

Text analysis 10

Setting up SouperStar

Lisa Goodwin recalls how she set up her first business at the age of eight.

When I first told my parents that I wanted to sell soup, I must have been about eight years old - like most sensible parents, they thought I was just joking. That weekend, I'd been at my aunt's house helping her harvest vegetables from her garden. It had been a **bumper year**, and we'd been staggering back and forth, shifting **armfuls** of all sorts of things into the house. With my aunt, not a single thing could go to waste, so we set about making soup. Gallons of the stuff. We were surrounded by steaming and bubbling pots and pans, and the air was thin with scents of leek and potato, carrot and coriander and spicy butternut squash. Anyway, when my parents didn't take me seriously, I went straight to the bridge to dig out one of the soups my aunt and I had made -it was cream of mushroom, I think -and they absolutely **lapped it up**. "See!" I said, smiling. So, it was then that SouperStar was born.

From day one I couldn't wait to get stuck in. My parents would dutifully help me select produce, **whizz up** batches of soup and drive me here, there and everywhere so that I could set up shop. I would go to school fairs, farmers' markets -anywhere that would have me. Dad was my champion haggler. He'd **barter** with local farmers to get carrots or potatoes at rock-bottom prices. If he could get anything for free, well, that was even better! I think a lot of people were bemused by the sight of this young kid, buying produce and setting soup, and my parents put up with it because they thought that I would grow out of it at some stage. While other kids my age were glued to the TV or playing in the park, I was peeling vegetables and frying croutons.

I struck upon the idea of selling soup at our local train station during the winter months -there was a constant stream of customers all in desperate need of something that would warm up their hands and fill their bellies. Before long, I was hiring extra staff in order to open up soup stands in other nearby train stations and Mum was coming up with advertising slogans and snazzy (5) package designs (her years of marketing experience came in pretty handy here). As the business grew and grew, Mum and Dad couldn't keep up with all the support I needed, so it made sense for them to get even more involved. Mum reduced her hours at work and Dad quit his job entirely. Fast-forward to today, and I'm the managing director of one of the most successful food companies in the area.

EXERCISE 1 (10 points)

Have a look at the words which are in bold in the text, using the context, explain the meaning of each one – give just the meaning in this particular context (5 points), and write a complex sentence with each word but in a different context (5 points). You will get 0 points in any of the definitions or sentences containing words which are not English.

1. BUMPER YEAR
2. ARMFULS
3. LAPPED IT UP
4. BARTER

5. WHIZZ UP

EXERCISE 2 (10 points)

Find words in the text with a similar meaning to the following ones (5 points). Then, write a complex sentence using each word from the text in a different context (5 points). You will get 0 points in any of the sentences containing words which are not English.

- a. DUMBFOUND
- b. MODERN, ATTRACTIVE
- c. WALKING UNSTEADILY
- d. CROP
- e. AROMAS

EXERCISE 3 (10 points)

Complete the following sentences using one word from the text (in the same form). You can only use each word once (2 points each one).

1. Dad was _____ when he found out you wrecked the car!
2. Gavin plays _____ every Wednesday
3. Sometimes a person needs to hit _____ before they are ready to admit they have a problem.
4. A _____ flows behind their house.
5. The new _____ of students arriving at university seem very nice.

EXERCISE 4 (10 points)

Explain the meaning and use of the following verb tense employed. In the text:

I must have been about eight years old

EXERCISE 5 (10 points)

Turn the following stretch into DIRECT SPEECH.

I begged and pleaded with my parents to let me be home-schooled (1), as I wanted to dedicate more time to the business (2), but they insisted I should have "normal" childhood (3) and fill my head with "necessary" stuff like formulae and equations (4).

Answer key – Text analysis 10

EXERCISE 1 (10 points)

Have a look at the words which are in bold in the text, using the context, explain the meaning of each one – give just the meaning in this particular context (5 points), and write a complex sentence with each word but in a different context (5 points). You will get 0 points in any of the definitions or sentences containing words which are not English.

1. BUMPER YEAR: “a natural phenomenon where some tree species produce very large crops of seeds in some years, compared to very few seeds in others”: *It’s been a bumper year for fruits and nuts.*
2. ARMFULS: (sing. “armful”): “the amount of something that you can carry in your arms”: *she scooped up an armful of clothes and stuffed them in a drawer.*
3. LAPPED IT UP: “to enjoy something and be keen to get more of it”: *The jokes were bad, but the audience were lapping them up.*
4. BARTER: “to exchange goods or services for other goods or services instead of money”: *They got what they needed by bartering their livestock.*
5. WHIZZ UP: “prepare quickly”: *a quick dip, which you can whizz up when you get home.*

EXERCISE 2 (10 points)

Find words in the text with a similar meaning to the following ones (5 points). Then, write a complex sentence using each word from the text in a different context (5 points). You will get 0 points in any of the sentences containing words which are not English.

- a. DUMBFOUND: **bemused**: *the bemused judge ordered a recess to sort out the confusion.*
- b. MODERN, ATTRACTIVE: **snazzy**: *Patricia is wearing a snazzy blue jacket today.*
- c. WALKING UNSTEADILY: **staggering**: *the staggering woman eventually made it to the end of the street.*
- d. CROP: **harvest**: *big agriculture companies harvest millions of tons of vegetables each year.*
- e. AROMAS: **scents**: *Wendy loves the scent of freshly baked bread.*

EXERCISE 3 (10 points)

Complete the following sentences using proper words from the text. You can only use each word once (2 points each one).

1. Dad was **steaming/struck** when he found out you wrecked the car!
2. Gavin plays **squash/bridge** every Wednesday
3. Sometimes a person needs to hit **rock-bottom** before they are ready to admit they have a problem
4. A **stream** flows behind their house.
5. The new **batches** of students arriving at university seem very nice.

EXERCISE 4

Explain the meaning and use of the following verb tense employed in the text:

I must have been about eight years old vs. I was about eight years old

Logical conclusion/inference about a past action on the basis of something that is witnessed by the person who says the sentence (or similar).

You could add:

- Meaning of *must* (certainty), as opposed to *might*, *may*, *could* (lack of certainty)
- Structure of modal pasts: modal verb followed by perfect infinitive (instead of simple infinitive).

EXERCISE 5 (10 points)

Turn the following stretch into DIRECT SPEECH.

I begged and pleaded with my parents to let me be home-schooled (1), as I wanted to dedicate more time to the business (2), but they insisted I should have “normal” childhood (3) and fill my head with “necessary” stuff like formulae and equations (4).

1.- “Why don’t you let me be home-schooled?” she begged (and pleaded)

2.- “I want to dedicate myself to business”, I said to my parents.

3.- “You should have a normal childhood”, my parents replied.

4.- “You should fill your head up with necessary stuff like formulae and equations”, they recommended.

Any slight variations on these key suggestions would be allowed by the corrector. If the candidate doesn’t use “inverted commas”, then -0.5 will be subtracted from each direct speech token, though. If there is also awkward and unnecessary change in verb tenses an additional -0.5 will be subtracted. Total mark for each sentence will be 2.5.