

## 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 answer the questions that follow:

### FA terminates McClaren's contract

- 1 Steve McClaren's dismal and lacklustre 16-month tenure as the England manager came to a predictable end today when he was sacked following an emergency FA board meeting at Soho Square.
- 2 The decision to terminate 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 terminated.
- 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. Why do you think the word 'terminates' has been chosen for the title rather than a synonym such as 'ends'?
2. Pick out the two adjectives that have been used to describe McClaren's performance in the first paragraph. In what ways are they effective? Why did the writer include them?
3. Which phrase in paragraph 2 shows that McClaren's sacking was expected?
4. What does the quote from Geoff Thompson in paragraph 3 about 'a full root and branch examination' suggest is going to happen?
5. Why do you think Geoff Thompson refers to the feelings of members of the FA as being 'like every England fan'?
6. What effect do the inclusion of statistics (such as McClaren's number of defeats, length of his original contract and amount of money) have in paragraph 5?
7. Why does Barwick repeat the word 'disappointed' in the last paragraph?
8. What do you think is the writer's opinion of what happened to the England team and McClaren? What makes you think this?

**Terminated McClaren: Being sacked 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 insisted 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 millions of fans devastated.
- 3 He spoke out after FA chiefs, who appointed McClaren 18 months ago, said they were embarrassed 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 my 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 nation and the fans".
- 6 McClaren paid tribute to the FA and his staff and refused to blame his footballers, 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' millionaire 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 we have come up short and we all take responsibility."

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1. What similarities do you notice between the *Daily Mail* and *Guardian* headlines?
2. Which adjective is used to describe England's exit from the championship in paragraph 1?
3. In what way is this adjective similar to those used to describe McClaren in paragraph 1 of the *Guardian* article?
4. What effect does the use of the word 'millions' have when describing the fans in paragraph 2? Why didn't the writer just write that 'fans were devastated'?
5. In paragraph 4 why do you think McClaren's refusal to resign is in the same compound sentence as the amount he will receive as a pay-off?
6. Why do you think McClaren has referred to 'the country, the nation and the fans' in paragraph 5 rather than just the fans?
7. In what way does McClaren's attitude seem to have changed slightly in paragraph 7 in comparison to earlier in the article?
8. What do you think is the writer's opinion of what happened to the England team and McClaren? What makes you think this?

## England denied position in Premier League

**By Tim Rich**

- 1 Once more the wreckage 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 proved painfully 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 squeezing 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. In what way is the headline of this article a pun?
2. Which phrase is repeated three times in the first paragraph and for what reason?
3. How is McClaren's performance described in paragraph 2?
4. What does the writer think of the Russian team? Find evidence from paragraph 3 to prove your point.
5. How does the writer convey his satisfaction that Venable was also sacked?
6. What hints does the writer give that the future of the England team does not look good?
7. What do you think is the writer's opinion of what happened to the England team and McClaren? What makes you think this?

## Steve McClaren: No excuses

- 1 Steve McClaren accepted the blame for England's calamitous Euro 2008 campaign today.
- 2 "I take full responsibility, results haven't gone our way and we haven't qualified and I've paid 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 pledged to "bounce back" from his "huge disappointment".
- 5 He said: "First of all can I say this is one of the saddest days of my career.
- 6 "Eighteen months ago (when he was appointed) was the proudest 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 revealed 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 clamour for a new head coach. The future is the future, all I can do is concentrate on getting over this huge disappointment and looking forward.
- 12 "Although it is a sad day I will recover, 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

1. Is it clear from the headline whether it is McClaren's opinion or the newspaper's? Why do you think this might have been done?
2. Compare the adjective used to describe England's effort in paragraph one with those used in other articles.
3. Why do you think so much of the article is direct quotes from McClaren? What effect do these have on the report?
4. Why has the word 'revealed' been used in paragraph 8? What might it suggest to the reader?
5. What do you think is the writer's opinion of what happened to the England team and McClaren? What makes you think this?

## Macca: I'll take the blame

1 STEVE McClAREN insists he will shoulder the blame for England's failure to reach Euro 2008.

2 The FA gave Mac the boot 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 his 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. What similarities can you see between this headline and the one on the Mirror article?
2. What effect does it have that the Sun writer has used a nickname for McClaren both in the headline and in paragraph 2?
3. In paragraph 1 what effect does the verb 'insists' have? What does it suggest about McClaren's attitude to what has happened?
4. Why is the phrase 'the boot' effective in paragraph 2? In what way might this be seen as a pun?
5. What does the word 'torrid' in paragraph 3 suggest about McClaren's time as England manager?
6. Why have the long quotations from McClaren been used in paragraphs 4, 5 and 6? Count up the number of times the word 'I' has been used and comment on its effect.
7. In paragraph 7 why has the writer referred to the England team as 'his side'?
8. What do you think is the writer's opinion of what happened to the England team and McClaren? What makes you think this?

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**Comparing the newspaper articles**

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1. Compare and contrast the various headlines.
2. Look at the opening paragraphs of each article and discuss how the writer's views are conveyed through the first few lines of each report.
3. Make a list of all the adjectives that are used to describe McClaren and his efforts as England manager. Write a couple of paragraphs about the type of words that have been used and how they might affect the reader.
4. Comment on the use of language in the two broadsheet newspaper articles (the *Guardian* and the *Telegraph*) and compare it with that used in the tabloids (the *Daily Mail*, the *Mirror* and the *Sun*).
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