

A Noisy Increase in the Standard of Living

Most of us would scarcely hesitate to agree that hardly anyone is actually in favour of loud noises, though we may be less likely to complain and kick up a fuss when it's our *own* noise, our car door slamming at night, our lawn mower shattering the peace and quiet of a lazy Sunday afternoon. No, other people's noises are much more irritating. Mind you, when it comes to the next-door-neighbours, the friendly ones, there's not much else you can do than shrug your shoulders and add that they have to put up with your noise too. Unpopular neighbours somehow make much more noise – almost enough to complain about to their faces, and certainly enough to support a good twenty-five minutes of grumbling over the garden fence on the popular side.

Then we have the anonymous, annoying but acceptable noise in the sky overhead or at the building site over the road. We grumble but accept it as a necessary evil, a by-product of progress.

It may well be that we've got hold of the wrong end of the stick. We feel that we have to put up with noise in order to secure and guarantee a prosperous future for the country. What we should be asking ourselves is: What is the purpose of technology? Is it to serve us and enrich our lives? Is it worth the sacrifices we have to make in order to make full use of its advances? We need seriously to ask whether any great advance in technology is worth the continual din we shall most probably condemn our heirs to live in.

Noise must be actively opposed – actively and noisily! Measures to reduce noise – eliminate it even – must be given all the support we can muster because, believe me, it's going to get worse in the years to come if we don't start doing something about it now.

Sonic booms will shatter the calm of the unspoiled countryside. Helicopters will clatter overhead carrying executive commuters from one airport to another, from city terminal to distant departure points.

Fifty million cars, lorries, motor-bikes on the roads; flyovers guaranteeing a nice thick blanket of carbon monoxide fumes around the chimney-pots; supersonic jets screaming over the roof-tops ... is this to be our legacy?

People who complain about noise are sometimes called sentimentalists, romantics longing for the long-lost days of peace and quiet, people who flee reality. Nothing could be more misleading. They are activists, more aware of the problems of the world than any blind believer in the benevolence of technology. If being aware of the dangers which threaten our peace and quiet condemns me to sentimentality, then I plead guilty. I am a sentimentalist!

Peterson, L. et al. *Our environment*. London: Heinemann, p. 60

1st Question: (1,0 mark)

Read the whole text and answer the following questions.

a) Would you say that the author of this passage is asking us to accept noise as a “necessary evil, a by-product of progress”?

Resposta:

No, I wouldn't.

No, s/he isn't.

b) Now, find a sentence in the text to back up your answer above and write it in the space provided below.

Resposta:

“Noise must be actively opposed — actively and noisily”

“Measures to reduce noise ... must be given all the support we can muster ...”

G a b a r i t o – L í n g u a I n g l e s a

2nd Question: (2,0 marks)

The statement below does not quite reflect what the author says in the passage. Can you explain what is wrong with it?

“Unpopular neighbours actually make more noise than other people.”

Resposta:

What the author is saying is that we are less tolerant towards our unpopular neighbours' noise than we are to other people's noise, and not that unpopular neighbours make more noise.

3rd Question: (2,0 marks)

Answer the following questions about the passage in your own words:

a) What kind of future for the next generations does the author seem to foresee in the passage?

Resposta:

A very noisy world is foreseen by the author unless we start acting now; unless we start actively opposing noise right away.

b) Complaining about noise is a sentimental attitude. What does the passage say about this?

Resposta:

The author is saying that lots of people think that protesting against noise is an inherent characteristic of those who cannot accept the present times, of those who are always longing for an idealised past. However, the author then goes on to add approval of this 'sentimental' attitude, in so far as it means opposing the increase of noise.

G a b a r i t o – L í n g u a I n g l e s a

4th Question: (2,0 marks)

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Fill in the blanks with ONE word ONLY:

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Berlin, Iowa 74626
April 23, 1999

Mr Wilbur Parsons, State Senator
Statehouse, Room 108
DesMoines, Iowa 74001

Dear Senator Parsons,

I am writing **on** (1) behalf of the Berlin Women's Club concerning the water pollution problem in our state and **particularly** (2) in Berlin. The situation created by the Bogert Textile Company seems to be getting **worse** (3) than last fall when you were campaigning here and **promised** (4) us action.

As you know, it is **no** (5) longer safe to swim **in** (6) the river here, and it is even unpleasant to **go** (7) boating in the park area. We are counting on you to do something about **this** (8) menace to the public good, but so far we have not **heard** (9) of any action even being initiated. You count on our **support** (10)100%. Please let us know what we can do to help you in this matter.

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G a b a r i t o – L í n g u a I n g l e s a

5th Question: (3,0 marks)

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In this test you find two passages on “pollution”. The main text focuses on noise and the letter in question 4 on water pollution. Although both kinds of pollution are equally harmful to us, which do you think requires more urgent action on our part and why?

Write a paragraph (at least 10 lines) expressing your opinion on this matter.

Resposta:

I think both kinds of pollution deserve an equal dose of concern. One might think that water pollution is more of a problem than noise pollution. I tend to disagree. Although water is essential to our survival as a species, it is hard to picture man living in a world with crystal clear water running down creeks and rivers but having to wear ear-plugs 24 hours a day on pain of getting instantly deaf. The reverse is of course unthinkable as well: a perfectly quiet but dry planet would become a majestic but lifeless wasteland.

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1st Question: (1,0 mark)

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a) Would you say that the author of this passage is asking us to accept noise as a “necessary evil, a by-product of progress”?

Resposta:

No, I wouldn't.

No, s/he isn't.

b) Now, find a sentence in the text to back up your answer above and write it in the space provided below.

Resposta:

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G a b a r i t o – L í n g u a I n g l e s a

2nd Question: (2,0 marks)

The statement below does not quite reflect what the author says in the passage. Can you explain what is wrong with it?

“Unpopular neighbours actually make more noise than other people.”

Resposta:

What the author is saying is that we are less tolerant towards our unpopular neighbours' noise than we are to other people's noise, and not that unpopular neighbours make more noise.

3rd Question: (2,0 marks)

Answer the following questions about the passage in your own words:

a) What kind of future for the next generations does the author seem to foresee in the passage?

Resposta:

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Write a paragraph (at least 10 lines) expressing your opinion on this matter.

Resposta:

I think both kinds of pollution deserve an equal dose of concern. One might think that water pollution is more of a problem than noise pollution. I tend to disagree. Although water is essential to our survival as a species, it is hard to picture man living in a world with crystal clear water running down creeks and rivers but having to wear ear-plugs 24 hours a day on pain of getting instantly deaf. The reverse is of course unthinkable as well: a perfectly quiet but dry planet would become a majestic but lifeless wasteland.

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1st Question: (1,0 mark)

Read the whole text and answer the following questions.

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Resposta:

No, I wouldn't.

No, s/he isn't.

b) Now, find a sentence in the text to back up your answer above and write it in the space provided below.

Resposta:

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2nd Question: (2,0 marks)

The statement below does not quite reflect what the author says in the passage. Can you explain what is wrong with it?

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Answer the following questions about the passage in your own words:

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1st Question: (1,0 mark)

Read the whole text and answer the following questions.

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Resposta:

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No, s/he isn't.

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2nd Question: (2,0 marks)

The statement below does not quite reflect what the author says in the passage. Can you explain what is wrong with it?

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3rd Question: (2,0 marks)

Answer the following questions about the passage in your own words:

a) What kind of future for the next generations does the author seem to foresee in the passage?

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Answer the following questions about the passage in your own words:

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