TYPE of reading: DETAILED READING
TEXT No.: 3

Read the text and the exercises that follow:

Dirty Britain

§1. Before the grass has thickened on the roadside verges and leaves have started growing on the trees is a perfect time to look around and see just how dirty Britain has become. The pavements are stained with chewing gum that has been spat out and the gutters are full of discarded fast food cartons. Years ago I remember travelling abroad and being saddened by the plastic bags, discarded bottles and soiled nappies at the *edge* of every road. Nowadays, Britain seems to look at least as bad. What has gone wrong?

§2. The problem is that the rubbish created by our increasingly mobile lives *lasts* a lot longer than before. If it is not cleared up and properly thrown away, it stays in the undergrowth for years; a semi-permanent reminder of what a tatty little country we have now.

§3. Firstly, it is estimated that 10 billion plastic bags have been given to shoppers. These will take anything from 100 to 1,000 years to rot. However, it is not as if there is no solution to this. A few years ago, the Irish government introduced a tax on non-recyclable carrier bags and in three months reduced their use by 90%. When he was a minister, Michael Meacher attempted to introduce a similar *arrangement* in Britain. The plastics industry protested, of course. However, they need not have bothered; the idea was killed before it could draw breath, leaving supermarkets free to give away plastic bags.

§4. What is clearly necessary right now is some sort of combined initiative, both individual and collective, before it is too late. The alternative is to continue sliding downhill until we have a country that looks like a vast municipal rubbish tip. We may well be at the *tipping* point. Yet we know that people respond to their environment. If things around them are clean and tidy, people behave cleanly and tidily. If they are surrounded by squalor, they behave squalidly. Now, much of Britain looks pretty squalid. What will it look like in five years?

What does the underline word mean:

1. edge (§1)

a) part	b) side	c) pavement	d) surface

2. lasts (§2)

a) continues	b) disappears	c) creates	d) stays

3. arrangement (§3)

a) agreement	b) rule	c) regulation	d) law

4. tipping (§4)

a) final	b) middle	c) starting	d) breaking

LIVEWORKSHEETS