



**Upper secondary**  
**Week 8**

**The Write Tribe**

# PAPER 2 TECHNIQUES SECTION B



## Section C

[25 Marks]

### Text 3

The text below is about changing the British Petroleum oil disaster. Read it carefully and answer Questions 14 – 19.

- 1 With oil continuing to pour into the Gulf of Mexico, the Deepwater Horizon drilling rig explosion, which occurred on April 20, has been described as the worst environmental disaster in U.S. history. It is also referred to as the BP (British Petroleum) oil disaster.
- 2 The spill, carried by the loop current of the Gulf Stream, is expected to pass along the shore of Miami Beach by the end of June, and some reports say that the fast-moving current will reach the shores of North Carolina a few days later. Once the Gulf Stream carries the oil slick around Key West and moves it north, there is no stopping the oil from affecting the Atlantic Ocean and reaching the shores of Northern Europe.
- 3 Shipping lanes have to cross the Gulf Stream in order for container ships to reach main harbours on the East Coast such as New York, New Jersey, Norfolk and Savannah. As ships pass through the oil slick they will carry oil residue with them, attached to the ships' hulls, bringing oil into our harbours and marshlands. It is safe to say that the Eastern seaboard and some of the beaches will also be affected.
- 4 BP is currently spraying toxic chemical dispersants, in addition to deploying many miles of containment boom to corral the oil, on the leak at the source, at an unknown cost to the ecosystem, in an attempt to break up and spread out the oil. Planes are also dumping chemicals from above to prevent oil from reaching the shore in the same form that the notorious slicks did with the Exxon Valdez spill.
- 5 On May 24, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency announced that it would require BP to reduce dispersant use on the surface by at least half, but would allow untested subsurface applications to continue. The agency said it was conducting its own tests of the toxicity of various dispersants after BP refused EPA's order to switch to a less toxic brand.
- 6 As of June 7, it was estimated that more than 779,000 gallons of dispersants have been applied on the surface and 317,000 gallons have been pumped deep into the water column in an effort to dilute the oil. The effects of using dispersants at such depths or in such enormous volumes have not been tested. Moreover, Corexit, the dispersant that BP is pumping into the Gulf, has been banned in the United Kingdom due to concerns that it posed too much harm to the marine environment. While the environmental impact is incalculable, the impact on health could also pose a great risk, especially for pregnant women and young children. Pregnant women are more vulnerable to the toxic chemicals in crude oil as their cardiovascular and endocrine systems, in addition to the liver and kidneys, need to maintain a healthy balance to protect the health of both mother and child.
- 7 A developing baby, exposed to toxic chemicals, may be born with birth defects, deformities or endocrine problems. A newborn baby does not have a fully formed



immune system, so crude oil contaminates in sand could seriously affect a baby's health and children's growth, and development may also be affected by exposure to the toxic chemicals. Additional long-term health risks of exposure to toxic chemicals to all also include cancer and neurological damage. 40

8 Dozens in Louisiana have already been hospitalized with health problems blamed on airborne toxic chemicals in the air a month after oil began to flood the Gulf of Mexico. Those exposed to the growing oil spill include residents, clean-up workers and those providing relief aid. Thus far, 71 have been hospitalized due to spill-related health problems, according to the Louisiana state health department. And while some say chemicals in the oil itself are to blame, others speculate the dispersants used to break up the massive slick could be playing a role. Federal agencies, including the Occupational Safety and Health Administration and the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, also report that many relief workers responding to the oil spill have been exposed to dangerous levels of airborne toxins. 45 50

9 BP has the worst environmental and safety record of any oil company operating in America. Even after the 2005 Texas City Refinery blast that killed 15 people, BP continued to rack up safety violations. Despite the dangerous nature of all offshore oil drilling and BP's own egregious safety record, BP's exploration plan downplayed the possibility of a spill, repeatedly asserting that it was unlikely or virtually impossible. Amazingly, MMS approved BP's exploration plan without any consideration of the environmental consequences of an oil spill. 55

<http://www.ethicaltraveler.org/2010/10/the-gulf-oil-spill-crisis-of-unfathomable-consequences/>

14. (i) With reference to paragraph 1, what caused the oil spill? [1]

(ii) With reference to paragraph 2, when will the oil affect the Atlantic Ocean? [1]

15. From paragraph 3 (line 13), 'It is safe to say that the Eastern seaboard and some of the beaches will also be affected'.

(i) How would the Eastern seaboard be affected? [1]

(ii) What does the phrase in italics suggest about the author's opinion of the possibility of Easter seaboard being affected? [1]

16. From paragraph 8 (line 46), 'And while some say chemicals in the oil itself are to blame, others speculate the dispersants used to break up the massive slick could be playing a role'. [2]

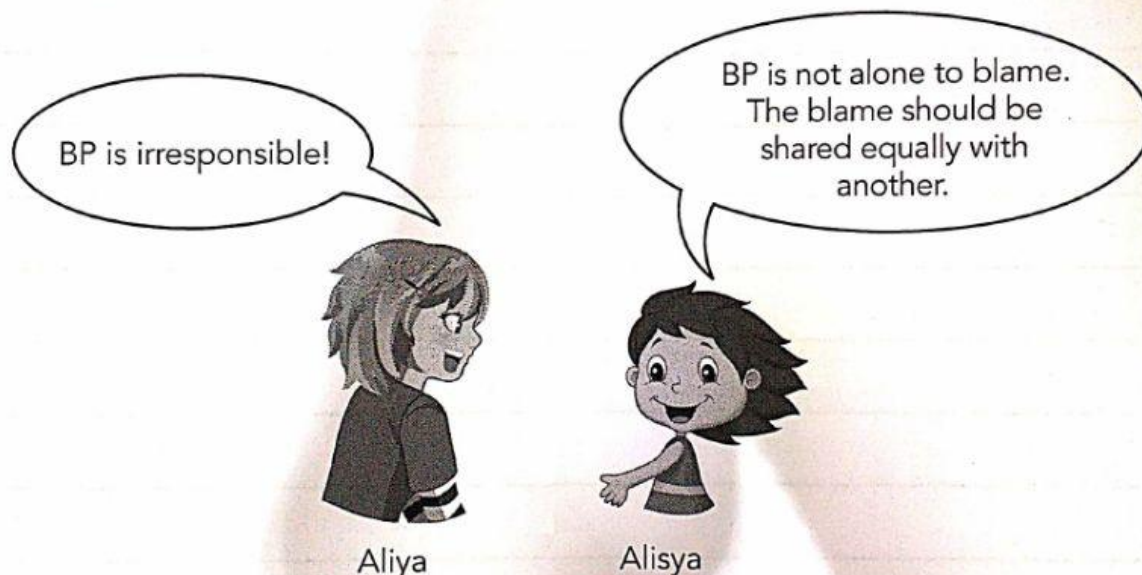
Quote a word/phrase which has the same meaning as:

hypothesize

a cause

17. With reference to the last paragraph, why does the writer find it amazing that BP's exploration plan was approved? [1]

18. Here is a part of a conversation between two students, Aliya and Alisya, who have read the article.



- (i) Quote evidence from paragraph 5 that Aliya could give to support her point. [1]

- (ii) Explain how Alisya could prove her point with evidence from the last paragraph. [2]



19. Using your own words as far as possible, summarise what is being done by BP to clean up the oil spill and the consequences of the clean-up.

Use only the material from paragraphs 4 – 8 of Text 3.

Your summary must be in continuous writing (not note form). It must not be longer than 80 words, not counting the words given to help you begin.

*Some solutions BP has employed include...*



No. of words  [15]