

Capture that Springtime Optimism! L2 reading tasks

Name _____ Date _____

Opening quotes – for learners to pick one with most meaning to them

From here: <https://healingbrave.com/blogs/all/spring-quotes-growth-renewal>

“There is something infinitely healing in the repeated refrains of nature—the assurance that dawn comes after night, and spring after winter.” — Rachel Carson

“The heart is like a garden. It can grow compassion or fear, resentment or love. What seeds will you plant there?” — Jack Kornfield

“Nature gives to every time and season some beauties of its own; and from morning to night, as from the cradle to the grave, is but a succession of changes so gentle and easy that we can scarcely mark their progress.” — Charles Dickens

“I sit before flowers hoping they will train me in the art of opening up.” — Shane Koyczan

“If we had no winter the spring would not be so pleasant: if we did not sometimes taste of adversity, prosperity would not be so welcome.” — Anne Bradstreet, *Meditations Divine and Moral*

“... gardens are not made by singing:—‘Oh, how beautiful!’ and sitting in the shade.” — Rudyard Kipling

“To plant a garden is to believe in tomorrow.” — Audrey Hepburn

“Spring: the music of open windows.” — Terri Guillemets

“How lovely the silence of growing things.” — Unknown Author

“That is one good thing about this world... there are always sure to be more springs.” — L.M. Montgomery, *Anne of Avonlea*

“An optimist is the human personification of spring.”
— Susan J. Bissonette

“‘Is the spring coming’ he said. ‘What is it like?’ ... ‘It is the sun shining on the rain and the rain falling on the sunshine, and things pushing up and working under the earth...’” — Frances Hodgson Burnett, *The Secret Garden*

“No matter how chaotic it is, wildflowers will still spring up in the middle of nowhere.” — Sheryl Crow

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Abridged from: <https://psychcentral.com/lib/capture-that-springtime-optimism/>



Capture that Springtime Optimism!

By Jane Collingwood

Last updated: 8 Oct 2018



Spring is the season of new growth, and the signs of change are all around us. Flowers smatter parks and lawns, the days are longer, brighter and warmer, and our emotions are lifted by the extra light and raised temperature.

Springtime is seen as a time of growth, renewal, of new life being born, and of the cycle of life once again starting. It is also seen more generally as the start of better times. At this time of year we begin to feel less sluggish, and become more open to inviting changes – both big and small – into our lives.

The symbolism of spring is one most people can appreciate. In all cultural traditions, the world over, it is a time of re-birth and new beginnings. Whether it is the antics of the numerous fertility gods of rural communities, the Green Man festivities of pagan cultures or the Christian resurrection of Easter, springtime itself has never been a season to go unmarked.

The word Easter is supposed to derive from Eostre, the Anglo-Saxon goddess of spring, worshipped by some neopagans, who associate her with various aspects related to the renewal of life: spring, fertility and the hare (allegedly for its rapid and prolific reproduction). Modern worshippers and writers describe Eostre as a “goddess of Dawn” based on the etymological relationship between her name and the Anglo-Saxon word for ‘dawn’.

The egg motif of Easter can be seen as an underlying pagan and pan-religious symbol of birth and the continuity of life, and it is also part of the Passover ritual - a political story of liberation and refusal to be persecuted. It uses the symbol of a scorched hard-boiled egg for birth, renewal, beginnings, and fresh leaves – parsley or lettuce, again, for renewal and to celebrate spring and the refreshing of the cycle of life.

These festivals are a call to positive-thinking. How can anyone not be inspired by the spirit of optimism that springtime seems to bring?

The new and rapidly-growing field of positive psychology has shown how important emotions such as hope, pleasure, humour, excitement, joy, pride and involvement are to human happiness.

One of the key elements of positive psychology is optimism, which its founder Dr Martin Seligman and others have shown has a major effect on human behaviour. Not only do optimists get sick less often and recover from illness more quickly than others, but they also live longer.

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Optimism can be built, these psychologists believe, leading to improved resistance to [depression](#) when bad events occur and better physical health. There are two important dimensions to optimism, says Dr Seligman, and they are linked to permanence and pervasiveness.

Pessimistic people believe that the reasons for bad things happening are permanent, whereas optimistic people consider them temporary. For example, a pessimist might say to their partner “You always nag”, when an optimistic person would say “You nag when I don’t do the dishes”.

Using qualifiers for bad events such as “sometimes” and “lately”, rather than “always” or “never” builds optimism. But the opposite applies to good events – an optimist will explain these by saying “I’m talented” or “I’m always lucky”.

Pervasiveness is to do with keeping problems in perspective. For pessimists, when one thread of their life breaks, the whole fabric unravels. Again, it comes back to having a specific explanation for bad events rather than catastrophizing. For example, saying “I’ll never learn Spanish in this class” rather than “I’ll never learn another language”.

The positive psychology approach also recommends building optimism by habitually recognizing and challenging pessimistic thoughts – something made much easier by the new season in which we can throw open the windows, and let in the fresh air and soft sunlight.

Spring has always been considered as a time for change and personal evolution, and another common way to embrace the sense of optimism and enthusiasm is to have a good old clear-out. Spring cleaning has a very valuable function, psychologists believe. We declutter our houses of anything that we needed around us to feel more comfortable during the long winter months, and we bring in new items, symbolizing new beginnings.

Ultimately spring is all about opportunity – a time for cultivating the qualities of courage and optimism, of strengthening the belief in ourselves and our powers to achieve and overcome obstacles – the greatest of which is perhaps our own fear, which prevents us from taking risks and stepping into the unknown.

As the days grow longer and warmer, we can choose to capture that sense of freshness and renewal in order it can be remembered, savoured and built on throughout the year.

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1. What is the genre (type of text) of this piece of writing?

2. What layout and language features does it include?

3. Who is its intended audience?

4. Find synonyms for the following words and phrases:

(verb) a small number dotted around	
slow and lethargic	
characteristic of the countryside	
ability to produce good crops or young animals	
plentiful	
relating to the origin and historical development of words	
present a situation as considerably worse than it actually is	
remove unnecessary items	
nurture and grow	

5. Which two environmental factors help lift people's moods in Spring?

6. Which festivals are associated with re-birth and new beginnings at this time of year?

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7. What word is Easter said to derive etymologically from?

8. What are the physical benefits to being an optimist?

9. Name three characteristics of optimistic thinking:

10. What can people “spring cleaning” their houses symbolise?

11. Summarise the author’s message in two sentences:

12. Name three persuasive language techniques used in this piece and give examples.

Personal Reflection

This is a space for your thoughts – you don't have to share them with anyone else.

Think of a problem. Write it in the language of an optimist! Make it temporary and specific.

What are you happy to leave behind in winter this year?

What "seeds" are you planting to grow?

Reflection to share with the class

Write something you are prepared to share with the rest of the class.

What are your intentions for your studies between now and July?

Capture that Springtime Optimism! Vocabulary consolidation task *(for the next lesson)*

Name _____ Date _____



Springtime optimism vocabulary - includes words from the article and quotes that we looked at last lesson

Definition or synonym	New vocabulary	Some of these words are more formal or informal. Note I or F next to these words.
(verb) a small number dotted around		
slow and lethargic		
characteristic of the countryside		
ability to produce good crops or young animals		
plentiful		
relating to the origin and historical development of words		
present a situation as considerably worse than it actually is		
remove unnecessary items		
nurture and grow		
throughout your life		
the flowers on trees in Spring		
come from		
start		

Subject content - FUNCTIONAL SKILLS (FS) ENGLISH 2018 (takes effect September 2019)

✓ = **content** assessed, although this may vary with the learner group and how the resource is used by the teacher. Greyed out descriptors = not covered but included for reference. Refer to DfE Subject Content document for a full list of descriptors for communication, reading and writing. *Content (and *text types) at each level subsumes and builds upon that at lower levels.*

Purpose and learning aims: FS English specifications enable students to develop confidence and fluency in, and a positive attitude towards, English. They should be able to demonstrate their competence by using English in real-world situations as well as demonstrating a sound grasp of basic English knowledge and skills. They need to provide assessment of students' underpinning knowledge (i.e. spelling) as well as their ability to apply this in different contexts. **Levels 1 & 2:** a qualification for work, study and life. Achievement of the qualification demonstrates the ability at an appropriate level to read, write, speak, listen and communicate in English, and apply these skills effectively to a range of purposes in the workplace and other real-life situations. Students should be able to communicate with confidence, effectiveness and an increasing level of independence, in a range of formal and informal contexts. **FS English – Reading:** 'Reading' within FS English qualifications is defined as the independent understanding of written language in specific contexts. Can be demonstrated through the use of texts on screen or on paper. **Learning aims for reading:** E1, 2 & 3. Acquire an understanding of everyday words and their uses and effects, and apply this understanding in different contexts. Read with accuracy straightforward texts encountered in everyday life and work, and develop confidence to read more widely. L1-2 Read a range of different text types confidently and fluently, applying their knowledge and understanding of texts to their own writing.

Reading content descriptors

Level 1	Level 2
L1.9 Identify and understand the main points, ideas and details in texts ✓ Q5, Q6 L1.10 Compare information, ideas and opinions in different texts L1.11 Identify meanings in texts and distinguish between fact and opinion. L1.12 Recognise that language and other textual features can be varied to suit different audiences and purposes ✓ Q12 L1.13 Use reference materials and appropriate strategies (e.g. using knowledge of different word types) for a range of purposes, including to find the meaning of words ✓ Q4 L1.14 Understand organisational and structural features and use them to locate relevant information (e.g. index, menus, sub-headings, paragraphs) in a range of straightforward texts ✓ Q2 . L1.15 Infer from images meanings not explicit in the accompanying text L1.16 Recognise vocabulary typically associated with specific types and purposes of texts (e.g. formal, informal, instructional, descriptive, explanatory and persuasive) ✓ Q1, vct (p8) L1.17 Read and understand a range of specialist words in context L1.18 Use knowledge of punctuation to aid understanding of straightforward texts ✓ Q7 .	L2.11 Identify the different situations when the main points are sufficient and when it is important to have specific details ✓ Q5, Q6, Q7, Q8, Q10 L2.12 Compare information, ideas and opinions in different texts, including how they are conveyed L2.13 Identify implicit and inferred meaning in texts L2.14 Understand the relationship between textual features and devices, and how they can be used to shape meaning for different audiences and purposes ✓ Q3, Q12 L2.15 Use a range of reference materials and appropriate resources (e.g. hyperlinks, glossaries, legends/keys) for different purposes, including to find the meanings of words in straightforward and complex sources ✓ Q4 L2.16 Understand organisational features and systems and use them to locate relevant information in a range of straightforward and complex sources ✓ Q2 L2.17 Analyse texts, recognising their use of vocabulary and identifying levels of complexity, formality and bias ✓ Q11, vct (p8) L2.18 Follow an argument, identifying different points of view and distinguishing fact from opinion L2.19 Identify different styles of writing and writer's voice. ✓ Q1
Scope of study – learners should read *texts that include: straightforward texts on a range of topics and of varying lengths that instruct, describe, explain and persuade.	
a range of straightforward and complex texts on a range of topics and of varying lengths that instruct, describe, explain and persuade.	

GCSE ENGLISH LANGUAGE		Enlarged bold font indicates main coverage.
READING (50% weighting)		
A1	(a) Identify and interpret explicit and implicit information and ideas. (b) Select and synthesise evidence from different texts.	
A2	Explain, comment on and analyse how writers use language and structure to achieve effects and influence readers, using relevant subject terminology to support their views	
A3	Compare writers' ideas and perspectives, as well as how these are conveyed, across two or more texts.	
A4	Evaluate texts critically and support this with appropriate textual references.	

An **editable Word version** of this document is available, **on a one to one exchange basis for your own resource contribution**. An answer sheet will also be available shortly (**for resource contributors only**).

If you wish to become a registered contributor, please contact Maggie using the site contact link.

References:

DfE (Feb 2018), *Subject content functional skills*: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/functional-skills-subject-content-english>

DfE (2013), *English Language GCSE subject content and assessment objectives*.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/gcse-english-language-and-gcse-english-literature-new-content>