

SIGHT/UNSEEN

Non-fiction



English
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centre

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Teachers' Notes and Introduction

Sight/Unseen: Non-fiction is intended to support students studying for the English Language GCSE. Consisting of over 30 stimulating texts from the nineteenth, twentieth and twenty-first centuries, and with extensive accompanying resources, it has been designed to develop the close reading skills of young readers, while also giving them the confidence to find ways into the type of challenging unseen texts that they are likely to come across in their final exams.

In the first section, texts are accompanied by extensive resources designed to familiarise students with all aspects of non-fiction language study. Students will be able to build up a repertoire of strategies for responding to texts and will also be given opportunities for actual examination practice. Many of the activities encourage students to develop their writing as well as their reading skills.

The second section provides generic activities that develop knowledge and understanding about key areas of close language study. These can be applied to almost any text, both from this book and elsewhere, and will be particularly useful when students come to revise for their final exams.

The third section contains ten additional texts to use as you wish. Several have thematic links to other texts in the first section, and so can easily be integrated into existing units of study. Alternatively, you might like to use them for revision activities. The emphasis on nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century texts in this section recognises the decision by three awarding bodies (AQA, OCR and WJEC) to examine students on unseen non-fiction from this period.

NOTES ON ACTIVITIES

Identifying Different Non-fiction Texts (pages 11-14)

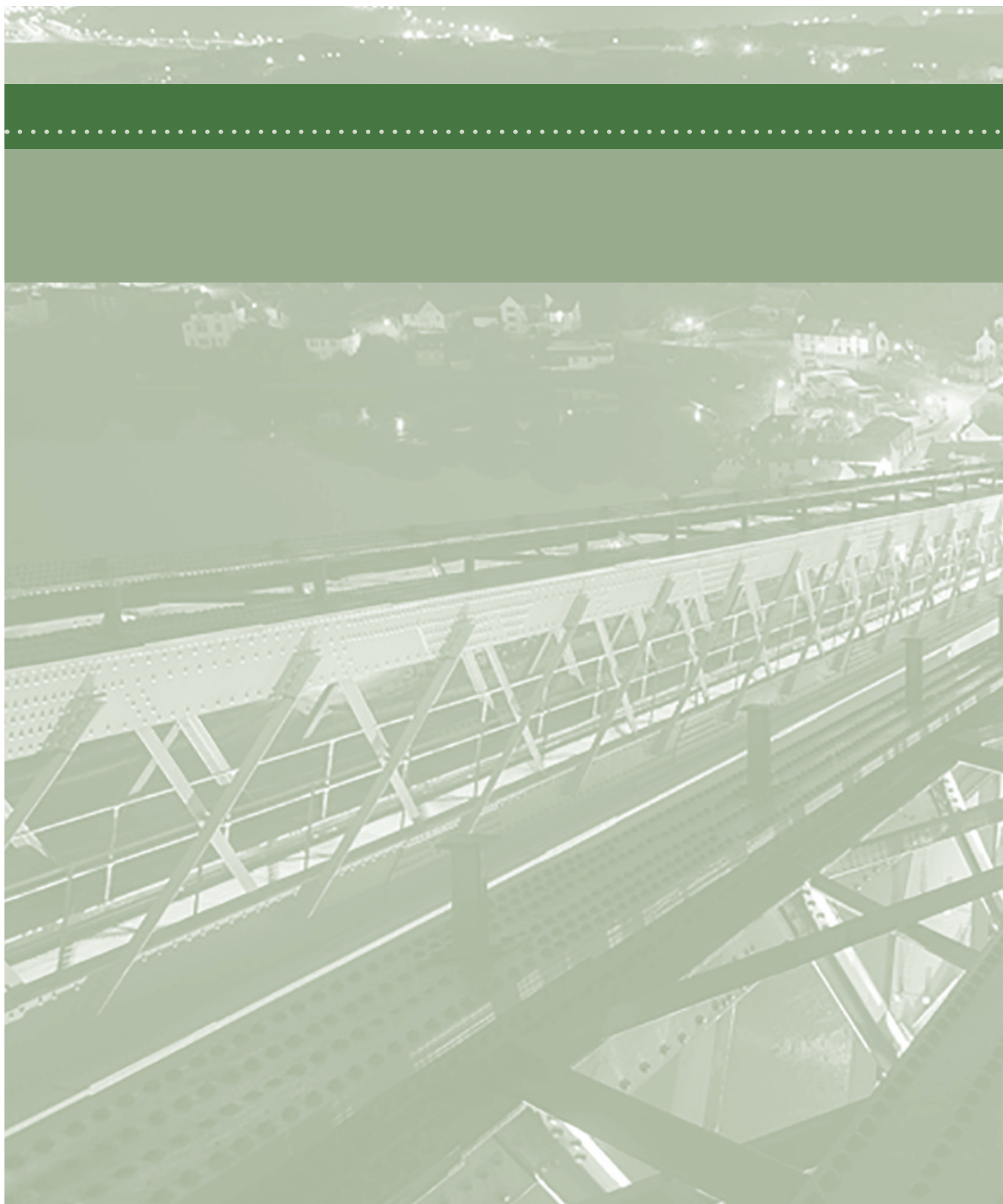
A: My Left Foot (20th century)	E: Nothing to Declare (20th century)
B: The First Atomic Bomb (20th century)	F: Katharine Mansfield's Diary (20th century)
C: You're Not Special (21st century)	G: The Invention (19th century)
D: The Opening of the Liverpool to Manchester Railway (19th century)	

Take My Advice – Fossil Record (page 90)

Values and Readership activity on page 90.

The *New Scientist* magazine's website sets out its values: *Intriguing Informing Inquisitive Impartial*

And audience profile: *'New Scientist' readers aren't just thought leaders. They are thought provokers – representing the leadership of their companies and communities. Technologically savvy and concerned about the world around them, New Scientist isn't just media to our consumers – it's a conversation starter, an opinion influencer and a mindset.*



2. WANDERLUST



Explore Everything

The text on page 41 by Bradley Garrett will introduce you to the controversial and relatively new subject of urban exploration. You will have a chance to explore different reactions to a text and to think about structure.

BEFORE READING

The appeal of the city

While adventure and wanderlust are generally associated with natural settings, for some people cities provide plenty of opportunities for excitement and exploration.



■ On your own write one or two paragraphs in which you imagine yourself exploring part of a city. You can draw on somewhere you know well, or an imagined location. Think carefully about details such as:

- ▶ the time of day
- ▶ the weather
- ▶ people you encounter.

- Share your work with a partner and discuss any similarities and differences in what you have written. Open up the discussion to your whole class and extend it to take into account the appeal of the city to non-fiction writers. You should specifically discuss these questions:
 - ▶ what are the attractions of the city for a non-fiction writer?
 - ▶ what topics would you expect to find in non-fiction that explores a city?

Thinking about urban exploration

- In pairs, discuss the following in relation to the photographs on page 30, all taken by urban explorers who did not have permission to visit the locations shown.
 - ▶ Do you think it is acceptable for urban explorers to visit these places if they are not causing any damage or inconveniencing others? What arguments can you think of for and against? What should happen to them if they are caught?
 - ▶ What do you think motivates explorers to go to these places? What do you think they feel when they reach their destinations? Why do you think they have taken photos of their explorations?
 - ▶ What similarities and differences do you think there are between urban exploration and more traditional forms of exploration, such as mountain climbing?
- Drawing on your discussion, write an urb-ex manifesto setting out five reasons why exploring cities is as exciting as exploring the natural world.

Scaling urban heights

The image below shows the inside of the crane cab at the top of the Shard (the tallest building in Europe). You can see the Shard in the photograph on page 28.



- Before reading about how a group of urban explorers climbed to the top of the Shard at night while it was being built, discuss the following as a whole class:
 - ▶ What tone of voice do you expect the writing to use?
 - ▶ What language do you expect the piece to use?
- Now on your own write a sentence or two in the first person that describes the sensation of sitting in the crane cab, using a tone identified in the whole class discussion.
- Hear examples of your sentences around the class and discuss how, as a writer, you can establish a particular tone. Think about the particular vocabulary you use, different sentence structures, and so on.

AFTER READING

First impressions

- On your own, read the whole text on page 41. When you have finished, complete the sentence starter below that best fits with your reading of the text:

I think what Garrett and his friends did was terrifying because ...

I think what Garrett and his friends did was dangerous because ...

I think what Garrett and his friends did was thrilling because ...

- In small groups compare what you have written. Discuss why a topic like this might result in very different reactions from readers.
- Open up your discussion to the whole class. You could, if you like, require speakers to argue strongly in favour of one of the three positions above.

Exploring structure

Does the structure of writing about an adventure follow the path of that adventure? Does the language change at different stages, for example? Does the tone change at particular moments? The following tasks will help you to think about these questions.

- On your own, storyboard the ascent and descent of the Shard in five or six frames. Beneath or around each frame write out words from the text that describe physical movement and activity, such as 'lingering' and 'staying low'.
- Compare your storyboard with two or three others. How do your storyboards show the development of the adventure? How does the language mirror its different stages?
- Re-read the text, this time with a partner. Continue to focus on the language used in different parts, identifying any shifts in tone and vocabulary.
- As a pair, write a paragraph justifying this statement:

The language in this text mirrors the ascent and descent of the Shard: ground level, summit, return to ground level.

Author interview

- In pairs, discuss how you think Bradley Garrett, the author of *Explore Everything*, would answer these questions:
 - ▶ What is your motivation for exploring urban spaces?
 - ▶ What do you say to critics who accuse you of setting a bad example by breaking the law and putting yourself and others at risk?
 - ▶ Why do you think people enjoy reading about your adventures?
 - ▶ How would you describe your own writing style? For example, what tone of voice do you use? What kind of language do you try to use? In what ways do you structure your work? How do you make your explorations sound exciting?
 - ▶ Some people have compared you to great outdoor explorers of the past, such as Scott of the Antarctic, or Hillary and Tenzing climbing Everest. What is your response to such comparisons?
- When you have gone through all the questions, use them to role play Bradley Garrett being interviewed by a journalist.
- One pair should act out their role-play in front of the whole class. Use this as a starting point for a whole class discussion about different possible responses to the questions.

Urban exploration: right or wrong?

- Using information from your role-play, the whole class discussion and your reading of Bradley Garrett's text, individually write a short magazine article or blog called:

Urban exploration: right or wrong?

Ground Level Exploration: 'Night Walks'

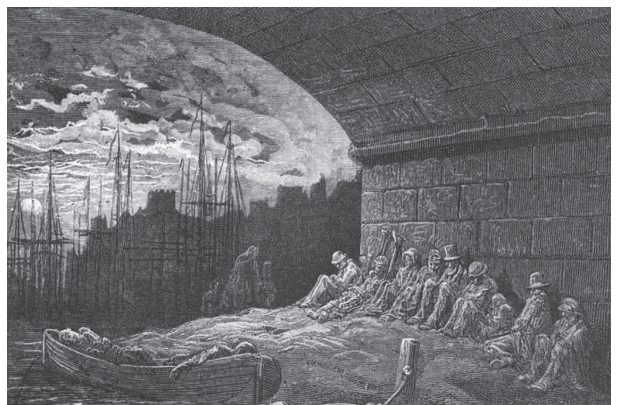
While urban explorers tend to explore high above and deep below the city, Charles Dickens, writing in the nineteenth century, contented himself with keeping to ground level. As a consequence of his insomnia, he frequently walked London's streets at night-time. In studying the text on pages 42-43, you will have the opportunity to explore the author's point-of-view, the effect of different sentences, and the development of atmosphere and character.

BEFORE READING

Dickens' London

- Drawing on the images below of night-time London in Victorian times (*Night Walks* was first published in 1861), as well as your imagination and your knowledge of the period from books, TV and films, discuss the following as a whole class:

- ▶ What was London like in Dickens' time?
- ▶ What might have motivated Dickens as a writer to wander London's streets at night?

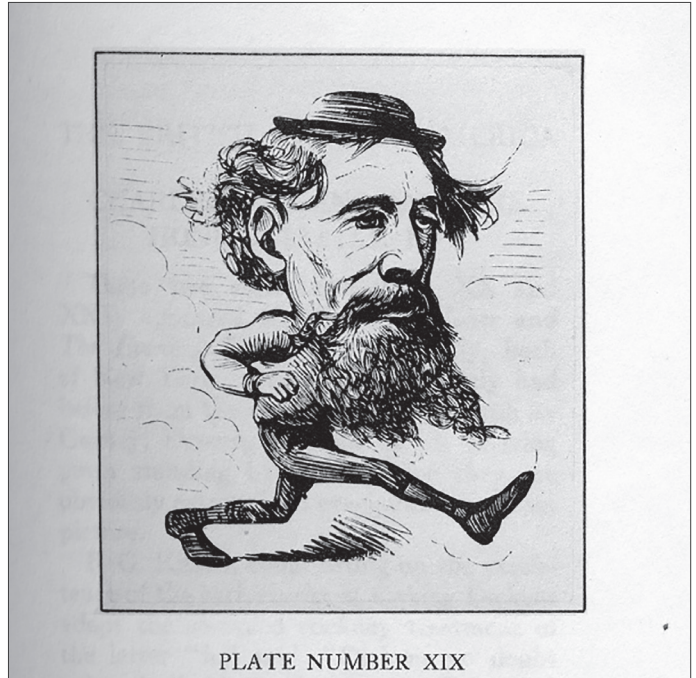


AFTER READING

Dickens' point of view

Dickens did not write about every single thing he saw when walking London's streets at night. He selected events and observations, presumably because he thought they would be interesting to his readers. As a renowned social campaigner, fighting for the rights of the poor and disadvantaged, he might also have wanted to present a particular version of London – what might be called his **point of view**.

- As a class, read the whole text on pages 42-43. The language is difficult, so you might not understand everything, but try to get a sense of what is happening and of how Dickens presents what he sees – his point of view.
- When you have finished, write a sentence or two on your own in response to each of these questions:
 1. What types of people and places does Dickens write about?
 2. What is his attitude towards the people he sees and meets? How can you tell?
 3. Why do you think he chooses to write about these people in particular?
- When you have finished, join up with a partner and compare your answers. Re-read the text together and identify a few examples that you think could be used as evidence that Dickens was a great social campaigner, on the side of the poor and disadvantaged.
- Share your ideas with the rest of the class and discuss whether you think the text successfully highlights the plight of some of London's poor and disadvantaged.



Creating atmosphere

Dickens' writing is well known for creating a sense of atmosphere. These tasks help you to consider how it does this.

- With a partner read the third paragraph from the text, in which Dickens explores a deserted theatre.
- Decide on the atmosphere that you think Dickens creates in this paragraph and develop a reading together that emphasises this atmosphere.
- Listen to one or two readings of the paragraph as a whole class. Discuss as a class how you think Dickens creates atmosphere in the paragraph, focusing on:
 - ▶ Tone of voice
 - ▶ Vocabulary choices
 - ▶ The level of detail
 - ▶ Sentence control and variation

Dickensian characters

Dickens is famous for creating memorable characters in his fiction. But what about in his non-fiction? In this extract he offers descriptions of real people.

- In pairs, discuss the statements on page 37 in relation to two characters from the text: 'the creature' outside St Martin's church and 'the man with the pudding' in the coffee-room near Bow Street. To what extent does each statement apply to each character?
- In your pair, choose the statement that you think most applies to each character and explain your choices to the rest of your class.
- On your own, use what you have discussed to write a paragraph or two on the following task:

Compare how Dickens describes 'the creature' (paragraph 4) outside St Martin's church and 'the man with the pudding' (paragraph 5) near Bow Street.

This character is described in a way that makes him a figure of fun.

The description makes the character sound frightening.

Dickens treats this character with sympathy.

Dickens dehumanises this character (writes about him as if he is not human).

You get a real sense of what this character looks like from the description.

You get a real sense of what type of person this character is from the description.

Dickens really succeeds in making this character memorable for readers.

Studying Dickens' sentences

Dickens is also well-known for his writing style. It is so distinctive that his name has been turned into an adjective to describe a particular kind of writing: Dickensian. This activity explores the role sentences play in this Dickensian style.

- Working in a pair, choose a paragraph from this text that you think is particularly interesting. Read the paragraph out loud, changing speaker each time you meet a new piece of punctuation.
- Discuss with your partner what you have noticed about the punctuation and about Dickens' sentences in general.
- Count the number of words and sentences in your paragraph. What is the average word count for each sentence? Compare this to a paragraph from a piece in *Sight/Unseen* written in the twentieth or twenty-first century. Are there significant differences in average word count per sentence? If so, why might this be?
- Still working in a pair, write a paragraph about exploring a city's streets in the day-time, using sentences like those used by Dickens. If you wrote a description of exploring a city as part of the introduction to this section, you might like to adapt that. If not, then, when writing, you can add in detail about the weather, the time of day, people you meet and so on.
- Listen to examples of your writing around the class. Identify what is distinctively Dickensian in the examples you hear.

Comparative Tasks

Drawing on the texts you have read in the 'Wanderlust' section, complete one or more of these tasks to develop your comparison skills.

1. Prepare a reading out loud of a favourite paragraph or sequence of paragraphs from two of the texts in this section of the book. Read them out loud in ways that demonstrate differences and similarities in tone of voice.
2. Choose two of the full texts from this chapter and write about how they create a sense of adventure for readers.
3. Describe an adventure of your own in the style of one of the texts in this section.

Exam Practice

- Choose two paragraphs that you think are highly descriptive from two different texts in this section. One should be from the nineteenth century and one from the twentieth or twenty-first. Complete the following exam-style task, referring to your two paragraphs:

Compare how effective the description is in the two paragraphs. You might want to comment on:

- » Vocabulary
- » Sentences
- » Linguistic devices

Into Thin Air (1997)

This is the opening passage of Jon Krakauer's best-selling book, *Into Thin Air: a Personal Account of the Everest Disaster*. It describes the true story of a 24-hour period on Everest when members of three separate expeditions were caught in a storm that resulted in the deaths of several of the climbers.

Straddling the top of the world, one foot in China and the other in Nepal, I cleared the ice from my oxygen mask, hunched a shoulder against the wind, and stared absently down at the vastness of Tibet. I understood on some dim, detached level that the sweep of earth beneath my feet was a spectacular sight. I'd been fantasising about this moment, and the release of emotion that would accompany it, for months. But now that I was finally here, actually standing on the summit of Mount Everest, I just couldn't summon the energy to care.

It was early in the afternoon of May 10, 1996. I hadn't slept in fifty-seven hours. The only food I'd been able to force down over the preceding three days was a bowl of ramen soup and a handful of peanut M&Ms. Weeks of violent coughing had left me with two separated ribs that made ordinary breathing an excruciating trial. At 29,028 feet up in the troposphere, so little oxygen was reaching my brain that my mental capacity was that of a slow child. Under the circumstances, I was incapable of feeling much of anything except cold and tired.

I'd arrived on the summit a few minutes after Anatoli Boukreev, a Russian climbing guide working for an American commercial expedition, and just ahead of Andy Harris, a guide on the New Zealand-based team to which I belonged. Although I was only slightly acquainted with Boukreev, I'd come to know and like Harris well during the preceding six weeks. I snapped four quick photos of Harris and Boukreev striking summit poses, then turned and headed down. My watch read 1:17 p.m. All told, I'd spent less than five minutes on the roof of the world.

A moment later, I paused to take another photo, this one looking down the Southeast Ridge, the

route we had ascended. Training my lens on a pair of climbers approaching the summit, I noticed something that until that moment had escaped my attention. To the south, where the sky had been perfectly clear just an hour earlier, a blanket of clouds now hid Pumori, Ama Dablam, and the other lesser peaks surrounding Everest.

Later – after six bodies had been located, after a search for two others had been abandoned, after surgeons had amputated the gangrenous right hand of my teammate Beck Weathers – people would ask why, if the weather had begun to deteriorate, had climbers on the upper mountain not heeded the signs? Why did veteran Himalayan guides keep moving upward, ushering a gaggle of relatively inexperienced amateurs – each of whom had paid as much as \$65,000 to be taken safely up Everest – into an apparent death trap?

Jon Krakauer

The Ascent of Long's Peak (1873)

Isabella Bird's first-person account of an 1873 ascent of Long's Peak in the Rocky Mountains is unusual because so few women climbed mountains at that time. This is an abridged version of a longer description of her climb.

Slipping, faltering, gasping from the exhausting toil in the rarefied air, with throbbing hearts and panting lungs, we reached the top of the gorge and squeezed ourselves between two gigantic fragments of rock by a passage called the 'Dog's Lift', when I climbed on the shoulders of one man and then was hauled up. This introduced us by an abrupt turn round the south-west angle of the Peak to a narrow shelf of considerable length, rugged, uneven, and so overhung by the cliff in some places that it is necessary to crouch to pass at all. Above, the Peak looks nearly vertical for 400 feet; and below, the most tremendous precipice I have ever seen descends in one unbroken fall. This is usually considered the most dangerous part of the ascent, but it does not seem so to me, for such foothold as there is is secure, and one fancies that it is possible to hold on with the hands. But there, and on the final, and, to my thinking, the worst part of the climb, one slip, and a breathing, thinking, human being would lie 3,000 feet below, a shapeless, bloody heap!

From thence the view is more magnificent even than that from the Notch. Snowy ranges, one behind the other, extended to the distant horizon, folding in their wintry embrace the beauties of Middle Park. Pike's Peak, more than one hundred miles off, lifted that vast but shapeless summit which is the landmark of southern Colorado. There were snow patches, snow slashes, snow abysses, snow forlorn and soiled looking, snow pure and dazzling, snow glistening above the purple robe of pine worn by all the mountains; while away to the east, in limitless breadth, stretched the green-grey of the endless Plains. Giants everywhere reared their splintered crests. From thence, with a single sweep, the eye takes in a distance of 300 miles—that distance to the west,

north, and south being made up of mountains ten, eleven, twelve, and thirteen thousand feet in height, dominated by Long's Peak, Gray's Peak, and Pike's Peak, all nearly the height of Mont Blanc! On the Plains we traced the rivers by their fringe of cottonwoods to the distant Platte, and between us and them lay glories of mountain, canyon, and lake, sleeping in depths of blue and purple most ravishing to the eye.

As we crept from the ledge round a horn of rock I beheld what made me perfectly sick and dizzy to look at—the terminal Peak itself—a smooth, cracked face or wall of pink granite, as nearly perpendicular as anything could well be up which it was possible to climb, well deserving the name of the 'American Matterhorn'.

Scaling, not climbing, is the correct term for this last ascent. It took one hour to accomplish 500 feet, pausing for breath every minute or two. The only foothold was in narrow cracks or on minute projections on the granite. To get a toe in these cracks, or here and there on a scarcely obvious projection, while crawling on hands and knees, all the while tortured with thirst and gasping and struggling for breath, this was the climb; but at last the Peak was won. A grand, well-defined mountain top it is, a nearly level acre of boulders, with precipitous sides all round, the one we came up being the only accessible one.

From the summit were seen in unrivalled combination all the views which had rejoiced our eyes during the ascent. It was something at last to stand upon the storm-rent crown of this lonely sentinel of the Rocky Range, on one of the mightiest of the vertebrae of the backbone of the North American continent, and to see the waters start for both oceans.

Isabella Bird

Explore Everything (2013)

Urban Exploration, or Urbex, is a term used to describe the exploration of man-made structures that are not usually accessible to the public, such as tall buildings, underground tunnels and abandoned ruins. While it can involve trespassing (and so the risk of arrest and punishment), urban explorers share an unwritten ethical code: that their activities must not cause physical damage or disturb other people.

This passage comes at the start of a book about urban exploration. It describes climbing the Shard, Europe's tallest building, at night.

It was a crisp, still night outside London Bridge station and our breath curled in the air. Marc Explo and I were standing on a temporary wooden walkway looking through a viewing window into the ground-level construction yard of the largest skyscraper in Europe. 'Gary' walked up behind us and, putting an arm around each of our shoulders, also peered through. 'One secca looking after the tallest building in London, huh?' he said, and we chuckled. We waited for the guard to finish his current round and go into his hut.

It took a few minutes of lingering before the walkway was clear of people, then we grabbed on to the scaffolding piping and swung off the bridge. Hanging tightly to the cold pipes, we pulled ourselves to the top of the walkway and laid down out of view, waiting for a reaction if anyone had seen or heard us. It didn't seem anyone had.

Staying low, we descended the other side of the scaffolding, right behind the security hut, where we could see the guard watching TV, ignoring the CCTV cameras that relayed images to him from the rest of the site. Quickly we scampered across the yard and found the central staircase, again pausing to see if there would be any reaction on site, like phones ringing, doors opening or people running. All was silent.

We took the stairs two at a time. All three of us were in pretty good shape and could do twenty-five or thirty floors like that, but by the thirty-first floor, I was sweating. Knowing that the sweat would sting when we emerged onto the roof into the cold night air, I tried

to pace myself and breathe. By floor fifty, my calves were burning and I needed to stop every so often to let them pulse a bit and untighten. When at floor seventy the cement stairs turned into metal ones, indicating that we were near the top, I was ecstatic. One final burst of enthusiasm took us from metal stairs to wooden ladders. We threw open one last hatch and found ourselves on top of the Shard, seventy-six stories high.

As I climbed up onto the counterweight of the crane on top of the building, my whole body tensed. It was a combination of the icy wind and the sheer weight of the moment that shocked me. I got down low, slowly pulled myself to the end of the counterweight and peered over the edge, down to the River Thames where the permanently docked HMS *Belfast* battleship looked like a bathtub toy. A ripple of adrenaline rolled up my spine, causing a full-body shiver. My hands gripped the edge of the counterweight tighter, knuckles whitening. We were so high that I couldn't see anything moving at street level – no buses, no cars, just rows of lights and train lines that looked like converging river systems or a giant circuit board. It was the first time in my life I looked at London and heard only the wind.

We found the cab of the crane open and sat down inside it. 'Gary', pointing to a glowing green button on the control panel, said, 'watch this, I'm going to build the Shard!' and pretended to press the button.

We only lasted about half an hour on top before our muscles began to seize up from the exertion and chill. We were actually yearning for the stair climb down, which is always much easier than coming up.

At ground level, we casually walked across the yard and hit the crash bar on the fire door, home free.

Later, standing next to the Thames, staring up at the monolith and the small red light blinking on top of the crane, it seemed unimaginable that I'd had my hands on that light just hours earlier. Ever after, whenever I see the Shard from anywhere in the city, I can't help but smile as I'm reminded of the inescapable allure of urban exploration – the ability to make the impossible possible.

Bradley Garrett

Night Walks (1861)

First published in 1861, in this abridged passage Charles Dickens describes what he saw while wandering around London at night.

Some years ago, a temporary inability to sleep, referable to a distressing impression, caused me to walk about the streets all night, for a series of several nights. The disorder might have taken a long time to conquer, if it had been faintly experimented on in bed; but, it was soon defeated by the brisk treatment of getting up directly after lying down, and going out, and coming home tired at sunrise.

In the course of those nights, I finished my education in a fair amateur experience of houselessness. My principal object being to get through the night, the pursuit of it brought me into sympathetic relations with people who have no other object every night in the year.

In one of my night walks, as the church steeples were shaking the March winds and rain with strokes of Four, I passed the outer boundary of one of [the great theatres], and entered it. With a dim lantern in my hand, I groped my well-known way to the stage and looked over the orchestra – which was like a great grave dug for a time of pestilence – into the void beyond. A dismal cavern of an immense aspect, with the chandelier gone dead like everything else, and nothing visible through mist and fog and space, but tiers of winding-sheets. The ground at my feet where, when last there, I had seen the peasantry of Naples dancing among the vines, reckless of the burning mountain which threatened to overwhelm them, was now in possession of a strong serpent of engine-hose, watchfully lying in wait for the serpent Fire, and ready to fly at it if it showed its forked tongue. A ghost of a watchman, carrying a faint corpse candle, haunted the distant upper gallery and flitted away. Retiring within the proscenium, and holding my light above my head towards the rolled-up curtain – green no more, but black as ebony – my sight lost itself in a gloomy vault, showing faint indications in it of a shipwreck of canvas and cordage. Methought I felt much as a diver might,

at the bottom of the sea.

Once – it was after leaving [Westminster] Abbey and turning my face north – I came to the great steps of St. Martin's church as the clock was striking Three. Suddenly, a thing that in a moment more I should have trodden upon without seeing, rose up at my feet with a cry of loneliness and houselessness, struck out of it by the bell, the like of which I never heard. We then stood face to face looking at one another, frightened by one another. The creature was like a beetle-browed hair-lipped youth of twenty, and it had a loose bundle of rags on, which it held together with one of its hands. It shivered from head to foot, and its teeth chattered, and as it stared at me – persecutor, devil, ghost, whatever it thought me – it made with its whining mouth as if it were snapping at me, like a worried dog. Intending to give this ugly object money, I put out my hand to stay it – for it recoiled as it whined and snapped – and laid my hand upon its shoulder. Instantly, it twisted out of its garment, like the young man in the New Testament, and left me standing alone with its rags in my hands.

Covent-garden Market, when it was market morning, was wonderful company. The great waggons of cabbages, with growers' men and boys lying asleep under them, and with sharp dogs from market-garden neighbourhoods looking after the whole, were as good as a party. But one of the worst night sights I know in London, is to be found in the children who prowl about this place; who sleep in the baskets, fight for the offal, dart at any object they think they can lay their thieving hands on, dive under the carts and barrows, dodge the constables, and are perpetually making a blunt pattering on the pavement of the Piazza with the rain of their naked feet. A painful and unnatural result comes of the comparison one is forced to institute between the growth of corruption as displayed in the so much improved and cared for fruits of the earth, and the growth of corruption as displayed in these all uncared for (except inasmuch as ever-hunted) savages.

There was early coffee to be got about Covent-garden Market, and that was more company – warm

company, too, which was better. Toast of a very substantial quality, was likewise procurable: though the towzled-headed man who made it, in an inner chamber within the coffee-room, hadn't got his coat on yet, and was so heavy with sleep that in every interval of toast and coffee he went off anew behind the partition into complicated cross-roads of choke and snore, and lost his way directly. Into one of these establishments (among the earliest) near Bow-street, there came one morning as I sat over my houseless cup, pondering where to go next, a man in a high and long snuff-coloured coat, and shoes, and, to the best of my belief, nothing else but a hat, who took out of his hat a large cold meat pudding; a meat pudding so large that it was a very tight fit, and brought the lining of the hat out with it. This mysterious man was known by his pudding, for on his entering, the man of sleep brought him a pint of hot tea, a small loaf, and a large knife and fork and plate. Left to himself in his box, he stood the pudding on the bare table, and, instead of cutting it, stabbed it, over-hand, with the knife, like a mortal enemy; then took the knife out, wiped it on his sleeve, tore the pudding asunder with his fingers, and ate it all up. The remembrance of this man with the pudding remains with me as the remembrance of the most spectral person my houselessness encountered. Twice only was I in that establishment, and twice I saw him stalk in (as I should say, just out of bed, and presently going back to bed), take out his pudding, stab his pudding, wipe the dagger, and eat his pudding all up.

When there was no market, or when I wanted variety, a railway terminus with the morning mails coming in, was remunerative company. But like most of the company to be had in this world, it lasted only a very short time. The station lamps would burst out ablaze, the porters would emerge from places of concealment, the cabs and trucks would rattle to their places (the post-office carts were already in theirs), and, finally, the bell would strike up, and the train would come banging in. But there were few passengers and little luggage, and everything scuttled away with the greatest expedition. The locomotive

post-offices, with their great nets – as if they had been dragging the country for bodies – would fly open as to their doors, and would disgorge a smell of lamp, an exhausted clerk, a guard in a red coat, and their bags of letters; the engine would blow and heave and perspire, like an engine wiping its forehead and saying what a run it had had; and within ten minutes the lamps were out, and I was houseless and alone again.

Charles Dickens