

Examen écrit- session 2 (Rattrapage) - Semestre 2 2022-2023

Langue : Anglais	Niveau : 6	Date : 24 juin 2023	Durée : 1h30
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Simon Armitage is a British poet (the current national Poet Laureate), and lives in West Yorkshire. The Pennine Way is a National Trail in England, with a small section in Scotland. The trail stretches for 268 miles (431 km) from Edale, in the northern Derbyshire Peak District, and ends just inside the Scottish border. The path runs along the Pennine hills, sometimes described as the "backbone of England".

In the summer of 2010 I decided to walk the Pennine Way. I wanted to write a book about the North, one that could observe and describe the land and its people, and one that could encompass elements of memoir as well as saying something about my life as a poet. I identified the Pennine Way as the perfect platform: a kind of gantry running down the backbone of the country offering countless possibilities for perspectives and encounters, with every leg of the journey a new territory and a new chapter. But I decided to approach it in two unconventional ways. Firstly, I decided to walk from north to south. This might not seem like such a revolutionary act; a walk is a walk – can it really matter which is the beginning and which is the end? And yet the majority of people who complete the Pennine Way start in Derbyshire and breast the finishing line in Scotland. The theory, it seems, is to keep the sun, wind and rain at your back rather than walking for three weeks with the unpredictable and unhelpful meteorological elements of the British summer in your face. Accordingly, all of the guide books are written in that direction. But as a poet, I'm naturally contrary. If most writers are writing in prose, mostly I'm writing something else. Poetry, by definition, is an alternative, and an obstinate one at that. It often refuses to reach the right-hand margin or even the bottom of the page. Prose fills a space, like a liquid poured in from the top, but poetry *occupies* it, arrays itself in formation, sets up camp and refuses to budge. It is a dissenting and wilful art form, and most of its practitioners are signed-up member of the awkward squad. So against all the prevailing advice, against the prevailing weather, and against much of the prevailing signage, I undertook to walk the Pennine Way in the 'wrong' direction. Walking south also made sense because it meant I'd be walking home. From what I'd read about the Way, almost every section of it offered multiple opportunities and numerous excuses to give up rather than carry on. I was going to need a consistent reason to keep going, and the humiliation of failing to arrive in the village where I was born seemed like the perfect incentive.

Secondly, and even more optimistically, I announced publicly that I would attempt the walk as a kind of modern-day troubadour, giving poetry readings at every stop, bartering and trading my way down country, offering only poetry as payment. Early in the year, I put the following page on my website.

The Pennine Way – Can you Help?

Hello. In July 2010 I'm walking the Pennine Way. It's usually walked from south to north but I'm attempting it the other way round, because that way it will be downhill all the way, right? I'm doing the walk as a poet. Wherever I stop for the night I'm going to give a reading, for which there will be no charge, but at the end of the evening I'll pass a hat around and people can give me what they think I'm worth. I want to see if I can pay my way from start to finish on the proceeds of my poetry alone. So, it's basically 256 miles of begging.

If you live on or near one of the recognised stopping points on the Pennine Way and would be willing to host or organise a reading for me, be it in a room in a pub, a village hall, a church, a library, a school, a barn, or even in your living room, do get in touch. If

you can throw in B&B and a packed lunch, sherpa my gear along to the next stop, point me in the right direction the next day or even want to walk that leg of the journey with me, so much the better. I'm pretty well house-trained and know at least three moderately funny anecdotes.

And even if you can't offer a reading, if you see a weather-beaten poet coming over the horizon early next summer, do say hello. Many thanks.

SA

A fortnight before I set off I traced out the route and the reading venues with a pink highlighter pen, and couldn't find enough room in the house to lay out the nine required Ordnance Survey maps end to end. As a geography graduate who once dreamed of becoming a cartographer, I pride myself on a certain amount of navigational ability. But seeing the walk sprawled out in front of me, like some great long stair-carpet, the enormity and ridiculousness of the task started to dawn on me. Or hit me, rather, as a series of bullet points, fired from close range.

- . It's a long way.
- . It's not a straight line
- . Some of the maps have very little in the middle of them apart from spot-heights and the name of hills.
- . The only maps I've looked at for the last ten years are A-Z street maps, and not many of them either since the advent of the SatNav. Will I be able to cope without an electronically voiced Sally or Bruce telling me to go straight ahead at the roundabout?
- . These maps are not handy and useful like road atlases, but wide, spineless and unwieldy sheets. It's hard enough trying to open them, let alone fold them back up again. What will that be like in the wind?
- . Or the rain?
- . For three weeks I will be reading these maps upside down.

[...]

Can I actually walk the Pennine Way? I have contemplated this question many times over the preceding months, and the truthful answer is this: I don't know. I'm forty-seven, I weigh twelve stone and twelve pounds, and when I look in the mirror, I see a reasonably fit, relatively healthy person. And from my father I have inherited a stubborn streak. Some people have interpreted this as 'ambition', but it isn't, it's just a pig-headed refusal to give up or accept failure particularly when the chances of success are microscopically small or when defeat would be a far easier and more dignified option. On the other hand, I have an unspecified lower back problem that incapacitates me a couple of times a year, and although I wouldn't describe my lifestyle as sedentary exactly, it's certainly true that on certain days my legs do very little other than dangle under a desk or propel me from the multi-storey car park to the ticket office at Wakefield Westgate railway station. And from my mother I have inherited 'small lungs', apparently. I don't know if this has ever been clinically measured, but our poor capacity for storing and processing oxygen is family lore, and from an early age I was warned never to dream of being crowned King of the Mountains in the Tour de France or to take up a career as a pearl diver. In terms of training, I've done a bit of stretching and a bit of swimming, plus a few hours on a primitive cycling machine in my mother-in-law's back bedroom. I've also moved house. Only a couple of miles down the road, but hand-balling dozens of cubic metres of boxes containing thousands of books must count as some kind of physical conditioning. And I've been to Glastonbury, the original intention being to test my boots in the mud, though Glastonbury 2010 turned out to be a bit of a scorcher, so all I know is that my size ten GTX Mammuts are 100 percent resistant to dust and cider. 'I've done a bit of mental preparation,' I tell people, when they ask, and have reasoned with myself that I will undergo most of the physical training en route, preparing for day two by walking on day one, and so on and so forth. What could possibly go wrong?

Simon Armitage, *Walking Home*, 2012

Answer the following questions in English **using your own words**:

1. Explain Simon Armitage's project and its originality. (6 pts) (150 words or more)
2. Despite the simplicity of the project ("*a walk is a walk*" Armitage writes), how is it a radical experience for anyone living in our society? How does it question some of the basic values of contemporary society? (6 pts) (150 words or more)
3. Choose one of the following subjects: (8 pts) (250 words or more)
 - a. Simon Armitage's motivation in completing the journey is to get to his village. Is going away all about our sense of home?
 - b. Simon Armitage originally wanted to write about the North. Would you say there is a particular identity attached to the North, whatever the country? Does this have to do with its situation on a map?
 - c. Simon Armitage writes "*Prose fills a space, like a liquid poured in from the top, but poetry occupies it, arrays itself in formation, sets up camp and refuses to budge.*" Comment.