

INUTILE DE PHOTOCOPIER LE TEXTE FOURNI
(voir ci-dessous)

Précis Writing – Déroulement de l'épreuve

Consignes adressées à mon remplaçant éventuel.

Il s'agit d'une épreuve de *précis writing*, qui doit se dérouler comme suit :

Le texte est lu trois fois par l'examineur, à une vitesse normale de lecture.


Lors de la première lecture, les candidats écoutent le texte et ne doivent prendre aucune note (stylos posés sur les tables).

Lors des deux lectures suivantes, les candidats prennent des notes.

Leur travail consiste ensuite à résumer le texte entendu.

N.B. : Tout candidat arrivé en retard ne peut plus être autorisé à composer, afin de ne pas déranger les autres par trois nouvelles lectures.

Le responsable de l'épreuve



M. DARRIBHAUDE

N.B.: les passages entre crochets
n'ont pas à être lus.

A changing working class culture

Before the war. I lived on a council housing estate on the outskirts of Manchester. Over the years I have continued to visit the estate and kept in touch with some of our former friends and neighbours. Comparing then and now I see that three of the very strongest strands in the old pattern have disappeared.

First, and most obviously, the pivot on which our life revolved was a totally inadequate pay packet. When my father put it down on the kitchen table on a Friday evening every halfpenny of it disappeared at once into a collection of vases, and tins labelled "rent", "gas", "coal", and so on. There was nothing left to put into an assortment of other tins labelled "clothes", "birthdays", "holidays", "rainy days". How to get something into those tins obsessed both my parents and their neighbours for the rest of the week ~~[sermiping and plotting most of the day and often into the night]~~ There are poor families on that estate still, but few dominated by poverty to that degree.

The second less considered strand was almost as old as poverty, and as daunting — fear of conception. Another mouth to feed inside the family would tip the whole balance from "just about possible" to "totally impossible". An unwanted baby outside the family could be as bad or worse. Apart from the shame of it, it meant that a young breadwinner would be lost, would be launched, hamstrung into a life as narrow as his parents. The effect of efficient contraception has been felt throughout society, but nowhere more deeply than among the working classes ~~[for whom enforced chastity was a particularly heavy burden on top of all their others. Solid marriages broke down under it.]~~

The power of religion is the third vanished strand. Not everyone was regularly observant then, but most of us children went to church or Sunday school, and most of our parents believed in Christianity to some extent. The middle classes preached religion, the working classes tried to practise it. If they departed from its precepts they were conscious of the fact. Its standards of right and wrong, its rewards and punishments seemed credible.

Freed from these three fears — of the workhouse, of unwanted children, of divine retribution — the working class has not surprisingly gone on a hedonistic binge, determined whenever and wherever possible to exploit its new freedom to the full. It has become self-centred, inward looking, and has little interest in externals, unless they threaten it obviously and immediately.

~~[In broad political terms this has led to a decline in its support for the Labour Party in its constituency work. The number of working class members has dropped inside the overall fall in constituency Labour Party membership. Without this some of the attempted takeovers by Trotskyists might have been avoided. The far left tends on the whole to be middle rather than working class.]~~

What Ernest Bevin called the poverty of working class aspirations still prevails over wide areas. [...]

In its present mood the working class is not yet ready to advance beyond traditional ways of gaining satisfactions and mostly short-term satisfactions at that. It is self-confident as never before, but on the whole unambitious and unenterprising.

Guardian Weekly, July 29, 1979.