

Gradually the short, sharp ringing of my alarm clock enters my ears. My eyes slowly adjust to the dim morning light filtering in through the curtains. Reluctantly I lower my weary body onto the floor, and weave past the obstructions that are littered upon it. I steady myself down the stairs and into the kitchen, to prepare my breakfast. I always make sure there is time for cereal, even if it does leave me in a rush to get ready for school!

Often I cycle to school. If the weather is inclement I walk with other friends that live close by. Upon entering the form room I find my class mates all involved in deep conversations on the previous days' antics and actions. On Mondays and Thursdays the colloquy frequently changes into light hearted arguments focused upon the football matches played the previous day. This usually invokes a reaction from our boastful form French tutor, who teases us over the sporting achievements his nation has achieved. In retaliation we often challenge him to either matches of tennis or football. Surprisingly he is always injured, and cannot take up the challenge.

During the school day, although I am attentive and take part in lessons, I find it hard to concentrate. However, I find the work a lot easier when I am at home. Maths is a great example of this, during the lessons I find the answers to problems unobtainable, yet when I am at home I complete the work swiftly and easily. I enjoy the problem solving element of maths.

Once at home I usually relax for a while before beginning my homework and revision. After that, at about eight o'clock I attend the local gym and work out the stress built up during the day. I am greatly interested in sports and feel I am an active person. I study physical education as a G.C.S.E subject, and although the practical element is great, the theoretical aspect also interests me, and has helped me to improve my sports performance and become more health conscious. Besides visiting the gym three times per week, I also play a football league match every Sunday and endure football training on Saturday mornings. Despite the numerous laps around the pitch, frequent stretching, weight lifting, and continuous repetition of intricate skills and set plays, the hardest part of training is waking up at half past eight in the morning! I believe it is important to exercise regularly as it reduces stress and tension, promotes good posture, and generally leaves one feeling happier.

We also play for the same football team, and as a result of our impressive performances we moved up an age group, and we now play against people at least a year older. The gym seemed like a good way to keep our stamina high, and increase our strength. However "conveniently" a McDonalds is next door, with a glaring advert for a Mcflurry, coincidentally priced at a pound, the same amount needed for the lockers in the gym, and the temptation of chocolate and ice cream always wins. Ironically I spend an hour in the gym burning off the calories, only to put them back on within five minutes! During the mornings my family are too busy preparing themselves for the day, with only time for monosyllabic grunts offered between us.

Although I enjoy football, it does have negative aspects. It tends to take up a lot of the weekends, and after completing my homework in the afternoon, by the evening I am too tired to do much else! When I was younger, I dreamt of playing football professionally, yet one Sunday afternoon saw this ambition to deteriorate.

During the evenings I like to release my tension by exercising at the gym. Listening to my walk man motivates me into working harder and pushing myself harder. I consider myself to have a wide range in taste for music, yet when I exercise I prefer to listen to bands such as 'Korn', 'Limp Bizkit', and 'Rage Against The Machine'. Generally other people of my age don't seem to agree with this 'alternative' type of music. However I find the strong beat of the drums, and thought provoking lyrics, motivates me into working harder. Most of my friends enjoy listening to 'garage' music. However I find that the random bleeps produced over a backing track are, unimaginative, repetitive,

uninspirational, and often causes me headaches! Other people like 'R and B', but yet again I find this to be irritating. Pop music, is perhaps an ironic title, because as far as I am concerned it is very unpopular. My taste is varied but, I prefer songs to have significant lyrics, and good rhythm. One of my favourite artists is Jimmy Hendrix, it was his music that influenced me into learning the guitar. I used to play along to my albums a lot, but since year 10 I have not been playing as regularly as I would like, this is due to the amount of work, and deciding to spend my free time on other activities. However a few of my friends, who study music at GCSE level, have great musical ability and taste, occasionally I listen to them play at lunch break and have heard them play at parties, where they can create a great atmosphere. Next year, after the GCSE examinations, we are planning to travel to Ireland, where we shall watch U2 in concert, and then days later, witness the Irish football team playing their final home world cup qualifying match against Portugal, who were semi finalists in Euro 2000 and boast an expensive squad, including the worlds most expensive player. Accommodation will be affordable, as a friends relative is proposing to let us stay at her house. As I am partly Irish, I have visited Ireland several times and know how friendly and generous the people can be, as demonstrated by my friend's Irish relative, due to this and the fact that several of us are Irish and follow the national team, I am anticipating a great atmosphere at the football match.

After my work out I usually meet my friends and we unwind in the sauna. The sauna relaxes me, and I soon forget about my worries as I enter a discussion with my friends. The topics of these range greatly from the important matters such as the transformation to sixth form, to the insanely stupid such as _____, we don't care what we talk about as long as our minds are distracted from the heat of the sauna, and how long we have been enduring it. My friends and I decided to join the gym during the summer term, so that we would have something to fill the long summer days with.

Next season I will probably leave the team as I feel the club is not in tandem with my standards, however I have not decide yet which club will be lucky enough to have me! Football is of great interest to me, and I follow it fanatically. I support Arsenal football club, although my attendance to Highbury stadium has dropped, I still watch Arsenal whenever I feel I have the time available, which is hardly ever! Although I am a devoted Arsenal adherent, I have been attending Highbury since I was 7, when tickets are unavailable I watch other local teams play such as Watford Crystal Palace, Gillingham, Fulham, and even Wealdstone, an amateur side, with a dedicated following of approximately 200! I have been to the *legendary* Wembley Stadium, and witnessed some amazing matches there, however not when England were playing! I have neglected to regularly watch England play, as in my opinion the ticket price was not proportional to the standard of the match. The best match I have seen at Wembley was when Gillingham played _____ in the Division two play offs, with the victor of the two sides being rewarded with a place in Division One. At the time Gillingham were being managed by Peter Taylor, who was controversially sacked as England Under 21 manger despite winning all the qualifying matches without conceding a goal.