



GCSE

4171/02

**ENGLISH/ENGLISH LANGUAGE
HIGHER TIER
UNIT 1 (READING)**

A.M. TUESDAY, 29 May 2012

1 hour

ADDITIONAL MATERIALS

Resource Material.

A 12 page answer book.

INSTRUCTIONS TO CANDIDATES

Use black ink or black ball-point pen.

Answer **all** questions.

Write your answers in the separate answer book provided.

INFORMATION FOR CANDIDATES

The total mark available for this unit is 40.

The number of marks in brackets will give you an indication of the time you should spend on each question or part-question.

Answer **all** the following questions.

*The passage on the opposite page is an on-line article: ‘Fantastic Mr Urban Fox’,
by Professor Stephen Harris.*

*The separate Resource Material is a newspaper article: ‘The Rise and Fall of Mr Fox’,
by Adam Edwards.*

Look at the first page of the article in the Resource Material: ‘The Rise and Fall of Mr Fox’ by Adam Edwards.

1. (a) Explain why foxes became so popular.
- (b) According to Adam Edwards, why have foxes become so common in towns?

[10]

Now look at the rest of the article by Adam Edwards.

2. How does Adam Edwards try to turn his readers against foxes?

You should track through the article and think about:

- what he says;
- how he says it.

[10]

Look at the article on the opposite page: ‘Fantastic Mr Urban Fox’ by Professor Stephen Harris.

3. How does Professor Stephen Harris try to prove that the urban fox has found ‘a place in our hearts’?

Track through the text and think about:

- what he says;
- how he says it.

[10]

To answer the following question you will need to use both texts.

4. Compare and contrast what these two texts say about the urban fox.

Organise your answer under the following headings:

- the threat foxes are to humans;
- the threat foxes are to other animals.

You must make it clear where you get your information from.

[10]

Fantastic Mr *Urban* Fox: The reason why our so-called pests are so at home in our cities. By Professor Stephen Harris

Whisper it – but deep down, we city dwellers love our urban foxes.

We may curse them when we find the contents of a ripped bin-bag strewn across the road, or when their barking has disturbed our suburban slumbers. But all this hostility is just an act. Secretly, we adore these red-coated invaders – as you can tell from our typical response to spotting one, maybe as it trots across the road or saunters casually along a garden wall. We stop for a moment and stare, marvelling at the sight of such a resourceful, intelligent and quite large wild animal so thoroughly at home in our human habitat. It's like a little bit of the countryside has suddenly come to town.

Which may be why so many of us feed them. Yes, that's right, feed them. Half of an urban fox's diet comes courtesy of us humans. I'm not talking about waste food they scavenge from our bins. (I find that nuisance is generally caused by stray dogs or greedy cats). I'm talking about food that is deliberately left out for them. As many as one in ten households regularly feed local foxes; sometimes with unexpected results.

The wife of a friend in Bristol was startled when she came into the kitchen one evening to find that a fox had calmly climbed through her cat flap and was busy eating the cat's food. But she didn't panic and nor did the fox. The animal fell into the habit of returning every night, knowing that not only would he find his special bowl of food but that, once he had finished, he could climb up onto the lady of the house's lap for a nap and to have his head stroked. This cosy arrangement continued happily for some time until the fox was caught one night by my survey team. We attached some tracking technology and the fox took it all in his stride and returned the next night for his dinner as usual. However, it was a rather frosty-sounding woman who rang me the next morning to complain that their after-dinner cuddle hadn't been the same now that the object of her affections had a plastic tag in each ear.

Stories like this show how totally at home foxes are in our cities. Unlike their country cousins, who are hunted and shot at daily, the foxes who live in towns have little to fear from humans, apart from our cars and our more ferocious breeds of dogs. This lack of fear is readily apparent – look how relaxed they are when you do spot them.

That's why I wasn't surprised to see the wonderful pictures of an urban fox riding up and down the escalators at an underground station in London.

However, it would be wrong to say that urban foxes cause no problems. Their barking can disturb a night's sleep, and to the normal diet of worms, insects and rats, I'm afraid must be added the occasional small pet – a rabbit, guinea-pig, even a kitten – that has been inadequately protected in a back garden. There is evidence of them very occasionally taking a curious nip at a baby left sleeping in a garden. But, as far as I know, no serious injuries have ever been recorded, and it pales into insignificance compared to the far more serious attacks on infants carried out by dogs. I see no reason why our love affair with the urban fox should not continue. They have found a place in our cities, and in our hearts.



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Resource Material

The Rise and Fall of Mr Fox

Once he had it all: good looks, fame and the affection of millions. As the hunting season gets under way, **Adam Edwards** asks: where did it all go wrong?



© Alamy images

In England, Mr Fox was hunted as vermin for centuries and he was always despised for his killing for pleasure, particularly of chickens. But in the twentieth century, his image changed. He became as lovable as Basil Brush, as cute as a Disney character.

So who then was to blame for giving the fox an image makeover, turning him into a victim of oppression? It was the poet John Masefield. In 1919, he wrote his hugely popular poem 'Reynard the Fox' which described the magic of country life and demonstrated a touching compassion for the animal. Over the following years, slowly but surely, the fox started to benefit from a public relations campaign that any *X Factor* contestant would die for. Advertisers cast him as an amusing fellow and Disney put the seal on his heroic status by turning him into a cartoon Robin Hood in 1981's *The Fox and the Hound*.

The makeover coincided with the rise and rise of the urban fox. He was protected by an army (the Animal Liberation Front), fawned over by animal charities and bunny-huggers, and finally saved from persecution by the law. He also began to find shelter among the houses of the suburbs and their long, lush gardens. He made slow progress at first, but now it is a rare night when residents in London do not record the carnivore on the prowl. The fox is regularly seen, even in daylight, in supermarket car parks, behind shopping centres, and scrabbling through bins near fast food shops. Each generation of foxes becomes more used to the ways of the town and is more able to deal with traffic. He has no predators, except man, and no shortage of food.

It is hard to believe that an animal so blessed as Mr Fox could, so casually, have chucked away his burnished image. Yet this summer he managed to do just that.

In 2010, he bit and mauled baby twins as they slept in their cot in London. And suddenly it dawned on the urban population of Britain that Basil Brush had a beastly side. He was nothing more than a feral chav, breeding indiscriminately and feeding off discarded buckets of KFC.

Last month it was revealed that he had crept into London Zoo and killed 11 penguins. For fun. Worse still, he decapitated the Queen's flamingos at Buckingham Palace and killed a number of pet rabbits, owned, unfortunately for him, by the children of various newspaper writers who then let rip in print.

It has not deterred him, and the charge sheet grows weekly: a woman in Fulham had her ear savagely bitten while sleeping in her bedroom. A baby boy was attacked in Dartford. In Islington a young girl had her arm mauled as she slept.

Across London, cries for the curbing of Reynard are mounting. Some have called – presumably in jest – for urban hunts to be introduced. It is hard for anyone in the countryside not to take pleasure in the misfortunes of the townies, particularly if you were one of the half million who demonstrated against the ban on foxhunting.

Actually, the only surprise in the fox's recent reversal of fortunes is that he was ever thought of as lovable in the first place. His cunning was first noted in the Bible, and in European folklore he has always symbolised trickery and deceit. In children's literature he rarely emerges with any credit. Even where the fox is a hero, as in Roald Dahl's *Fantastic Mr Fox*, he is also seen as a thief.

The events of 2010 are proof that the urban fox is more fearless than ever and there is no immediate solution to the problem. Shooting is the most effective form of control, but it is of limited practical use in towns and generally unpopular with local people. As a result, many councils have given up trying to control the fox at all.

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