is no point on having two hands connected to the steering wheel if the brain is not connected to the hands.

To endorse their view, the Lord Chief Justice, as early as April 2003, suggested that a driver convicted of death by dangerous driving while using a mobile phone should face a longer jail sentence than the average. That sentence now stands at anything from 12-18 months to a maximum of 10 years, but should perhaps be increased to a minimum of 6 years.

Information**Comparing Information from Different Sources**

The selection and presentation of material is rarely completely objective and information on the same subject can often appear to be different depending on the standpoint of the writer. Sometimes it is what is left out that may give the effect of bias rather than what is actually written.

Examples

The loss of jobs at a local factory was reported in these two very different ways in two local papers:

- 1) "The downsizing of Acme Supplies resulted in the loss of only 100 jobs."
- 2) "Disaster to local economy. 100 jobless following draconian cuts at Acme Supplies."

Exercise 16

Read the following articles, both about the same subject. They both claim to be giving factual information but you may feel that one of the articles is more objective in its presentation than the other.

Discuss the points which seem to be contradicting information from the other article.

Police Speed Cameras on the Increase

It has been reported by West Blottinghamshire police that the number of people fined for speeding on the county's highways this quarter has increased by an all time high of 25%. This will have increased police funds by a staggering £60,000 all at the expense of the already exploited motoring public. Chief Constable Mackle refused to comment when asked about the boost to police funds that will have been generated by this increase in convictions. Much of this increase is due to the extra numbers of speeding cameras that have been added to the county's roads over the last few months rather than any increased efficiency in the county's police force.

Increase in Safety Measures on our Roads

West Blottinghamshire's roads are some of the safest in the country according to a statement made by the county's police chief this week after a 25% increase in speeding convictions throughout the county was announced.

Chief Constable Mackle was delighted with the increase in convictions saying that he was proud of the extra vigilance his officers had obviously been making. "The message we are trying to put across to the public is that speed kills! If it means that we have to increase the number of speeding convictions by 25% to save just one life it will have been worth it," he commented to the local paper this week. When questioned about the increase the speeding fines would make to the local police funds he declined to comment.

Discuss whether you feel you could come to a conclusion about why the extra speeding cameras had been installed on the roads of West Blottinghamshire.

Highlight all the *facts* in each article in the same colour. Use a different colour to highlight the *opinions* in each article. What do you notice?

What relevant information was missed out of one article that was in the other? How did this affect the tone of that article?

What effect did the different titles have on your overall understanding of the article?

Information**Using Organisational Features and Systems
to Locate Texts and Information**

It is important to know how to locate information. Different types of texts can be accessed in different ways.

Example

If you wanted to find out more about the place you were going to on holiday you could look in the Travel and Geography section of a library and/or on the Internet.

Exercise 17

Make a list of the different types of information sources, e.g. books.

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In a group, discuss where information is found in a library. Discuss and note the methods used to access this information.

Visit the library as a group and practise using the systems to locate specific texts and web sites about a topic of interest to you and the group, e.g. holiday destinations, contemporary music, sport, information for your specific vocational area.

Information**Choosing the Correct Source**

Once you have selected a book which you think will give you the information you require you can then use different texts within the book to locate the required information.

The contents, index and bibliography help you to refine your research.

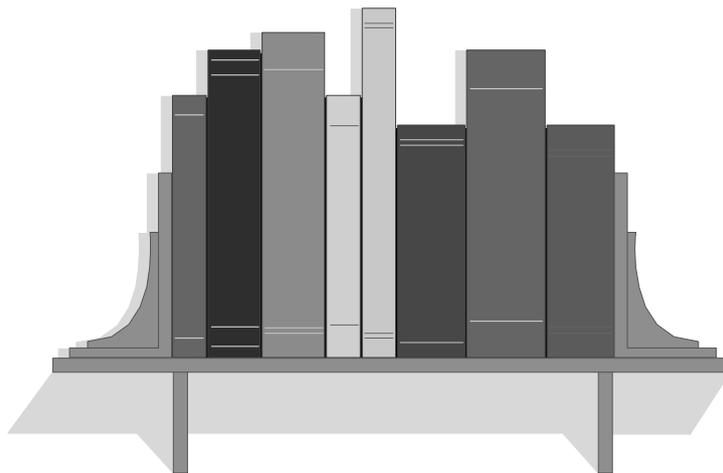
For Example

Suppose you need to find information about how to fit a new chain to your bike. Having found a book titled 'The Bike Book', you need to find out whether it contains the relevant information.

- 1) Have a quick glance through the book. Does it seem the right type?
- 2) Look at the contents page to see whether there is a chapter about repairing bikes.
- 3) Nothing there? So next look at the Index.
- 4) Still no success? Look to see whether there is a bibliography that suggests where there is additional information.
- 5) Try a different book.

Exercise 18

Using the method above look for information about a topic that interests you. The topic could be one which would help you with your studies or for your own pleasure.



Information**Locating Whole Texts**

Whole texts need to be organised in different ways, for different purposes so that their contents are readily available for whoever requires them.

For Example

In a library the fiction section books are usually in alphabetical order of the author's surname or may be grouped according to their genre.

Exercise 19

As a group, discuss how the following are organised:

- documents on a computer;
- reference books in a library;
- files in an office;
- records at a doctors' surgery;
- findings on a website search;
- books in a book shop.

Can you think of other places where whole texts are organised?

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Information

Using Contents Pages

To be able to research a topic, we need to know where to look to find relevant information. Books, websites, magazines are all useful sources of information. Selecting the right source for information is important and we need to adapt the method discussed on Page 26 for other information sources.

For Example

You are going away for the weekend and you want to find out what the weather is going to be. The information about this can be found in several places all of which have to be accessed by looking at the contents.

- In a newspaper we look at the contents on the first page.
- On teletext we first look at the contents page from which we select the appropriate page.
- On the BBC website on the Home Page there is a directory where you would click on the “w.” This brings up a contents page of words starting with “w.” The heading weather has several topics including one about the UK weather.

Exercise 20

As a group, find a controversial topic of communal interest, e.g. global warming, vegetarianism, drug testing in sport.

Research the topic individually using any of the information sources you feel are appropriate. Use the method used on Page 28 to structure your research. Discuss what you have found out.



Information**Choosing a Book for Pleasure**

The vast number of books available in bookshops, on line bookshops and libraries means that we need a method of choosing a book we can read for pleasure. Libraries and bookshops are organised into fiction, reference and non-fiction.

- Fiction books are usually catalogued in alphabetical order although they are sometimes grouped according to their genre, e.g. detective, adventure, romance.
- Non-fiction are organised in sections about topics e.g. geography and these are subdivided into subsections e.g. Africa.

When looking for a book you need to:

- decide what type of book is required and go to that section, use the catalogue to help you;
- look for a title or cover that interests you;
- read the back, this is often about the book or has extracts of reviews;
- if it has a cover there is sometimes a 'blurb' on the inside telling you about the book;
- read the first few pages.

Example

George likes reading fiction, especially detective novels. He wanted to buy a new book to take away on holiday. He had already read the ones by his favourite author and wanted to choose one by another. He felt that a shop was better than an on-line bookshop as he was able to look at the books. On entering the bookshop, he went to the fiction section and found that most of the books were placed in alphabetical order but there were three other sections organised into genre; romance, adventure and detective. This helped him as he now knew where to look, in the detective section. He glanced along the lines of books and saw a title that interested him. There were several extracts of reviews on the back which made him feel that it was his sort of book. He read the first few pages and decided that was the book for him.

Exercise 21

Robert is interested in rock music and wants to find out more about it. Discuss with another learner how he can select a book the he will enjoy reading about the subject.

Now using this method choose a book from the library to read for your pleasure.

Information**Different Reading Strategies**

There are several different reading strategies we use when locating information.

- ❑ Skimming to get a general impression of whether the piece is relevant.
- ❑ Scanning to find where the information is located.
- ❑ Reading in detail to find the correct information.

Using the correct one for a task is important in terms of time and efficiency.

For Example

If we were trying to locate a particular service in, say, Yellow Pages. We use **skimming** to find the position of a group of advertisement by looking for the titles of the sections but **scanning** to find a specific advertisement within that section.

Exercise 22

As a group, discuss which reading strategy you would use to find the following information. You may use more than one.

- 1) Locating a relevant website from a list produced by a search engine.
- 2) Seeing whether a book is relevant to your research.
- 3) Finding a phone number in a telephone directory.
- 4) Reading an article to use the information at a later date.
- 5) Looking through a newspaper to find a specific article.
- 6) Finding a builder in Yellow Pages.

Exercise 23

A friend is moving and has asked you to help him find a flat or a room in a shared house in the area. He wants a list of properties to visit at the weekend.

You have decided to search the Internet for any suitable accommodation.

In pairs discuss the stages of the search and which reading strategies you would use at each stage.

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Information**Skimming, Scanning and Detailed Reading**

There are several different reading strategies when looking for information for a project.

- Skimming to get a general impression of whether the piece is relevant: looking for key words is a good way of doing this.
- Scanning to locate where the information is located.
- Reading in detail to find the correct information.

Exercise 24

You have been asked to find out about hypothermia.

The extracts below are from a First Aid Manual.

Skim the following extracts to find which ones are relevant.

Scan to find the main points.

Read in detail and make notes about the main points.

Compare your notes with another learner. Have you found the same main points?

A Recognition

As hypothermia develops there may be:

- shivering and cold, pale, dry skin;
- apathy, disorientation, or irrational behaviour; occasionally belligerence;
- lethargy or failing consciousness;
- slow, shallow breathing;
- a slow and weakening pulse;
- in extreme cases, heart failure.

B Nose Bleeds

These most commonly occur when blood vessels inside the nostrils are ruptured, either by a blow to the nose, or as a result of sneezing, picking, or blowing the nose. Infection, such as a cold or 'flu, make the blood vessels in the nose more fragile; nose bleeds may also occur as the result of high blood pressure. Nose bleeds are usually merely unpleasant, but they can be dangerous if the casualty loses a lot of blood.

C Dislocations

This is partial or full displacement of bones at a joint. There may be an associated fracture, tearing of the ligaments or damage to the membrane that encases the joint. Dislocation can be caused by a strong force wrenching the bone into an abnormal position, or by violent muscle contraction. This very painful injury most often occurs to the shoulder, thumb, finger or jaw.

D Treatment of Hypothermia

Your aims are:

- to prevent the casualty from losing more body heat;
- to rewarm the casualty;
- to obtain medical aid.

E How Hypothermia is Caused

Hypothermia may develop over several days in poorly heated houses. Infants, homeless people, elderly people, and the thin and frail are particularly vulnerable. Lack of agility, chronic illness, and fatigue all increase the risk; alcohol and drugs can exacerbate the condition. Hypothermia can also be caused by prolonged exposure to cold outdoors, especially in wet and windy conditions. Moving air has a much greater cooling effect than still air: a high wind chill factor can, therefore, substantially increase the risk of a person developing hypothermia.

G Heat Stroke

A failure of the thermostat in the brain causes this condition. The body becomes dangerously overheated due to high fever or prolonged exposure to heat. In some cases, it follows heat exhaustion when sweating ceases, and the body cannot be cooled by evaporation. Heat stroke can occur suddenly, causing unconsciousness within minutes. This may be signalled by the casualty feeling uneasy and ill.

Recognition

There may be:

- Headache, dizziness and discomfort;
- restlessness and confusion;
- hot, flushed and dry skin;
- a rapid deterioration in the level of response;
- a full bounding pulse;
- body temperature above 40 °C.

F Hypothermia

This condition develops when the body temperature falls below 35 °C. The effects vary with the speed of onset, and the level to which the temperature falls. Moderate hypothermia can usually be completely reversed. However, deep hypothermia (core temperature below 26 °C) is often, though not always, fatal.

H Indoor Treatment for Hypothermia

- 1) For a casualty brought in from the outside, quickly replace any wet clothing with dry warm garments.
- 2) The casualty can be warmed by bathing if she/he is young and fit and able to climb into the bath unaided. The water should be warm (40 °C/104 °C). Do not allow an elderly person to have a bath as this can affect their heart.
- 3) Put the casualty in a bed and ensure that she/he is well covered. Give her/him warm drinks, soup, or high energy food such as chocolate.
- 4) It is important that you call a doctor if you have any doubts about the casualty's condition, or if the casualty is elderly or an infant.

I If the Casualty Suffering from Hypothermia is Outside:

- 1) Insulate the casualty with extra clothing or blankets, and cover his/her head.
- 2) Take or carry the casualty to a sheltered place as quickly as possible.
- 3) Protect the casualty from the ground and the elements. Put him in a dry sleeping bag, cover him with blankets or newspapers, or enclose him in a plastic or foil survival bag.
- 4) Send for help; in an ideal situation, two people should go. However, it is important that you do not leave the casualty alone; someone must remain with him/her at all times.
- 5) Give a conscious casualty warm drinks, if available.
- 6) When help arrives, evacuate the casualty to hospital by stretcher.

Information Using Different Reading Strategies to Find and Obtain Information

As already discussed on previous worksheets there are several different strategies for locating information:

- Skimming to get a general impression of whether the piece is relevant;
- Scanning to find where the information is located;
- Reading in detail to find the correct information.

Using the correct one for a task is important in terms of time and efficiency.

Example

Here is a plan for an information search:

- 1) Use a catalogue/search engine to locate relevant titles.
- 2) Skim several titles for general impressions and choose three that look relevant.
- 3) Scan these to locate any useful sections; mark with stickies or bookmark the screen.
- 4) Starting with the section that seems most useful, read carefully and critically in close detail.
- 5) While reading, write brief notes of the most important points and record the source: title, chapter or section, website, page number etc.
- 6) When deciding that a whole page is relevant after reading it photocopy it or paste it into a word processing file, to read again later.
- 7) Highlight key words and phrases from notes/photocopied page/word file and sort the main points under relevant headings for later use.

Exercise 25

In pairs or groups, identify a real task for which information is needed.

This may be a topic related to your studies or research for an expensive purchase.

Plan an information search, in stages, deciding which strategies are likely to be most efficient at each stage.

Work through the stages.

Discuss your research topics with other learners.

Information**Researching Information**

When researching a topic it is important to be able to make notes on the key points for future reference.

For Example

When researching the place where you are planning to go on holiday, you will need to make notes on:

- the cost of accommodation;
- places around and about to visit;
- good places to eat etc.

Exercise 26

In pairs, decide on an expensive purchase you would like to research.

It could be a proposed holiday, a camera, a CD player or motorbike, in fact anything you want.

Research and make detailed notes of any information you feel is important to making a decision about a purchase.

Report back to your other learners.

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Information**Summaries**

It is often useful to be able to produce a summary of a document or article in note form. This is easier to read, to understand and to absorb than continuous text.

From time to time, when looking for information, you will find it necessary to read extracts from a variety of books, leaflets etc. and summarise the key facts **in your own words**.

Summaries should:

- ❖ be brief – they are not essays but neither are they rough notes;
- ❖ be structured using complete sentences, correct grammar, correct punctuation and appropriate paragraphs;
- ❖ contain all important points;
- ❖ be organised so that all related points are brought together;
- ❖ be in your own words.

A summary is NOT a collection of directly copied paragraphs or pages from selected books.



Information**The Techniques of Doing a Summary**

There are a number of techniques you can learn and use when summarising pieces of text. Here, we will look at how these techniques are used through two practical examples of summarising short passages.

Techniques

- 1) Break up the sentence into short chunks.
- 2) Summarise (or précis) each part.
- 3) Improve the English used and summarise the whole passage or paragraph by cutting out unnecessary information and by paraphrasing separate ideas.

Note – Direct speech is always turned into indirect or reported speech in a summary.

Example 1

I walked into the workshop and saw, lying on the bench in front of me, a large quantity of drills, saws, hammers, nails indeed, all the accoutrements of the carpenter's trade.

(31 words)

- 1) (I walked into) (the workshop) (and saw,) (lying on the bench in front of me,) (a large quantity of) (drills, saws, hammers, nails) (indeed, all the accoutrements of) (the carpenters' trade.)
 - 2) I entered the workshop and saw, on the bench before me, many tools, everything used by carpenters.
- (17 words)
- 3) (I entered the workshop and saw,) (on the bench before me,) (many tools, everything used by carpenters.)

a. Entering the workshop, I saw many carpentry tools on the bench.

(11 words)

Example 2

“Good morning sir,” the young secretary said to her boss, the company’s Managing Director. “Here are the files and statistics you asked for last night about the firm which is merging with the combine.”

(34 words)

1) (“Good morning sir,”) (the young secretary said to her boss, the company’s Managing Director.) (“Here are the files and statistics) (you asked for last night) (about the firm which is merging with the combine.”)

2) “Good morning sir,” the secretary wished the Managing Director. “Here is the information you requested concerning the merger.”

(18 words)

3a) The secretary wished the Managing Director a good morning and gave him the information he had requested concerning the merger.

(20 words)

3b) The secretary greeted the Managing Director and submitted the requested information concerning the merger.

(14 words)

Note – In example 2, the four main elements of the passage were identified and have been included in each version of the passage.

- a) The secretary
- b) The Managing Director
- c) The requested information
- d) The merger

How to begin a summary

- 1) Select your text.
- 2) Read the text at least twice. Check any words or information you do not understand by using a dictionary or asking a tutor.
- 3) Decide on a title or a theme for the text.
- 4) Take each paragraph, give a theme to each paragraph and list the main points being made. Every point you make must relate to the theme of its paragraph and of the whole text.

Caution: Do not include facts or descriptions which will take you away from the main point. Consider, “If I leave this out will it alter the message?”

- 5) If several paragraphs seem to have similar themes, you can start to structure your summary by putting these sets of notes together.
- 6) If your summary has to be in continuous prose, you should now be able to write it from the list of main points and structure it from the themes you have already identified.
- 7) Write the summary by collecting the related points together and forming these into complete sentences/paragraphs. (See examples on Pages 37 and 38.)

Note: It is acceptable to change the order of the points in the original text providing this does not alter the meaning. The order of the points has been changed in the example given.

- 8) When summarising long pieces of text, it is often a good idea to use headings under which all relevant points regarding the topic can be grouped.
- 9) If the text you are analysing contains an image which is needed to convey information, do not be afraid to include this in your summary.

Exercise 27

- 1) Read the text on the next page.
- 2) Identify the main theme of each paragraph.
- 3) Take each paragraph and list the main points. There may be more than one main point in each paragraph.
- 4) Decide on the order in which the themes you have identified should be written.
- 5) Link the points together, using headings if you think it is appropriate to do so.
- 6) Write a first draft of your summary, ensuring that you take care with punctuation, grammar and spelling.
- 7) Read your summary and check that you have included all the points you originally identified and that these are in a sensible order.
- 8) Re-write your summary if necessary.

ExtraValue Foods is a fast growing company with approximately 100 supermarkets nationwide. It is now planning to develop a number of hypermarkets: these are very large stores on one level selling food and non-food under one roof. All sales are made on a self-service basis. Recently, the company has applied for planning permission to build an ultra-modern hypermarket on the edge of an attractive little village which is four miles from the town of Hometown.

The plans are for a store of 85,000 square feet plus 37,000 square feet of warehousing and office space. There will also be a large car park and petrol station. The proposed store is described by ExtraValue Foods as 'a paradise for shoppers' and the company believes that it will revolutionise shopping in the area.

The village concerned is in an area of natural beauty and, because of its history, it is a popular tourist attraction. It has many beautiful old buildings of architectural interest, including public houses, antique shops, an old manor and a working water mill.

Hometown, by contrast, is a small town with a population of 31,000. It has suffered over the past few years from the closure of much of its heavy industry. It has an open-air market and small shopping precinct and these shopping facilities provide for the community's basic needs. Before the area's economy began to decline, Hometown also provided for the needs of the surrounding towns and villages. Recently, however, many of the shops have closed and people wishing to purchase goods, other than basic items, have had to travel to the nearest city which is twenty miles away.

Residents of the village have mixed feelings about the proposed hypermarket. Objections to the scheme have come from all sectors of the community. There is concern that delivery lorries will pass through the village causing damage to the roads and extra air pollution. There is also a group of people very concerned about the danger to pedestrians and cyclists who have not previously been exposed to a large volume of traffic. Even the subject of litter has been raised along with fear that the whole atmosphere of the historic little village will be destroyed by the building of a hypermarket on its boundary.

Objections are also being raised in Hometown, particularly from shop owners. They fear that the hypermarket would affect their trade and that even more shops would close. Residents too, are expressing their doubts about the scheme. An action group is being formed to represent the interests of the elderly, people who rely on public transport and others who have strong objections.

Those in favour of the proposed scheme state that the store will provide hundreds of new jobs and will bring money back into Hometown and a new prosperity to the village. It is anticipated that jobs will be created for full and part time workers of both sexes and ages. Despite ExtraValue Foods' intention to bring senior management from other branches, for the initial two years of the operation, the company is giving assurances that, wherever possible, local people will be employed and trained. Other arguers for the scheme consider that the area needs to be modernised and that shoppers should be given the opportunity to enjoy the seven day a week service to be offered by the new hypermarket.