



EXAMEN TERMINAL D'ANGLAIS - EPREUVE ORALE - NIVEAU 4 - MAI 2023 – NOM EXAMINATEUR·TRICE

DATE :	CRENEAU HORAIRE :
ETUDIANT·E : Name + N°	

Vous pouvez écrire sur le sujet ou le surligner mais devrez le rendre à la fin de votre oral.

Preparation – 1 hour:

- 1) Summary: present the text and summarize the main ideas in your own words.
 - 2) Commentary: present a structured analysis of the text with 2 or 3 main points that you illustrate with pertinent examples.
- (Recommendation: prepare a detailed outline (= *un plan détaillé*) as this will help you make an effective presentation).

Oral exam – 15 minutes:

- 1) Present your summary and commentary without reading your notes. (10 mn)
- 2) Questions and discussion with the examiner about your presentation. (5 mn)

Underfunded, rusting and fenced off¹, Britain's parks are under attack

Dan Hancox, Mon 29 Aug 2022 | The Guardian (abridged and adapted)

Crumbling parks infrastructure may be low down the list of priorities, given the desperate state of the NHS, the social care system, our sewage-filled² rivers and soaring demand for food banks. But these are dark times for our parks, which have been devastated by budget cuts since 2010.

5 Last week a Guardian investigation found that local authorities in England are spending £330m less a year on parks in real terms than they were a decade ago. The study found that less affluent³ parts of the country have been hit the hardest by austerity, with parks in the north-west and the north-east suffering in particular.

10 Our urban parks are the last vestiges of truly free public space in an age of privatised squares and local authority fire sales⁴ of public assets. They offer robust support for our mental as well as physical health, they offer us solace⁵ through solitude and joyful social space without an obligation to buy anything – they are democracy rendered in three dimensions, with jumpers for goalposts in the background.

15 But now drastic underfunding is seriously degrading not just the quality and safety of public parks but also their accessibility and very publicness. Big city parks – especially those in London, but also in Bristol, Newcastle and Nottingham – are increasingly seeking to plug the holes⁶ in their budgets with commercial income generated through paid-entry festivals that render public parks effectively semi-privatised for large portions of the summer.

In 2019, I found that many London's borough councils⁷ were cordoning off⁸ public space for weeks at a time in the warmest months of the year. With substantial festival infrastructure taking several days

20 to build and dismantle, some councils were simply leaving their fences⁹ up in between bookings, leaving areas of the park inaccessible even outside scheduled events.

It is ironic that they are becoming less accessible spaces when the pandemic lockdowns highlighted just how essential our urban parks are – in particular to those less well off, to people living in overcrowded flats without gardens or balconies.

25 Our green spaces have always been contested spaces and have been fenced off¹ and preserved for an elite few at numerous points in our history. Many city parks today only exist because of public pressure from below – such as Victoria Park in Hackney, created in the 19th century as respite¹⁰ for the poor from the dark and disease-ridden slums¹¹ of industrial east London.

30 One of my most beloved local places for a walk is a delightfully wild, wooded and peaceful little park called One Tree Hill. For centuries it had been this way, a place where children climbed trees and picked flowers and all people could roam¹² freely, until it was suddenly enclosed by a golf club in 1896.

35 The seizure of this public space was met with fierce opposition over the following months. In October 1897 a large crowd gathered to protest the enclosure, and 500 police were summoned to protect the golf club's property. But thousands of local people fought and overwhelmed¹³ the police to pull down the fences and reclaim the land. A few years later the council purchased the land to create the officially protected public park we can all enjoy today.

Private capital does not rest in its efforts to sequester, fence off and draw profit from that which is held in common. In what the historian Dr Katrina Navickas has called “enclosure by privatisation”, we see the same patterns repeated in the threats to our public parks today.

40 The story in the soil is one of vital historic battles for free assembly, protest, foraging and grazing – but also for a place of play, relaxation, ritual, exercise and peace for all ages, classes and races. How many other spaces in Britain are left that truly belong to us all?

1. enclosed - 2. filled with domestic waste water - 3. wealthy - 4. sales (of public assets) at a much reduced price - 5. comfort - 6. to reduce the deficit - 7. \approx *les conseils municipaux* - 8. making (public space) inaccessible to the general public - 9. barriers - 10. break, breathing space - 11. a district of a city marked by poverty and inferior living conditions (\approx *bidonvilles, taudis*) - 12. walk, stroll - 13. defeated