

Question A6: Comparing writers' ideas

You will be asked to compare how the writers feel about the subject they write about (say what is the same and/or what is different). You will need to move between the texts, commenting on what they say and the effects of their choices of language and technique. This question is worth 10 marks.

What exactly must I do?

You will have already read both texts when answering the previous questions. Now you need to look at the focus of the question and synthesise information by selecting evidence from one text, then the other and saying whether they show a difference or a similarity between the texts. Having found a selection of these, you can then give an overall opinion about the writer's ideas. Aim to spend about 12–14 minutes answering this question.



ACTIVITY 1

Read the following texts about Bermondsey, London.

Text A is a section of an online guide to the area of Bermondsey in London, written in 2017.

Text A

Hidden Jewels of London: Bermondsey

Despite its enviable location, Bermondsey is an area of London that is often overlooked by tourists, but is definitely worth a visit! Visitors are spoiled for choice by its bars, shops, coffee shops, art galleries and parks as well as the opportunity to experience the area's rich history.

Despite being close to London's city heart, Bermondsey maintains an independence and character of its own, with the feel and atmosphere of a garden suburb. Having been ravaged by the devastation of the Great Fire of London in 1666, Bermondsey has been rebuilt over the years and now showcases a huge range of breathtaking parks and gardens, complemented by the stunning architecture of many fine buildings, including St Mary Magdalen Church (one of the few places that survived the Great Fire).

In the past, Bermondsey was a magnet for many of Britain's greatest food and drink manufacturers. In fact, this led to the area being nicknamed the 'Larder of London'. Although most of these companies have moved on, many of the amazing old warehouses, factories and storage spaces have been converted into unique restaurants, galleries and artisan studios.

At the centre of Bermondsey remains Jacob's Island. Nestled against the constantly changing waters of the beautiful Thames river, tourists must take a walk around this area. Jacob's Island was once a renowned slum area of London, made famous by Charles Dickens in his novel *Oliver Twist*, but it now contains some of Bermondsey's best sights, with clean, sparkling buildings that are sure to be on the sightseeing list of any fans of classic literature!

Additionally, you must take a leisurely walk down the ancient and historic main street. Home to the Street Festival and the Antiques Market, Bermondsey Street is a thriving and bustling hub of the area.

So what are you waiting for? Bermondsey is a place that you need to visit – and one that you will come back to time and time again! We'll see you there!

ACTIVITY CONTINUES ➔

Text B is from an account by Henry Mayhew of the living conditions in areas of London. In this section, he describes a visit to Bermondsey.

Text B

Monday, September 24, 1849

Anyone who has ventured a visit to [Bermondsey] will not wonder at the ravages of the pestilence in this malarious quarter, for it is bounded on the north and east by filth and fever, and on the south and west by want, squalor, rags and pestilence.

Here stands, as it were, the very capital of cholera, Jacob's Island, a patch of ground insulated by the common sewer. Spared by the fire of London, the houses and comforts of the people in this loathsome place have scarcely known any improvement since that time. The place is a century behind even the low and squalid districts that surround it.

Not far from the Tunnel there is a creek opening into the Thames. This creek bears the name of the Dock Head. Sometimes it is called St. Saviour's, or, in jocular allusion to the odour for which it is celebrated, Savory Dock. The walls of the warehouses on each side of this muddy stream are green and slimy, and barges lie beside them, above which sacks of corn are continually dangling from the cranes aloft. This creek was once supplied by the streams from the Surrey hills, but now nothing but the drains and refuse of the houses that have grown up round about it thickens and swells its waters.

On entering the precincts of the pest island, the air has literally the smell of a graveyard, and a feeling of nausea and heaviness comes over any one unaccustomed to imbibe the musty atmosphere.

As we passed along the reeking banks of the sewer the sun shone upon a narrow slip of the water. In the bright light it appeared the colour of strong green tea, and positively looked as solid as black marble in the shadow – indeed it was more like watery mud than muddy water; and yet we were assured this was the only water the wretched inhabitants had to drink. As we gazed in horror at it, we saw drains and sewers emptying their filthy contents into it; we saw a whole tier of doorless privies in the open road, common to men and women, built over it; we heard bucket after bucket of filth splash into it.

From *A Visit to the Cholera District of Bermondsey* by Henry Mayhew

To help compare the extracts, fill in the following table:

	Text A	Text B
Any details mentioned that are similar		
Any details mentioned that are different		
Adjectives used		
How the writers engage the audience with techniques		
Any features of layout and structure that are similar/different		

**ACTIVITY 2**

Once you have completed the table, use your notes to answer the following question:

Both of these texts are about Bermondsey in London. Compare what the writers say about the area and how they say it.

[10]

Handwriting practice area with 20 horizontal dotted lines.

Extended practice

Text A is taken from an information sheet for parents, promoting education through the medium of the Welsh language.

Text A

What are the advantages of being educated through the medium of Welsh?

Statistics show that the majority of young people who study through the medium of Welsh achieve more highly at GCSE level than students who study through English alone.

The success of Welsh-medium education is not just about higher examination grades, however. Research shows that speaking two languages encourages greater versatility and creativity in the brain as well as better problem solving skills.

Bilingual learners are also statistically more likely to be intellectually advanced at a younger age. They tend to score higher in IQ tests compared with people who are fluent in only one language. A recent University study concluded that speaking two languages encourages faster reaction times, keeps people mentally alert, and makes people less likely to suffer from mental decline further on in life.

Additionally, a great advantage of speaking both Welsh and English for those who live in Wales is that it is of great advantage when applying for jobs. Bilingualism has been identified as a highly desirable skill by many employers.

Children who have the ability to speak two languages tend to encounter a broader range of people. The ability to speak Welsh will also open up a wide variety of cultural opportunities that would otherwise be closed off.

Furthermore, giving your child the opportunity to study in Welsh will benefit the country as a whole and ensure future economic success.

Text B is a Royal Commission report on the Welsh language, written in 1847

Text B

The Welsh language is a vast drawback to Wales, and a manifold barrier to the moral progress and commercial prosperity of the people.

It is not easy to over-estimate its evil effects. It is the language of the Cymri, and anterior to that of the ancient Britons. It dissevers the people from intercourse which would greatly advance their civilization, and bars the access of improving knowledge to their minds. Because of their language, the mass of the Welsh people are inferior to the English in every branch of practical knowledge and skill. Equally in his new or old home his language keeps him under the hatches, being one in which he can neither acquire nor communicate the necessary information. It is the language of old fashioned agriculture, of theology and of simple rustic life, while all the world about him is in English ... He is left to live in an underworld of his own and the march of society goes completely over his head.

Extended practice continues ➔

Both of these texts are about the use of the Welsh language.

Compare:

- a) how the writers feel about the use of Welsh
- b) how they make their views clear to the reader.

[10]