

# X270/10/01

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NATIONAL  
QUALIFICATIONS  
2015

THURSDAY, 14 MAY  
1.00 PM – 2.00 PM

ENGLISH  
INTERMEDIATE 1  
Close Reading

Answer all questions.

30 marks are allocated to this paper.

Read the passage carefully and then answer **all** the questions, **using your own words where asked to do so**.

The questions will ask you to show that:

you understand **what** the writer has said (main ideas and supporting details) (**Understanding—U**);

you can identify **how** the writer has said it (techniques of structure and style) (**Analysis—A**);

you can comment on **how well** the writer has achieved his/her purpose (using appropriate evidence) (**Evaluation—E**).

A code letter (U, A, E) is used alongside each question to identify its purpose for you.



## FULL CYCLE

Like so many daft ideas it started at a reunion. My old schoolfriend Dave and I were reminiscing about a bike trip eight of us had made 50 years ago around Cornwall.

Before we knew it, the idea of the “50 Years On” tour was born. The plan was that we would cycle much the same route around Devon and Cornwall as we had in 1962, somewhere between 250 and 300 miles. So this soggy summer, seven 65-year-old blokes (one dropped out the week before) set off with barely any training for a week’s hard cycling.

When we started the ride we thought that we would all manage it. After all, bikes today are much better than they were in 1962 and, despite being a bunch of old blokes, we had all the necessary accompaniments that didn’t exist or we couldn’t afford back then—like padded Lycra shorts, a minimum of 24 gears, clip-on cycling shoes and helmets. We also decided that for safety reasons we needed a back-up vehicle, and so another mate was drafted in with a van.

However, the problem, as we discovered, was not the equipment, it was us. Devon and Cornwall were much hillier than we remembered them being in 1962, and after a day or two we decided that Cornish miles were longer than ordinary miles. We should have known it would be tough—one of my cycling mates had found a computer programme which showed that if you added together the heights of all the hills we were due to climb it was the equivalent of climbing Everest.

Cycling round some parts of the West Country has got easier though, thanks to the advent of cycle tracks on many of the old railway lines. The great advantage that they have as cycle paths is that because they used to be railways they are reasonably flat.

We had all the modern navigational aids—GPS, iPhones and computer-generated maps—but we still managed to get lost most days and one day we even cycled an extra ten miles because of them.

The weather wasn’t on our side either. We started with warnings of gales in the South West and things never really improved, although we had a couple of sunny afternoons to go with the mist, the wind and the torrential rain. In the interest of authenticity some of us had bought 1962 style bicycle capes only to discover it was difficult to ride in them—no wonder they are not in popular use today!

We had decided, again for the sake of authenticity, that we should stay in youth hostels when we could. Mistake. Youth hostels are not really suitable for a bunch of 65 year olds who had grown soft enjoying the luxuries of modern living.

In truth, some things about today’s youth hostels are better than in 1962. They were then largely run by forbidding characters called wardens, who made you do jobs like cleaning the dormitory or peeling potatoes in exchange for the privilege of staying in them. No one was allowed motorised transport, and I still remember two girls being turned away because the warden had seen them getting out of a car even though they’d only hitched a lift.

Today wardens have largely disappeared to be replaced by foreign students working for the summer, and these days anyone is welcome to stay no matter what transport—in fact you don’t even have to be a Youth Hostel Association member.

Although there were many more motorists this time round, they did seem more friendly toward cyclists. Fifty years ago we all remembered being hooted by one driver who thought he owned the road. When we replied with an appropriate sign he stopped to tell all eight of us that if he hadn’t been in a hurry he’d sort us out.

This time the only person who shouted at us, probably fairly, was a woman pedestrian who objected to us riding on a station platform, but she was not exactly kind when she told us we were the oldest Lycra louts she had ever seen.

50 Some things about long-distance cycling hadn't changed. Bikes still get punctures, bicycle chains still break and if a spoke in the wheel breaks it's still pretty hard to ride with a buckled wheel. There's no doubt touring on a bike is a lot easier if you have a van to take you to the nearest bicycle repair shop.

Cornwall itself has changed. In 1962 Cornish ice cream and Cornish pasties were  
55 something novel to be found only in Cornwall—today you can get them everywhere. And genuine Cornish people now seem to be in short supply; the county seems full of people who had moved there for a “different lifestyle”. As one of my mates put it “in 1962 it seemed like a foreign country, but not any more”.

We did have our doubts about Cornish business practice, though. There was the man  
60 in the bike shop who wouldn't sell one of us a new bike—he explained that if he did he'd only have to replace it—and a pub landlord who advertised food all day but suggested that rather than serve us we would do better to go to the local shop and buy a pasty.

But what of the seven boys who had been pupils together in the local school all those  
65 years ago? Interestingly, and in spite of most of us meeting for only the second or third time in nearly 50 years, we got on well together and the ride turned out to be such a special trip for us all.

At the end of seven demanding days all had found the experience exhilarating but were  
70 not quite sure why. In many ways we had gone back 50 years. People who had been called John and Bob for more than four decades had gone back to their school names of Brooko and Wally.

For seven days all the responsibilities, concerns and worries of modern life had  
75 disappeared. We made fun of one another, joked over who had to sleep on the top bunk or who'd been snoring the night before, cursed the hills and helped one another climb them. We were understanding when people gave up and got in the van (only two of us made it all the way round climbing every hill) and most of all we laughed and laughed, just as we had 50 years earlier. I suspect the reason for all this was simple—for one week of our lives we'd been 15 again.

Greg Dyke, in *The Times*

### QUESTIONS

*Marks Code*

1. Look at lines 1–7, and then explain **in your own words two** reasons why the planned cycle tour was a “daft” idea. 2 U
2. Look at lines 8–13, and then explain **in your own words two** reasons why the cyclists thought they would “manage it”. 2 U
3. Explain any reason why the sentence “However, the problem, as we discovered, was not the equipment, it was us” (line 14) helps to make an effective link at this point in the passage. 2 A
4. Look at lines 14–19.  
How does the writer, in these lines, show that their journey would be “tough” (line 17)? 2 A

**QUESTIONS (continued)***Marks Code*

5. Explain the purpose of the words in dashes (parenthesis) in lines 23–24. 2 A
6. Look at lines 26–33.
- (a) Explain how effective you find the expression “The weather wasn’t on our side”. 1 E
- (b) The writer uses the word “authenticity” twice. Show how we can work out from these lines what this term means. 2 U/A
- (c) Explain how effective you find the writer’s use of “Mistake”. 2 E
7. Look at lines 34–39, and then explain how anything in these lines helps us to realise what the writer means by “forbidding”. 2 U/A
8. Look at lines 43–49.
- (a) Explain what evidence the writer gives for there having been more friendliness on this trip than on the previous one. 2 A
- (b) Explain how effective you find the expression “Lycra louts”. 1 E
9. Look at lines 50–53, and then explain **in your own words** what general point the writer is making in these lines. 1 U
10. Look at lines 54–58, and then explain **in your own words** why the writer’s friend thought that Cornwall once “seemed like a foreign country, but not any more”. 2 U
11. Look at lines 59–62, and then explain why the cyclists had “doubts about Cornish business practice”. 1 U
12. Look at lines 67–77.
- (a) What is surprising about the writer’s **word choice** in the expression “At the end of seven demanding days all had found the experience exhilarating” (line 67)? 2 A
- (b) The writer tells us “In many ways we had gone back 50 years”. Explain fully **in your own words** how he makes clear what he means. 2 U
- (c) Explain how effective you find the expression “for one week of our lives we’d been 15 again”. 1 E
13. Considering the passage as a whole, explain how effective you find the title “Full Cycle”. 1 E

**Total (30)***[END OF QUESTION PAPER]*

**[OPEN OUT FOR QUESTIONS]**

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