

- 1 The following text is a transcription from a televised studio discussion among a panel of four women. They are talking about whether parents should be best friends with their children.
- a) Imagine that you write an advice column for a parenting magazine. A parent has written a letter asking for your advice about how friendly their relationship should be with their child. Your response will be printed next to the letter. Write your advice in 120–150 words. [10]
- b) Compare the language and style of your advice with the language and style of the conversation. [15]

TRANSCRIPTION KEY

(1) = pause in seconds

(.) = micro-pause

// = speech overlap

UPPER CASE = loud volume

underlining = stressed sound/syllable(s)

[laughs] = paralinguistic feature

Jools: I've always thought it's very important to have a very close relationship with my daughters

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Cath: certainly if theyve got
an emotional problem they know they can talk to me about anything

2 Texts A and B both involve adventurous pursuits.

Text A is an extract from the opening of an article from the lifestyle section of a newspaper. The writer recounts his experience of hiking in the Alps.

Text B is an advertisement from the website for the Marathon des Sables (MdS), an annual footrace which takes place over several days in the Sahara desert.

Compare the language and style of Text A and Text B. [25]

Text A

There it was in the distance—a scowling black triangular cliff surmounted by a quiff of wind-whipped snow. We were never going to get to the top of that. These people had to be joking, I thought. Weren't they?

A few months ago I had a brilliant idea for a cheapo weekend break. I had always wondered what it was like to go to the Italian Alps in the summer. So I had truffled up¹ some low-cost plane tickets to Turin², and for ages I had been dreaming about upland pastures with evergreen scents and butterflies; lovely streams to splash in; the clonk of cowbells—that kind of thing. At any rate, that was the concept I had sold to my wife. 5

When we turned up at the hotel on the Friday night, it was clear that we had come ill-prepared for what our hosts had in mind. Gloves? I said. Hats? Goggles? We didn't have any of that malarkey³. As for waterproof jackets and trousers—well, I proposed to go in my tweed jacket, if that was all right with them. They laughed, in a slightly incredulous way. 10

Stephano, our guide, indicated where he proposed to take us. I looked anxiously at my wife, but she seemed to be taking things in her stride. The truth is that I don't think either of us fully grasped, even then, what we were letting ourselves in for. 15

The next morning we set out with Stephano, and I was relieved to find that we were going by car. We finally came to a place that already seemed impossibly high—at the top of the highest ski-lift. Was that it, then? Was our excursion complete? It was not.

We got out and began to walk. Higher and higher we went, until there was no grass and no trees. There weren't even any birds, let alone butterflies; and the landscape had changed to a desolate and blasted moonscape, full of haphazard piles of metamorphic rock, colossal slabs broken and ruined as though eternally dynamited by some malign cosmic force. 20

By this stage I was starting to feel the effects of hauling myself up the mountain, and Stephano made a sympathetic puffing noise, like a walrus. "Are you all right?" he asked. "We can always stop or go back." Well, there is only one way to respond to a challenge like that, isn't there? We kept going. 25

¹ *truffled up*: located

² *Turin*: a city in Northern Italy close to the Alps

³ *malarkey*: nonsense

Text B

Known simply as the MdS, the race is a gruelling multi-stage adventure through a formidable landscape in one of the world's most inhospitable climates—the Sahara desert. The rules require you to be self-sufficient, to carry with you on your back everything that you need to survive except water. You are given a place in a tent to sleep at night, but any other equipment and food must be carried.

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Started in 1986 by Patrick Bauer, the race is now in its 28th consecutive year and continues to grow in popularity every edition. Places are much sought after, but those who do make it to the start line are richly rewarded. Under the scorching Moroccan sun, life-long friendships are fostered through a shared experience of unforgettable days spent running across salt pans, up desert-mountains, through ruined towns and through the occasional sand storm.

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The Marathon des Sables is open to individuals and teams of individuals, amateur and elite runners. With runners coming from all over the world, the MdS is a truly international event that has a positive impact on the local environment and in local communities. Through the MdS foundation Solidarite, runners have raised funds to help hundreds of families through education and improve their quality of life.

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Imagine yourself in the Sahara desert with nothing but rolling sand dunes for miles around. When you plough your feet through the sand, a fine dust kicks up. You can't feel the sweat dripping down your face because it's evaporating in the baking heat. Your lungs feel parched. Today's temperature is over 100 degrees Fahrenheit (50 degrees centigrade). Part of your brain is screaming at you to stop, right now, to drop out of the race, but the other part of your brain is stronger. The other part of your brain knows that when you complete the final stage of the Marathon des Sables, you will have run the equivalent of five and a half marathons in five or six days.

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No one can deny that finishing the MdS is an incredible accomplishment. But more importantly, you will walk away with a new slant on life—that you can achieve anything you set your mind to do.

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Join us for the event that defined the word ULTRAMARATHON.

Enter the MdS.

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