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# Nelson English Usage

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*Digital resources for the Australian Curriculum*

## *Step away from your thesaurus*

After failing to hand in your English homework on time throughout the year, your parents have sentenced you to a six-week summer vacation at Aunt Ethel's house, where you will enjoy such delights as the smell of moth balls, bowls of stuck-together hard candy, cat fur on every conceivable surface, dinner at 4.30 p.m. and lights out by 9 p.m.

On day one, you discover Ethel also rises for calisthenics in front of the television at five in the morning, and she thinks it's really important for young people to be fit too, so you will sweat it before the sun rises every astonishingly long day.

On day two, you discover that you have left your mobile phone charger at home.

On day three, you discover that Ethel's internet access is dialup only – on a PC still running Windows 95. Facebook, Twitter and Wikipedia quickly become relics of a lost, happier time. (You expect to spend much time reminiscing about the good old days on this vacation.)

On day five, you learn that Ethel has written a letter to the local council to file a complaint of some kind. It's hard to tell what kind of complaint, because Ethel was sunburnt from gardening without a hat and somewhat delirious the night she wrote it. She has since blocked out all memory of it, but she knows, definitely, that it's important! It must be sent out! Ethel asks you to look it over for her, because she doesn't want to look foolish – and it's your English homework that got you here after all, ha ha!

'And when you're finished, could you be a dear,' says Ethel, 'and drop it off in the post box for me? It's only a 45-minute walk.'

You begin to read Ethel's letter and by the second sentence you are wondering if she suffered a great deal more than some bad sunburn. But, she assures you, she didn't – though she has vague memories of finding the *Roget's Thesaurus* in her library very helpful.

Although Ethel is a bit dotty, she is, in all, a fairly lovely old bird – as great aunts go – and you don't want to embarrass her by pointing out the travesty of her complaint letter.

Gravely, you take the letter upstairs to your attic bedroom, and, feeling like the letter-writing heroine of many an overlong 18th century romance novel, decide to decipher it.

Cherished Gentleman or Gentlewoman,

I am corresponding to lament the churlishness manifested by your council's detritus hoarders. On the forenoon of December 20, I was, as is habitual, conveying the hebdomadal gazettes into the salvage receptacle, primed for acquisition.

As I trundled the receptacle en route to the deterrent, it decanted by reason of being immoderately gorged. As I stalled to hoist the disseminated gazettes, the detritus jalopy twirled the curve into my thoroughfare. Distinguishing that I was clamouring with the gazettes, the hoarders discharged sod all – other than eschewing hoarding my detritus comprehensively, owing to my receptacle being a whisker coy of the deterrent.

I terminated trundling the receptacle to the deterrent after hoisting the gazettes, and ventured to gesticulate to the detritus jalopy after it discharged a horseshoe gyration and reverted glumly to the unrelated flank of my thoroughfare. The handler snubbed me primarily; nevertheless, when the jalopy stalled to gut the receptacle opposing my edifice, he alleged, 'Sorry, lady. You're supposed to have it out the night before. It's not our problem if you don't get it out on time.'

Disquieted by this pageantry, I goggled for the nonce prior to traversing the thoroughfare, hauling my receptacle at my heels, which I progressed to gut into an additional bystander's gorged, to-be-gutted, receptacle. The handler trumpeted at me at disparate junctures, and, as I traversed to my flank of the thoroughfare, gutted receptacle in my grip, he deposited his crown extramurally to the aperture and opined, 'You crazy old witch!'

This is fiercely incongruous savoir-faire for council-affirmed hirelings and the handler should be handicapped judiciously. The distinct receptacle's numerical platter is GCC-143.

I lie in readiness for your alacritous rejoinder and execution on this motif.

Sincerely,  
Ethel P. Anglais

## Task

Decipher Ethel's letter, line by line, word by word, to reveal the reason for her complaint and edit it appropriately for her. Use the widely spaced text below to decipher the letter as you go.

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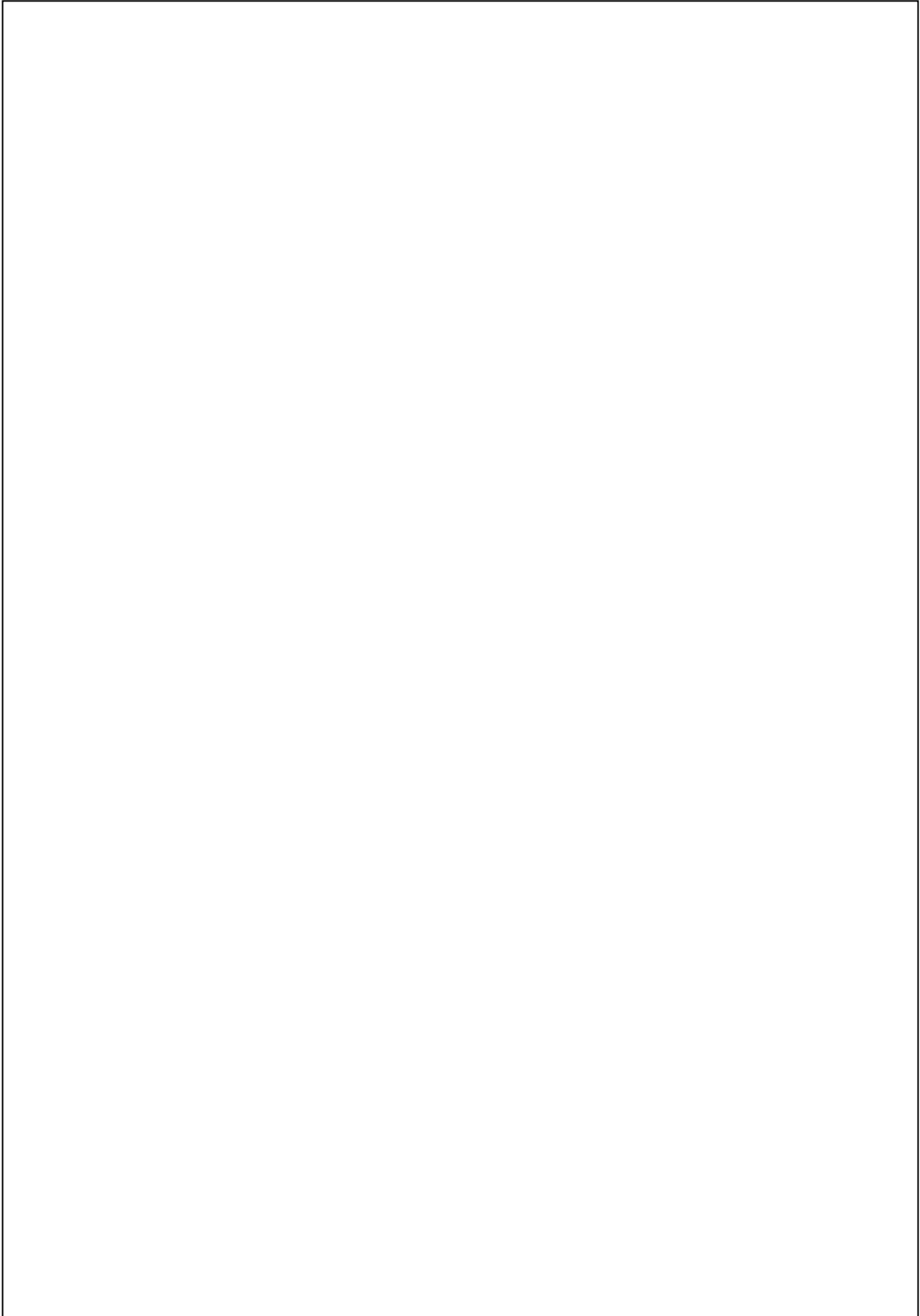
I lie in readiness for your alacritous rejoinder and execution on this motif.

Sincerely,

Ethel P. Anglais

1 What was the reason for Ethel's complaint letter?

2 Tidy and polish your letter, and paste it below.

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for pasting a letter. The box occupies most of the page's vertical space.