

## Reading newspapers

Read each of the following extracts from online newspaper articles which were all published on 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2007, the day after the England football team failed to qualify for Euro 2008, and then complete the tasks that follow:

### FA \_\_\_\_\_ McClaren's contract

1 Steve McClaren's \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ 16-month tenure as the England manager came to a \_\_\_\_\_ end today when he was sacked following an \_\_\_\_\_ FA board meeting at Soho Square.

2 The decision to \_\_\_\_\_ McClaren's contract, which was taken unanimously by the FA's 12-man board, came as little surprise following last night's 3-2 defeat at home to Croatia - a result that confirmed England's failure to qualify for a major tournament for the first time since 1994. McClaren's assistant, Terry Venables, also had his contract \_\_\_\_\_d.

3 The FA chairman Geoff Thompson promised that the organisation would now instigate a "full root and branch examination of the whole England senior team set-up" which would begin "with immediate effect".

4 "Like every England fan, we are bitterly disappointed that we have failed to qualify," he said. "I know Steve feels that disappointment more than anyone. Of course, we have no divine right to play in any major tournament - but it is quite right that qualification is expected."

5 McClaren leaves his post as statistically the worst England manager in history, having lost five of his 18 matches in charge. However the FA's chief executive, Brian Barwick, said he had "no regrets" about appointing McClaren on a four-year deal, even though it would cost the FA £2.5m to pay off his contract.

6 "I don't regret that now; I think he has tried very hard," he said. "But in the end, not qualifying for Euro 2008 means he comes up short. Of course we're embarrassed, disappointed, disappointed like all fans."

From: Guardian Unlimited © Guardian News and Media Limited 2007

1. Which of the following words do you think fits best into the headline?

ends      terminates      finishes      cancels

Explain the reason for your choice of word.

2. In which order do you think these words fit in to the spaces in the first paragraph?

predictable      dismal      emergency      lacklustre

3. Which word could be used in paragraph 2 to fit both the spaces? Think about the tone of the article and the opinion of the writer before making your choice.

**\_\_\_\_\_ McClaren: Being \_\_\_\_\_ by England is the 'saddest day of my career'**

1 Steve McClaren this afternoon took the blame for England's disastrous exit from Euro 2008 and \_\_\_\_\_ he would not make any excuses.

2 His contract as head coach was "terminated" by the Football Association following the defeat by Croatia at Wembley that left \_\_\_\_\_ of fans \_\_\_\_\_.

3 He spoke out after FA chiefs, who appointed McClaren 18 months ago, said they were \_\_\_\_\_ and "bitterly disappointed" at the failure to qualify for a major tournament.

4 McClaren, who refused to resign and will collect a £2.5million pay-off, said: "You live and die by results, I asked to be judged on that and people have. I said at the beginning it was \_\_\_\_\_ responsibility, and results haven't gone my way."

5 He said it was one of the saddest days of his career and he felt a "huge disappointment for the country, the \_\_\_\_\_ and the fans".

6 McClaren paid tribute to the FA and \_\_\_\_\_ staff and refused to blame his \_\_\_\_\_, saying: "The players have given me total support. Their attitude was fantastic all the way through. No matter what people say and the criticism coming their way, they are a fantastic bunch of players. I can't criticise anybody."

7 McClaren denied there had been issues surrounding players' \_\_\_\_\_ lifestyles, saying: "These are professional footballers who want to play for England. All I will say is they are a pleasure to work with, they really want to achieve. Unfortunately \_\_\_\_\_ have come up short and we all take responsibility."

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1. Fit the words below into the article; read it through carefully before you make your choices:

millions	nation	sacked
insisted	we	his
millionaire	terminated	footballers
embarrassed	my	devastated

## England \_\_\_\_\_

**By Tim Rich**

1 Once more the \_\_\_\_\_ is picked over, once more failure is analysed and once more the Football Association promises a thorough-going review of the English game.

2 This morning at Soho Square, the FA did the easy bit, sacking Steve McClaren, a manager who **was badly** inadequate even for the relatively straightforward task of qualifying for the European Championship. A man who said he wanted to be judged on results and who, in 15 months, produced only one performance of note.

3 It was against Guus Hiddink's Russia, who almost made as big a hash of qualification as England, losing in Israel and then \_\_\_\_\_ past Andorra with a 1-0 win. They were not as good as we thought they were but they were better than England.

4 The next bit was a little bit harder, sacking McClaren's assistant Terry Venables, and stifling the cries from well-worn sections of the media that he should be allowed to "rescue" England. Those supporters who had seen Venables attempt to "rescue" Portsmouth, Crystal Palace and Leeds United would be grateful for that. For once, Venables was not allowed to escape responsibility.

5 Bloodletting is easy, especially on mornings like Nov 22. The rest is far harder to come to terms with. There is a dearth of qualified English managers to replace McClaren - none has even the slightest experience of the Champions League. Of the candidates to succeed Sven-Goran Eriksson, Sam Allardyce and Alan Curbishley appear considerably weaker options than they were in 2006.

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1. Choose an appropriate headline for this article (you can use more than one word!).
2. Which word best fits in to the gap in the first paragraph?

rubbish                  finish                  wreckage                  game                  competition

3. Try to replace the words in bold in the second paragraph with a more effective phrase.
4. Which of the following verbs best fits the gap in the third paragraph to show the writer isn't impressed by Russia's performance either?

rushing                  racing                  sneaking                  plodding                  squeezing

## Steve McClaren: No \_\_\_\_\_

- 1 Steve McClaren accepted the \_\_\_\_\_ for England's \_\_\_\_\_ Euro 2008 campaign today.
- 2 "I take full \_\_\_\_\_, results haven't gone our way and we haven't qualified and I've \_\_\_\_\_ the price," he told a press conference.
- 3 McClaren said he had "no excuses" and that his team had had "enough games" to secure qualification.
- 4 But he \_\_\_\_\_ to "bounce back" from his "huge disappointment".
- 5 He said: "First of all can I say this is one of the \_\_\_\_\_ days of my career.
- 6 "Eighteen months ago (when he was appointed) was the \_\_\_\_\_ day of my career and I was honoured to be the England head coach and for 18 months I've enjoyed every minute.
- 7 "It is a sad day to have been relieved of my duties but I understand the decision of the FA."
- 8 McClaren \_\_\_\_\_ that the FA's chief executive Brian Barwick informed him of the decision this morning.
- 9 "With regret, unfortunately we didn't qualify and we've come to this situation," he said.
- 10 "Brian phoned me this morning at 10.30 and told me after the meeting of the decision.
- 11 "Obviously there's going to be a \_\_\_\_\_ for a new head coach. The future is the \_\_\_\_\_, all I can do is concentrate on getting over this huge disappointment and looking forward.
- 12 "Although it is a sad day I will \_\_\_\_\_, bounce back and wait for my next challenge. I'm not one to lie on a beach. I believe after 18 months I am a better coach than I was 18 months ago."

Copyright: the *Mirror* newspaper

2. Fit the words below into the article; read it through carefully before you make your choices:

paid	responsibility	recover
excuses	proudest	calamitous
revealed	future	pledged
clamour	blame	saddest

**Macca: I'll take the \_\_\_\_\_**

1 STEVE McCLAREN insists he will shoulder the blame for England's failure to reach Euro  
2008.  
2 The FA gave Mac the \_\_\_\_\_ after an emergency board meeting this morning.  
3 And, after 15 torrid months in charge, the ex-Middlesbrough boss admitted: "I understand  
the decision.  
4 "I'm not making any excuses — we had enough games to do it.  
5 "I said at the beginning it was my responsibility. I said I would live and die by results — and  
they haven't gone my way.  
6 "I take full responsibility. We haven't qualified and I've paid the price."  
7 McClaren, who saw \_\_\_ side lose 3-2 to Croatia at Wembley last night, added: "This is one  
of the saddest days of my career.  
8 "When I was appointed it was the proudest day of my career — I was honoured to be the  
England head coach.  
9 "I've enjoyed every minute but it is sad to have been relieved of my duties."

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1. Which word do you think best finishes the headline from the list below? Read the article first to get an idea of the tone and opinion of the writer:

money                      blame                      responsibility                      other job

2. Which word best fits in to the gap in paragraph 2?

sack      news                      boot                      information

Explain the reasons for your decision.

3. Which of the following words is most suitable for the gap in paragraph 7?

the                      our                      his                      England's

Explain the reasons for your decision.

**Extension activity**

Write your own newspaper articles about the event (make it up if you don't know what happened) or write about another sports tournament – one should support the person/team the article is about (here it's McClaren and the England football team) and in the other it should be obvious the writer thinks the person and/or the team deserved what happened to them.