

21st-Century Source

Here are the exam sources to go with the questions on pages 98-99. On this page is a newspaper article written by an MP (Member of Parliament) called Rishi Sunak, which was published in October 2015.

Rishi Sunak: Why rural schools must receive a fairer deal on funding

ONE of my constituents summed it up best. Their belief was that education is the greatest single tool to allow you to change your own life and make an impact in your community.

5 My grandparents grew up on the other side of the world with very little. Two generations later, I have the incredible privilege of being a Member of Parliament. Many of us can tell similar stories of where our families started, what they worked to achieve and how their efforts passed something on to the next generation. I am confident that all these journeys are built on the foundation of a strong education.

10 However, since becoming a Member of Parliament, it has become clear to me that our current means of distributing funding between schools is, at best, out of date and, at worst, unfair for our rural schools and local children.

15 This week I hosted an education forum with more than 50 local primary school teachers and governors to learn about their experiences. We agreed to work together and launch a campaign to fight for a better deal.

20 Many of our children and grandchildren attend wonderful village primary schools that are the beating hearts of their communities. But because of the nature of our countryside and the distances between settlements, these schools will often be small.

25 There are particular costs of providing education in small rural settings that are often not well understood by policy-makers sitting in Whitehall. For example, it is often difficult to organise seven primary school year groups into a standard class structure and sometimes an additional half class is needed. More obviously, small schools cannot spread the cost of administration or leadership over a large number of pupils.

30 The way funding was allocated between schools historically did not adequately recognise these factors. This led to significant problems in under-funded areas, in particular the East Riding* a decade ago, where there was talk of four-day weeks and mass redundancies.

Although people often talk about problems with the education funding formula, the reality is that there is no formula. In response to crises like the one in East Riding, it was dropped a decade ago and, instead, whatever a local authority received then has been either uniformly increased or decreased.

35 So if your local area was under-funded 10 years ago, it will continue to be. If your local schools got a raw deal back then, they most likely still will do now. What was a temporary fix is now long overdue for reform.

Today two children, both on free school meals but living in different places, can receive very different sums of money for their education. Schools around the country that are similar can get very different budgets and children with the same needs can receive very different levels of financial support.

40 Last year, a pupil in my constituency in North Yorkshire received £500 less than a pupil only a few miles away in Middlesbrough. In the case of a city such as Manchester, the gap is as high as £700. A pupil in one of the top five funded areas received over £2,000 more than North Yorkshire does.

This simply needs to change. In a climate where money is tight as we balance the books, it is even more important that schools receive their fair share.

45 At the forum I heard inspiring stories of what heads, teachers and governors are doing to ensure our local schools can continue to thrive. They all deserve their fair share of funding so they can continue to do the vital job they do so well.

Providing a fairly funded and excellent education is one of this generation's most important responsibilities to undertake for the benefit of the next generation. We simply must get it right.



Glossary

* East Riding — a part of the county of Yorkshire in the north of England

19th-Century Source

This is the second exam source, which is an extract from an article published in a journal in 1896. It was written by Lawton B. Evans, an American teacher and educational leader.

THE COUNTY UNIT IN EDUCATIONAL ORGANIZATION

By Lawton B. Evans, Superintendent of Schools, Augusta, Ga.

The educational thought of our time has been chiefly directed toward the improvement of city school systems. So we hear of the great schools at Boston, Chicago, New York, Cincinnati, Philadelphia, and a score of other places; but I have yet to hear of a single county or township of rural population, the excellence of whose schools entitles them to national repute. The emphasis of our thought has been placed long and devotedly on city schools at the expense of the rural schools.

It is true that cities are the centers of highest civilization. Our human nature has made them so. Architecture, art, literature, schools, fashion, reach their highest forms when people strive with each other for display. The very contact of people civilizes them. Cities are likewise the centers of greatest iniquity*. The worthless, the idle, the contentious, the wicked, gravitate toward large centers. Extremes of virtue and vice meet. The force of cities attracts everything, good and bad alike. But cities do not develop individuality. There is a leveling influence about them that merges individuals into masses, and it is only occasionally that a volcanic genius breaks through the hard crust and thrusts itself above the burning level of great city life. The highest types of individuality, the strong and independent men of our nation, have been born and bred in village or rural homes, away from the turmoil of city life, in quiet and serious communion with nature, in her grand and ennobling forms. It is out of the rural homes that the great men of our country have come. Genius abhors the palace and the crowded cities and the cradles of luxury, and courts the cabins and the open fields and the simple but stern homes of the poor.

We need skilled labor in the fields as well as in the city. We need intelligent and scientific management of a farm as well as of a great factory. We need business methods here as well as in the great commercial houses of the city. We need economy of effort and conservation of force and adaptation of invention and discovery here, if we need it anywhere. And we need culture and refinement among the country people. Music, painting, books, and all the evidences of a higher kind of life are as proper on the farms as in the cities. The more highly educated the people of the rural districts are, the more capable they will be of taking advantage of the improvement in machinery, of economizing time and labor in producing raw material, and the more time they will have to devote to culture and the higher arts of civilization. They will accomplish as much as now in far less time, and will live more comfortably and more happily.

That farm life is behind city life in development is due in some part to the isolation of the rural population. Men live too far apart and see each other too seldom to exert a refining influence over each other. In other part, it is due to the attention that has been given to educating the people of the city.

It is quite time that we change the emphasis of our study, turn aside from the contemplation of the excellences of the city schools, and consider the necessities of the rural schools. The wisest policy is to frame some educational scheme that will keep the people in the country, that will stop the exodus from the farms, that will make the rural population content, that will make them enlightened and prosperous.

Glossary
* iniquity — sin