

TASK 1

Read the following texts about environmental issues and match them to their corresponding heading on the answer sheet. Write their corresponding numbers (1-6) in the boxes provided. There are three headings that you will not need, write number 0 in the box next to them.

HEADING		TEXT NUMBER
A	<i>Cleaner power stations may not be able to supply all the country's needs.</i>	
B	An insistence on considering the importance of environmental changes.	
C	Contribution to Climate Deal is in serious danger.	
D	Expecting a 'not in favour, not against' vote.	
E	Green changes that haven't become true.	
F	Promises to stop worsening Global Warming.	
G	Putting off the vote on the emissions plan.	
H	The Government considers gas emissions more important than other health issues.	
I	The Government is working on reducing gas emissions.	

TEXT 1

Amendment to energy bill which would set new emissions standard could fail if Tory backbenchers abstain as expected. A significant number of Tory MPs are expected to abstain today on a vote to cut emissions from coal-fired power stations like Kingsnorth, threatening to tarnish the party's carefully cultivated green image.

The Guardian has learned that Conservative party officials have not imposed a three-line whip ordering MPs to vote for an amendment to the government's energy bill to avoid a confrontation with those sceptical about David Cameron's green agenda.

It is believed there could be enough rebel Labour MPs prepared to vote against the government to defeat its plans, but only if Tory backbenchers do not abstain.(...)

At least 20 Labour MPs are expected to vote for the cross-party amendment, along with the majority of Lib Dems and many Conservatives.

TEXT 2

The UN secretary-general Ban Ki-Moon, today urged environment ministers to reject attempts by sceptics to undermine efforts to forge a climate change deal, stressing that global warming poses "a clear and present danger."

Despite the failure to forge a binding deal on curbing heat-trapping greenhouse gas emissions at a UN conference in Copenhagen last December, Ban said the meeting made an important step forward by setting a target to keep global temperature from rising and establishing a program of climate aid to poorer nations.

(...) "Tell the world that you unanimously agree that climate change is a clear and present danger," Ban said. A British poll yesterday showed public conviction about the threat of climate change has declined sharply in the last year (...).

TEXT 3

The Rudd government will delay pushing ahead with its emissions trading scheme, prompting an accusation by the leader of the Opposition Tony Abbott that it is planning one of the "all-time great political backflips".

In a surprise move, the long expected reintroduction of the emissions trading legislation to Parliament next week has now been stalled.

Instead, the government is shifting its priorities to force a vote on its proposed changes to the private health insurance means test, potentially creating a trigger for a double dissolution election, as health looks set to be a key battleground in this year's election.

It means it is almost certain that the next vote on the controversial emissions trading scheme will be pushed back until at least next month.

TEXT 4

A Conservative UK government would bring to an end the practice of the government underwriting investment in "dirty" fossil fuel power stations around the world through the Export Credit Guarantee Department (ECGD) and instead turn the public fund into a "pro-poor ECGD" to encourage the spread of new green technology to poor countries.

The shadow secretary of state for international development, Andrew Mitchell, will say in a speech at the Overseas Development Institute today that it is "scandalous" that "Labour ministers are using taxpayers' money to guarantee unsustainable energy projects that are contributing to global warming" and will pledge that a Tory government would "never again" support dirty fossil fuel stations. Under the plans, a Tory "trade minister" would liaise between the business department and the Department for International Development.

TEXT 5

Drax is Britain's biggest power station. In fact, it is western Europe's biggest. It produces 7% of the country's electricity by burning coal. For years, it has promised to replace some of that coal with locally grown biofuel. But last week, its chief executive, Dorothy Thompson, appeared to tear up those plans.

It is Britain's biggest emitter of carbon dioxide – about 22m tons in a typical year. It emits as much CO₂ as one quarter of all Britain's cars, and more than all the planes taking off from Heathrow in a year.

The company has been trumpeting its green credentials for years. Now, all that seems to be off. In interviews ahead of this week's company results, Thompson said plans to convert part of Drax to co-burning biofuels and coal – enough to cut its CO₂ emissions by 2.5m tons – are on hold. Right now, the company appears to be rowing backwards fast from their promises.

TEXT 6

Ageing coal-fired power stations should be exempted from the treaty of environmental regulations and kept open to stop the lights from going out, the chief executive of E.ON UK has urged the government.

Paul Golby told the Guardian that some of the coal and oil-fired plants due to close this decade because of European pollution regulations should remain operational and ready to come on-line during periods of peak demand such as those experienced in recent weeks.

"Given that the issue we are trying to grapple with is climate change, there is a question mark over keeping one or two of these oil or coal fired plants mothballed to secure supplies for a few days per year when we get these conditions," Golby said.

Golby's view is privately supported by many UK power station operators who fear a looming energy gap in a few years when old coal and nuclear plants have been closed but new re-actors, clean coal plants and wind farms have not been built.

TASK 2

TRUE (T) OR FALSE (F)

Iraqi interpreters left without help because of rigid guidelines

1. *Broadly speaking, the Government's policy for helping the British in Iraq has been very useful.*
2. The British scheme has shown that all interpreters have benefited from this new policy.
3. The violence against interpreters helping the British started in 2005.
4. Mark Brockway states that the Government should make its assistance policy less severe.
5. The British Government did not propose the scheme on its own initiative.
6. Now that the conditions are not so strict, many people will benefit from the assistance policy.
7. The majority of the Iraqis who work for the British are keen on beginning new lives in Britain.
8. Patrick Mercer, MP, supports the scheme as it is, since it represents a powerful measure against terrorism.
9. Mr Mercer, declared that British soldiers should not be reckoned as more necessary than any interpreter.
10. The Locally Engaged Staff Assistance Scheme is not likely to be changed.
11. Although assistance has been largely denied, some cases are still under consideration.

The Government's policy for helping interpreters and others in Iraq who worked for Britain has undoubtedly saved lives, but a failure to make the scheme more responsive to individual cases has left scores without assistance. It also sets a worrying precedent for interpreters working for the British in Afghanistan.

As with the much-criticised Gurkhas resettlement scheme, the Government drew up strict guidelines for Iraqi candidates that remain resolutely rigid barring anyone who did not work for 12 consecutive months, even if he clearly risked his life. Anyone forced to quit before the end of 2005 would also fail to make the grade even though the killings and threats had started before then.

Mark Brockway, a former Army warrant officer, hired 18 interpreters after he arrived in Iraq in 2003. Of them, 12 are dead and the other six are living overseas, including three in Britain. He has been campaigning for the assistance scheme to become more flexible.

The Prime Minister introduced the initiative only after *The Times* highlighted the plight of interpreters in 2007. The majority of about 20,000 Iraqis who worked for the British in Iraq over the past six years were labourers who experienced minimal risk. The number of additional people who would benefit if the rules were relaxed is thus not huge, probably a few dozen at most, and their families. Most do not want to move to Britain as Basra becomes calm. They simply want compensation for the pain and trauma they have suffered.

Patrick Mercer MP, the Conservative chairman of the Commons counter-terrorism subcommittee, said the policy was devised in a narrow way. "The interpreters in Iraq and Afghanistan are as much a weapon or a resource as any other soldier, sailor or airman", he said. "Many of them have been killed or injured. We cannot afford at this stage not to treat them properly. The legacy we leave in Iraq has got to be a good one".

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office said: "The Locally Engaged Staff Assistance Scheme is for people with a substantial employment relationship with the British Government. This is defined as working in a professional and public role alongside us for a year or more. Those who have worked for shorter periods are not eligible. We think this is reasonable". Both the Foreign Office and the Home Office said that there were no plans to review its policy.

Hundreds were rejected and received nothing. All appeals must be heard by June 30. A decision has yet to be made on how long to keep the scheme open for Iraqis still working for the British mission as it winds down.

TASK 3

According to the text, for each question write the correct answer (a, b or c) in the white boxes.

The city that looks and smells like a landfill site

A Slice of Britain: Take one council, cut the pay of its binmen, then sit back and watch the rubbish pile up

The rats are having a field day. The scavengers have been pigging out on the rich pickings of the refuse collectors' strike in the suburbs of Leeds. For two months the rodents have been fattening themselves up for the coming winter. They are the only ones who are anything like content.

With wheelie bins overflowing, particularly in student districts such as Headingley and Hyde Park, the rats have been helping themselves to a rich banquet of September's soggy pizza crusts, and mouldy lasagne thrown out weeks ago.

The fat rats have been the beneficiaries of a bitter industrial dispute and strike action by the city's refuse collectors. The unrelenting nature of the protest – the length of the stand-off has inevitably drawn parallels with militant walkouts in the 1980s – has left Headingley shrouded in the whiff of landfill.

The root cause of the dispute also seems to be a throwback to another generation: the Liberal Democrat and Conservative-run council is attempting to equalise pay between male and female workers. But instead of raising the pay of female staffers, it wants to cut the salaries of male workers. The first proposal was a £4,000 drop for some. What's more, the council thinks the workers need to increase their work rate.

The strike, which has gone some way to forcing the council to scale back demands for wage cuts in recent days, could soon be mirrored elsewhere in the country: bin collectors in Brighton are also due to walk out this week with similar grievances.

Other local authorities are still working out how to meet new regulations to balance inequality in pay between the sexes.

Postal workers are newly back on the streets after walking out in the national strike over pay and conditions. Firefighters across South Yorkshire are also locking horns with management.

So far, everyone in Leeds is assiduously avoiding phrases that begin with the words "winter of". But walkouts last week in Doncaster and Sheffield are concentrating people's minds. More discontent and more strike action are expected.

Few of the students in Headingley were alive in 1979. The term "all-out strike" is just the stuff of political history textbooks. And so, unknowingly, they sit at the centre of what future books may call a new wave of industrial action. They're not enjoying it.

Jess Johnson, a 20-year-old music student, has "flipped", to use her own phrase. Looking out of her bedroom window on to the back alley of Headingley Mount, she is so angry at the sight of giants slabs of mouldy food that she is bagging it up herself. "If I don't do it, who is going to do it? It's gone on so long that if something isn't done right now, the problem will just get too big for anyone," she says. "It's disgusting".

She knows her efforts may be for naught: bin bags that don't fit in the wheelie bins risk being ripped apart by foxes or, as the most recent street craze has it, blown up with fireworks. And so she struggles outside the redbrick terraces, where university students cram in six to a house, to hold back a waste tide of pizza.

"We've bagged our stuff up so it's not our rubbish," says Layla-Jane Gabriel who lives in the next street. "I know it might not be the right attitude but I don't want to be picking up other people's rubbish. Some people have just come along and dumped it, didn't even put it in a bag"

Other areas of the city have fared better, cleansed by small cadres of refuse workers who were finally talked back into work at the end of the week and a hastily arranged substitute team of new recruits hired by the council to break the strike.

Some areas are heading towards sanity but the patched-up patrol has clearly not reached all corners. It's not obvious why some areas have been left out. The students are muttering that the area they have colonised has been shifted to the bottom of the list because they don't pay council tax.

0. - The refuse collector's strike has
- a. allowed rats and other kinds of animals to feed themselves freely.
 - b. left only Headingley covered in rubbish.
 - c. made the number of rodents increase.
1. - The council wants all of its workers to
- a. accept a more equitable pay scale between the sexes.
 - b. allow women to earn more than men.
 - c. work longer for less salary.
2. - The term "all-out strike"
- a. belongs to a distant past.
 - b. is familiar to students in Headingley.
 - c. is a new way of social action against unpleasant political measures.
3. - Jess Johnson
- a. admits that students are partially responsible for the situation.
 - b. is horrified by the state of the street around where she lives.
 - c. lives with five other students.
4. - Students from Headingley
- a. are responsible for most of the rubbish left in the streets.
 - b. have taken no action against the state of their neighbourhood.
 - c. moan about the behaviour of other people.
5. - Some areas of Leeds
- a. are being discriminated against due to the type of resident.
 - b. have sorted the problem with private teams of refuse workers.
 - c. struggle to keep the streets clean because they have students living in the area.