



Reading for Meaning

STUDENT INTRODUCTION

- ▶ The Isle of Wight Steam Railway is a working railway that shows us what steam trains and stations were like on the Isle of Wight.
- ▶ Some documents still exist, like this one below.
- ▶ Can you work out what the meaning, purpose and context of this text document is?

Understanding Railway Texts

READING TASK

- ✓ Your task is to analyse the language content in extract below, from 1845.
- ✓ Read the resource, thoroughly.
- ✓ Answer the questions on page 1&2. Your teacher may require you to write on this sheet, or on paper.

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Declaration of Landowners & other Inhabitants.

WE, the undersigned, Landowners, Clergy, Yeomen, Traders, and others, Inhabitants of the Isle of Wight, have seen with extreme surprise, Advertisements having reference to a project for establishing Railways in the Island.

We hereby declare our direct and determined hostility to this wild and dangerous speculation, which, so far from benefiting the Island, would painfully affect its interests, and would threaten with ruin a large class of its inhabitants.

Neither the importance of our Trade, nor the extent of our Roads, nor the size of the limited area to which we are confined, lead us to require any facilities of transport other than those which we at present enjoy; nor do we believe that the Visitors, whose occasional residence gives profit and support to numbers, would wish to exchange for the hurried speed of a Railway those ordinary means of conveyance to the quiet enjoyment of which they look for pleasure and for health.

We protest therefore most anxiously and earnestly against a proposal, thrust upon us contrary to our wishes and to our interests, involving serious risk to the Speculators, threatening deep injury to the Inhabitants of the Island, and utterly useless and valueless to the Community at large.

Questions

1. What is the form and purpose of the text?

Questions (continued...)

2. What does the article suggest is happening on the Isle of Wight at the time (the context)?

3. Can you tell who the audience is, for this petition?

4. Who is the petition biased towards and what is the writers' intended outcome?

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6. Can you pick out some other persuasive techniques that are used here? Give 1 or 2 examples.

7. There are 2 main reasons given as to why the railway should not be built. Write one below in the form of a quotation.

8. What language to use to suggest a very serious tone? Pick out one or two phrases and write them below.

