

EDUCATION – A Sorry Story

Today education is under attack. Our government, the same government that rode into power 13 years ago on the slogan, education, education, education, is now slashing the education budget by over a quarter. Colleges across the country face cuts of over £200 million, and universities of more than £900 million. Never before have we seen an attack on education of this scale.

The labour party says they can't continue funding further and higher education in the same way. But we say that's rubbish. We say it's the hypocrisy that's got to stop, not the funding. When labour was voted in 13 years ago, they said they wanted to improve education and narrow the gap between rich and poor. But what we've seen instead is the opposite! Seven million adults in Britain don't have basic literacy yet there are now 1.5 million fewer at college than there were 10 years ago. With 3 million people out of work, now is the time to expand education, not destroy it. And what has the government done to get us out of this recession? It was the banks that caused it, and it's the banks that should get us out. But instead Gordon Brown bailed out the banks to the tune of £800 billion of public money. Money which should have gone to education but which instead has gone to the very people who got us into this mess. And guess who's paying the price? Us of course, the normal people.

So what does this assault on education mean for us? If Brown carries out his threats, there'll be 25% less money in the system. Not only does this mean fewer college or uni places for you, but it also means bigger classes, fewer course options and a massive hike in course fees. We're also facing widespread and devastating job losses for your teachers and support staff. And last, but not least the government are scrapping the EMA bonus and reducing the adult learner grant.

So, what about for the wider society? Education is the only way out of poverty. These plans will widen social inequality in Britain, at a time when the gap between rich and poor is already greater than ever. It's no coincidence that most of the cuts will hit the poorest sections of society. For unemployed adults seeking to retrain, immigrants wishing to learn English or school leavers looking forward to higher education - the cuts will make all these aspirations a distant dream. It's the most vulnerable in society that will be the hardest hit.

And the money is there. So what can we do? We must unite and fight these cuts. We call on you to join us in a campaign against these vicious attacks on our education. Work with us to demonstrate against the government to show them that we're not going to take these cuts lying down.

We all have the right to an education. Now is the time to fight to defend that right.

GCSE English / Level 2 – Adult Literacy / Functional English tasks

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1. Who's the intended audience of the speech? _____

2. What's the main purpose of this text? _____

3. What's the secondary purpose of the text? _____

4. Write 2 **facts** from the text and 2 **opinions**.

5. How is the speech structured? Annotate the text with the letters A – H

- A. Closing call to action
- B. Double standards – the government says one thing and does the other
- C. New announcements from the government
- D. Some facts and figures
- E. The impact on Britain
- F. The impact on students and teachers
- G. What we've got to do
- H. Why we're in this mess

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Emotive Language

*Scan the text quickly. Find the words 1-15 below and underline them.
Then use the context to match the word with a synonym in the box.
Which words are most effective? Why?*

1. assault / attack / threat
2. greater than ever
3. bail out
4. defend
5. destroy
6. devastating
7. fight
8. hike
9. hit
10. ride into power
11. slash
12. scrap
13. to the tune of
14. vicious
15. vulnerable

- a) affect
- b) bigger than before
- c) cruel
- d) cut
- e) harmful
- f) help out financially
- g) increase
- h) look after / protect
- i) reduce
- j) take action against
- k) take away
- l) the plans that the government have
- m) to be elected
- n) to the amount of
- o) weak

Investigating persuasive techniques

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Use the speech to find examples of the following techniques.

In pairs, discuss the effects on the audience and make notes in the table.

	Technique	Example	Effect on Audience
LANGUAGE	Rhetorical questions		
	Groups of three		
	Emotive vocabulary		
	Alliteration / assonance		
	Repetition		
	Addressing audience directly		
	Imperatives		
	Emphasis		
	Imagery -metaphor, simile		
	Juxtaposition		
INFORMATION	Facts and opinions		
	Structure / rhetoric		