

MINI MINI MOCK PAPER 2, QUESTION 4: COMPARE THE WRITERS' ATTITUDES TO BEGGARS AND BEGGINGRichard Grant, published in 1838 *Sketches in London*

I come now to speak of the other class of begging impostors. I mean those who are to be seen openly following their profession in the streets. The number of beggars is astonishing. Ten years ago it was estimated at 7,500; I am sure the number has not diminished since then; my impression is, that it has, on the contrary, considerably increased. I think it may be safely enough assumed, that the present number of beggars of this class, to be seen in the streets of London, is not under 8,000. It will startle those whose attention has never been called to the subject, when they are informed, that of the beggars who in so great a variety of ways, audibly and silently, solicit alms in the public streets, there is only one out of every twenty who is a proper object of charity; the remaining number are impostors. Suppose we take the proportion of street-beggars who are real objects of charity to those who are not, at nearly one in sixteen, that will give, on the above computation, the immense number of 7,500 of this class of impostors who are constantly on town. I have made inquiries of a gentleman who has been officially occupied with the subject for the last few years, as to what may be the average amount which the street-beggars annually receive from a generous but too confiding public; and he says that very few of them average less than thirty shillings a week. This will give the immense sum of 7,500^l. per week, or 350,000^l. per year, which these persons levy on a charitable public.

Mark Johnson, written in 2018, *'Don't Demonise Beggars'*

Homelessness has increased 170% since 2010 and more people are on the streets. And we are using a 200-year-old law to lock up homeless addicts for begging, in some cases sending them to already overcrowded prisons. Vigilante groups are even naming and shaming rough sleepers they believe to be "professional beggars". The police reaction? Arrest, caution, lock them up. Lock people up and fine people with no money. What do the police think they are going to do when they come back on to the streets? Yet the level of debate rarely rises above "should we give to beggars or not?"

Researching a BBC Radio 4 documentary, *The Truth About Britain's Beggars*, recently, I met people begging in Brighton.

I met a guy in Brighton who makes about a fiver a day – the most he has ever made is £30. He doesn't see anyone making a comfortable living from begging.

In Cambridge, a police sergeant told me he felt his role was to make life as uncomfortable as possible for beggars. Luke, a homeless man I met there, a former chef, is now an addict with mental health issues. The sergeant had little sympathy. Someone who I saw as really ill was, in his eyes, "an adult capable of making his own decisions". In other words, Luke had a choice and had chosen this existence, and the police felt they had every right to arrest him every time he came back on to the streets because society was uncomfortable and wanted him to find a solution.

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MINI MINI MOCK PAPER 2, QUESTION 4: COMPARE THE WRITERS' ATTITUDES TO POVERTY IN EDUCATIONGeorge R Sims, published in 1883 *How the Poor Live*

I have said that the hardships entailed upon the poor by the Education Act are numerous. Let me quote a few statistics gleaned from the papers which I turn over on the chairman's desk by his kind permission.

They are cases in which the parents apply to have the fees remitted because they cannot afford to pay them:

1. Mrs. Walker. 7 children of school age, fee 2d. a week each. Total earnings of entire family 10s. Rent 5s. 6d. Husband once good mechanic, lost employment through illness and deafness. Parish relief none. Character good. Is now a hawker - sells oranges and fish. Children half-starved. When an orange is too bad to sell they have it for breakfast, with a piece of bread.

2. Mr. Thompson. 5 children of school age. Out of work. No income but pawning clothes and goods. Rent 4s. Wife drinks surreptitiously. Husband, good character.

How these people live is a mystery. It is a wonder that they are not found dead in their wretched dens, for which they pay a rent out of all proportion to their value, by dozens daily. But they live on, and the starving children come day after day to school with feeble frames and bloodless bodies, and the law expects them to learn as readily as well-fed, healthy children, to attain the same standard of proficiency in a given time.

It is these starving children who are not allowed to earn money towards their support until they are thirteen, and in many cases fourteen.

Melissa Hemsley, written in 2022, for *The Independent*

I've cooked lunch for school kids in north London while volunteering with food charity The Felix Project, and some of these children have shared heartbreaking stories with me. Sometimes their school lunch is their main – or their only – meal of their day. These are not easy stories to tell – I truly admire these brave children who face not only feelings of hunger, but also of shame. Children should just be able to be children – and not have to worry about where their next meal is coming from.

Children are in school around 39 weeks a year. That's 190 days annually, so school meals count for around half of their yearly lunches. Currently, a household must earn less than £7,400 – excluding benefits – to be eligible for free school meals for their children. That's 800,000 children a year in England who are living in poverty and urgently need free lunches, but aren't getting them. That's 800,000 children in need who are going without one of their three meals a day because they don't qualify for them.

As an example, a family with two children, living in poverty but not eligible for free school meals, currently has to pay around £450 a year if they're buying a school lunch each school day. Teachers (and parents) tell us that children who receive a nutritious midday meal tend to be happier, healthier and more productive. At its most basic, we know that eating well will support children's education and that going hungry will leave children tired, unfocused and unable to retain information. It's a no-brainer.

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MINI MINI MOCK PAPER 2, QUESTION 4: COMPARE THE WRITERS' ATTITUDES TO THE UNDERGROUNDEdmondo Amicis, published in 1883 *Jottings about London*

At one time, finding myself near a station, I thought I would make a trip in the Underground Railway. I go down two or three stairs and find myself suddenly thrown from daylight into obscurity, amid feeble lights, people and noise, trains arriving and departing in the dark. Mine draws up and stops; people jump down and people jump into the carriages; while I am asking where the second class is, the train is gone. 'What does this mean?' I say to an employee. 'Never mind,' he answers, 'here is another.' The trains do not succeed, but pursue each other. The other train comes, I jump in and away we go like an arrow. Then begins a new spectacle. We run through the unknown, among the foundations of the city. At first we are buried in thick darkness, then we see for an instant the dim light of day, and again plunge into obscurity, broken here and there by strange glowings; then between the thousand lights of a station, which appears and disappears in an instant; trains passing unseen; next an unexpected stop, the thousand faces of the waiting crowd, lit up as by the reflection of a fire, and then off again in the midst of a deafening din of slamming doors, ringing bells, and snorting steam; now more darkness, trains and streaks of daylight, more lighted stations, more crowds passing, approaching, and vanishing, until we reach the last station; I jump down; the train disappears, I am shoved through a door, half carried up a stairway, and find myself in daylight. But where? What city is this?

Lottie Coltman, written in 2016, *'Reasons we love the tube'*

If the leading religions of the world have taught us anything, it is that hell is situated underground – a hot, horrible place full of writhing bodies, where you will see and experience things that can never be forgotten. And if that isn't an apt description of the Central line at rush hour then we don't know what is.

Yet, we are a city obsessed with the tube. The tube, it seems, is a bigger part of London life than novelty pop-ups, lost tourists and a hatred of estate agents. And we think we know why...

It doesn't discriminate: If you live in London and are not the Queen, Alan Sugar or one of those people from 'Made in Chelsea', you will inevitably spend a fair chunk of your time on the Underground, pressed up against your fellow Londoners. The good news is that every man, woman or child gets the tube in the same way – unlike other forms of travel where you can pay an extra 50 quid for a first-class upgrade and a bit of extra legroom. If we have to suffer then we're all doing it together.

And lastly, dare we say it, it's actually quite good. Rubbish rhyming posters aside, the tube is a feat of Victorian engineering and one of the greatest transport networks in the world. The trains come every two minutes – anyone who's spent their adolescence in the countryside waiting half an hour for a bus can tell you how wondrous it is. So yes, it is dirty and chaotic and full of rats but it connects every corner of this place we call home.

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MINI MINI MOCK PAPER 2, QUESTION 4: COMPARE THE WRITERS' ATTITUDES TO THE FLOODS

J Thomson, published in 1877, <i>Street Life in London</i>	Ella Buckland, written in 2023, in <i>The Guardian</i>
<p>THE sufferings of the poor in Lambeth, and in other quarters of the Metropolis, caused by the annual tidal overflow of the Thames, have been so graphically described as thoroughly to arouse public sympathy. The prompt efforts of the clergy and the relief committees in distributing the funds and supplies placed at their disposal, have done much to allay the misery of the flooded-out districts. Feelings of apprehension and dread again and again rose with the tides, and subsided with the muddy waters as they found their way back into the old channel or sank through the soil. The public have settled down with a sense of relief; and the suffering People returned to rekindle their extinguished fires and clear away the mud and debris from their houses; to reconstruct their wrecked furniture, dry their clothes and bedding, and live on as best they may under this new phase of nineteenth century civilization.</p> <p>Meanwhile the Metropolitan authorities, lulled to a sense of temporary security, have adopted no satisfactory measures to prevent the recurrence of similar disasters. A dangerous experiment is being tried with the health of the community at a time when epidemic disease is only held in check by the most vigilant efforts of modern science. It would be difficult to conceive conditions more favourable to the growth of disease than those at present existing in the low-lying, densely populous quarters of Lambeth, that have been invaded by the floods.</p>	<p>It was the break of dawn, but still so dark.</p> <p>The rain was beating down hard on the tin roof – harder than I’d ever heard in my life. I went out on to mum’s front deck. What I saw and heard will stay with me for ever.</p> <p>A lake was encroaching, steadily moving up the road.</p> <p>Above the roar of the rain and helicopters buzzing, I could hear children screaming and voices crying: “Help! Help!” My daughter appeared next to me. “What’s that noise, Mummy?” she asked. “Why are those children screaming? Will someone help them?”</p> <p>This wasn’t a moment I expected to have, living in this country. I wasn’t ready. I decided to evacuate us again. We drove up the hill and saw boats launching where we ride bikes on Sunday. As soon as we were safe, I went online and saw my friends asking to be saved.</p> <p>My brain was still confused. I knew I’d lost my house and everything in it. I remember thinking it would be OK – that we’d all be looked after, that surely there was a flood unit somewhere that was being deployed. It didn’t happen. The government was just as unprepared as we were.</p> <p>Climate change is supposed to happen somewhere else, to other people in other countries – to someone else’s children. It isn’t supposed to end up in my house, in my town. We’ve been hearing about it – warned about it – for years, but it was always something in the future, happening somewhere else. Now it’s here, in Australia, and we need to do something about it.</p>

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MINI MINI MOCK PAPER 2, QUESTION 4: COMPARE THE WRITERS' ATTITUDES TO FOOD MARKETSCharles Dickens Jr, published in 1879, *Dictionary of London*Ellen Jenne, written in 2023, in *MyLondon Online*

Clare Market lies hidden behind the western side of Lincoln's-inn, and can be reached either by the turning up from the Strand next to the new law courts, or through the archway in the western side of Lincoln's-inn. It is a market without a market-house; a collection of lanes, where every shop is tenanted by a butcher or greengrocer, and where the roadways are choked with costermongers' carts. To see Clare Market at its best, it is needful to go there on Saturday evening: then the narrow lanes are crowded, then the butchers' shops are ablaze with gas-lights flaring in the air, and the shouting of the salesman and costermonger is at its loudest.

The greater portion of those who are pushing through the crowd to make their purchases for to-morrow's dinner are women, and of them many have children in their arm. Ill-dressed, worn, untidy, and wretched, many of them look, but they joke with their acquaintances, and are keen hands at bargaining. Follow one, and look at the meat stall before which she steps. The shop is filled with strange pieces of coarse, dark-coloured, and unwholesome-looking meat. There is scarce a piece there whose form you recognise as familiar; no legs of mutton, no sirloins of beef, no chops or steaks, or ribs or shoulders. It is meat, and you take it on faith that it is meat of the ox or sheep; but beyond that you can say nothing. The slice of bacon on the next stall is more tempting, and many prefer a rasher of this for their Sunday's dinner.

I'm in Crystal Palace Park battling the end of winter chill permeating South East London and a new roster of street market stalls, apart from the few who've continued to linger about. This bustling corner of the park attracts anyone and everyone, bonding over their mutual love of food and carefully curated produce.

Barbequed meats, aromatic spices and sweet, sweet sugar danced through the air, making my job infinitely harder. Stalls displaying enviable baked goods, sizzling grills wafting intoxicating smoke and pungent cheeses is just how I like to spend a Sunday afternoon.

The market is held between 10am and 3pm on a Sunday, which makes it feel even more exclusive than the permanent food markets of Central London.

Even though the sky was hidden behind grey clouds, the weather didn't deter visitors from perusing the goods the market put on offer. It'd be wrong of me to come away without at least one baked good, so I came away with five. Hackney Wick's Galeta Bakery piled face-sized cookies, mounds of doughnuts and buns sky high, catching every eye. I wanted it. I wanted it all. Two cookies wrapped up in a paper bag entered my possession. They'd last no longer than ten minutes once I got home.

It's unpretentious in its appearance but knows how to make an impression. A revolving door of food stalls keeps people, like me, coming back. It's the perfect Sunday excursion for any Londoner with a hankering for good food.

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