

# Mystery texts



## **Instructions**

Work in groups. As a group read each ‘mystery text’ aloud and make educated guesses as to who wrote the text, why they wrote the text (purpose), to whom they wrote (audience), when they wrote and where they wrote (context). Comment on the uses of style and structure. How does your understanding of the world affect your guesses? After your discussion of each text, turn over the card to reveal its context. How accurate were you?

## **Mystery text 1**

As with the commander of an army, or the leader of any enterprise, so it is with the mistress of a house. Her spirit will be seen through the whole establishment; and just in proportion as she performs her duties intelligently and thoroughly, so will her domestics follow in her path. Of all those acquirements, which more particularly belong in the feminine character, there are none which take a higher rank, in our estimation, than such as enter into a knowledge of household duties; for on these are perpetually dependent the happiness, comfort and well-being of a family.

## **Context of Mystery text 1**

This extract is taken from *Beeton's Book of Household Management* by Isabella Beeton, first published in 1861, which was a bestselling book and cookbook on how to run a household in Victorian Britain.

## **Mystery text 2**

X: We need somebody over there that can get us some better plans than we've got. What I want is somebody that can lay up some plans to trap these guys and whup the hell out of them. Kill some of them, that's what I want to do.

Y: I'll try and bring something back that will meet that objective.

## **Context of Mystery text 2**

This extract is from a recorded conversation in the White House between US President Lyndon B. Johnson (X) and Secretary of Defense, Robert McNamara (Y) taken on 10 March, 1964. They are talking about the war in Vietnam.

### **Mystery text 3**

You may purchase male or female slaves from among the foreigners who live among you. You may also purchase the children of such resident foreigners, including those who have been born in your land. You may treat them as your property, passing them on to your children as a permanent inheritance.

### **Context of Mystery text 3**

This is an extract from the Bible, Leviticus 25: 44-46  
New Living Translation (NLT) .



## **Mystery text 4**

People always said that I didn't give up my seat because I was tired, but that isn't true. I was not tired physically, or no more tired than I usually was at the end of a working day. I was not old, although some people have an image of me as being old then. I was forty-two. No, the only tired I was, was tired of giving in.

## **Context of Mystery text 4**

This is an extract from *My Story* an autobiography by Rosa Parks, published in 1992, about her refusal to move to the back of a racially segregated bus on 1 December, 1955, in Montgomery, Alabama.

## **Mystery text 5**

Dear friend, Friends have been urging me to write to you for the sake of humanity. But I have resisted their request, because of the feeling that any letter from me would be an impertinence. Something tells me that I must not calculate and that I must make my appeal for whatever it may be worth. It is quite clear that you are today the one person in the world who can prevent a war which may reduce humanity to a savage state. Must you pay that price for an object however worthy it may appear to you to be? Will you listen to the appeal of one who has deliberately shunned the method of war not without considerable success? Any way I anticipate your forgiveness, if I have erred in writing to you. I remain, your sincere friend, X

## **Context of Mystery text 5**

Person 'X' is Mahatma Gandhi, a pacifist who led India in its struggle for independence from the British. He wrote this letter to Adolf Hitler on 23 July, 1939, shortly before the Nazis invaded Poland.