

A

**AQA** 

**GCSE**

**ENGLISH LANGUAGE**

**Paper 2 Writers' viewpoints and  
perspectives**

**8700/2**

**Insert**

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**3**

**The two sources that follow are:**

**SOURCE A: 21st Century non-fiction**

**‘All cyclists fear bad drivers’**

**An article published in ‘The Guardian’  
newspaper in 2016**

**SOURCE B: 19th Century literary  
non-fiction**

**‘ON A BICYCLE IN THE STREETS OF  
LONDON’**

**An article published in a magazine in 1896**

**Please turn the page over to see the  
sources**

## **SOURCE A**

**SOURCE A** was published in ‘The Guardian’ newspaper in 2016. In this article, the writer, Peter Walker, explores how people who cycle in the city are at risk from other road users.

### **All cyclists fear bad drivers**

- 1** Ask most people who ride a bike regularly in the UK and they’ll happily recount a list of terrifying or alarming incidents caused by the deliberate actions of another road user, usually someone in a motor vehicle.

**10** My last such incident happened just under a week ago, when a driver decided to overtake my bike very closely and at speed on a narrow residential street near my home in south-east London. I was

## 5

unharmmed, but the driver was  
15 gambling on the assumption that I  
would not, for example, hit a sudden  
pothole and swerve or wobble.

Inevitably the congested traffic  
meant I caught up with the driver at  
20 the next junction. His relatively  
minor, but nonetheless very real,  
roll of the dice with my chances of  
making it home safely that evening  
had all been for nothing. That's  
25 appallingly common.

A couple of things must be noted.  
First, however distressing such  
incidents can be – and there is  
evidence they help keep levels of  
30 cycling in Britain as pathetically low  
as they are – riding a bike is still  
safer than many people think. The  
average Briton would ride 2 million  
miles before they suffered a serious  
35 injury.

[Turn over]

## 6

**Secondly, while some are tempted to characterise such events as part of a ‘war on the roads’ it’s nothing of the sort, not least as the majority of cyclists also drive, and would thus be somehow waging war on themselves.**

**The thing to grasp is that it’s about the person, not the mode of transport they happen to be using at that particular time. As well as cycling, I walk, use buses and trains, sometimes drive, occasionally get planes. My personality is not changed, or defined, by any of those. I get the sense that all these forms of transport are populated by roughly similar proportions of idiots. They might push on to a train, barge past you on an escalator at an Underground station, recline their plane seat just as the meals are**

being served.

60 Driving is, however, different in one  
way. It is the sole event in most  
people's everyday lives where there  
is a plausible chance they could kill  
another human being. It's not about  
65 morals, it's simple physics. If I hit  
someone at 12mph even on my  
solid, heavy everyday bike it would  
impart something like 1,200 joules  
of kinetic energy. If I were in the  
70 last car I owned, a relatively tiny  
Nissan Micra, doing 30mph, you're  
suddenly at 100,000 joules. It's a  
very different impact.

It's why police should take incidents  
75 more seriously than they generally  
do. It's why the driving tuition and  
testing system should be revamped  
to place far more stress on drivers'  
vast, overriding responsibility to  
80 look out for and protect vulnerable

[Turn over]

## 8

**road users, those not cocooned within a tonne of metal.**

**85 Next time you're in a car and you think a cyclist in front is holding you up, I'd urge you to hold two very clear thoughts in your mind.**

**90 The first is this: despite the apparent belief of many drivers, cyclists are not obliged or even advised to ride in the gutter. If a rider is in the middle of the lane it could be to stay clear of opened doors on parked cars; it could be because the edge of the road is**  
**95 rutted and potholed; it might even be to stop drivers squeezing past when it would be clearly unsafe to do so.**

**100 Also bear this in mind: even if you're absolutely convinced the cyclist is in the wrong, hold back**



and be cautious anyway. In the majority of urban traffic situations, your overtake will be a very brief  
105 victory – they'll pedal past again in the queue for the next red light or junction. But most of all, remember that these are human beings, unprotected flesh and bone seeking  
110 to get to work, to see their friends, to return to their loved ones. However much of a rush you think you're in, it never, ever, justifies putting them at risk.

**Turn over for SOURCE B**

## SOURCE B

In this extract, the Countess of Malmesbury describes her experience of riding a bicycle in the streets of London. She wrote the magazine article in 1896, at a time when city streets were full of horse-drawn vehicles. Cycling was becoming a popular means of transport, for women as well as for men.

### ON A BICYCLE IN THE STREETS OF LONDON BY SUSAN, COUNTESS OF MALMESBURY



**1 A new sport has lately been  
devised by the drivers of hansom  
cabs.\* It consists of chasing the  
lady who rides her bicycle in the  
5 streets of the metropolis. Having  
now been the prey of the hansom  
cabman for nearly a year, and  
having given him several exciting  
runs, I cannot help feeling that  
10 cycling in the streets would be  
nicer, to use a mild expression, if  
he'd not try to kill me.**

**13 Riding on a track began to bore me  
as soon as I had learnt to balance,  
15 but I remained steadily practising  
until I could turn easily, cut figures  
of eight, get on and off quickly on  
either side and stop without  
charging into unwelcome  
20 obstacles. This done, burning to  
try my fate in traffic, and yet as  
nervous as a hare that feels the  
greyhound's breath, I launched my**

**[Turn over]**

## 12

**25** little bicycle early one Sunday morning in July into the stormy oceans of Sloane Street, on my way to visit a sick friend who lived about four miles off. The streets were really very clear, but I shall

**30** never forget my terror. I arrived in about two hours, streaming and exhausted, much more in need of assistance than the invalid I went to visit. Coming home it was just as

**35** bad; I reached my house about three o'clock and went straight to bed, where I had my lunch, in a state bordering on collapse. I only

**40** recount this adventure in order to encourage others who may have had the same experience as myself, but who may not have tried to

**43** conquer their nervousness.



45 What cured my fear was the  
purchase of a little book called  
‘Guide to Cycling’, where it is  
written that I had an actual legal  
existence on the roadway. Yes, I  
had as good a right to my life as  
50 even my arch-enemy the hansom.  
Cautious and alert, I merrily  
proceeded on my way, using my  
bicycle as a means of doing my  
morning shopping or other  
55 business. I found that my  
experience in driving an  
exceedingly naughty pony and cart

[Turn over]

## 14

in town stood me here in very good  
stead, my eye being well-educated  
60 to pace and distance.

Drivers of hansoms have various  
ways of inflicting torture on a  
fellow-creature, one of which is  
suddenly and loudly to shout out  
65 'Hi!' when they have ample room to  
pass, or when you are only  
occupying your lawful position in a  
string of vehicles. Also, they love  
to share your handle-bars and  
70 wheels, passing so close that if you  
swerve in the slightest it must bring  
you to serious grief. They are also  
fond of cutting in just in front of  
you, or deliberately checking you at  
75 a crossroads, well knowing that by  
so doing they risk your life.

I myself always ride peaceably  
about seven or eight miles an hour,  
and keep a good look-out some

## 15

80 way ahead, as by that means you  
can often slip through a tight place  
or avoid being made into a  
sandwich composed of a  
pedestrian who will not, and an  
85 omnibus\* which cannot, stop.

Many a time when I first began to  
ride in traffic have I meekly  
escorted an omnibus in a crowded  
street, thankful for the shelter it  
90 afforded from the wild and  
skirmishing jungle round me, and  
feeling like what I may perhaps  
describe as a dolphin playing round  
an ocean liner. Many acts of  
95 kindness have I received at a  
difficult crossroads from hard-  
worked men, to whom pulling up  
their horses must have been a  
serious inconvenience. Indeed, on  
100 one occasion, I might have been  
killed but for the consideration of a  
driver. I found myself wedged in

[Turn over]

## 16

between an omnibus and a large  
cart. They had both been standing,  
105 and at the moment of my  
appearance each pulled out from  
the kerb in a slanting direction. I  
was thus fairly caught in a trap; but,  
not having time to faint or go into  
110 hysterics, I thought it best to catch  
the nearest omnibus horse by the  
harness and try to stop him.

My life was safe, it is true; but what  
is life if your new white gloves are  
115 ruined?

## Glossary

- \* hansom cab – a taxi carriage pulled by a horse
- \* omnibus – a large horse-drawn vehicle used for carrying passengers

**END OF SOURCES**



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