

This is a journal entry by Flora Tristan, a Frenchwoman who visited London in 1839. Overseas visitors to London rarely commented favourably on the English weather. It was often claimed by visitors that in England there are “eight months of winter and four months of bad weather.” In her journal entry, the author is complaining about the smog – air pollution from houses and factories so bad it created a thick, smoky fog.

SOURCE A: A journal entry, written in 1839

Over every English town there hangs a pall compounded of the Ocean vapours that perpetually shroud the British Isles, and the heavy noxious fumes of the Cyclops' cave. No longer does timber from the forests provide fuel for the family hearth; the fuel of Hell - coal - snatched from the very bowels of the earth, has taken its place. It burns everywhere, feeding countless furnaces, replacing horse-power on the roads and wind-power on the rivers and the seas which surround the empire.

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Above the monster city a dense fog combines with the volume of smoke and soot belching from thousands of chimneys to wrap London in a black cloud which allows only the dimmest light to penetrate and shrouds everything in a funeral veil.

In London, misery is in the very air you breathe and enters in at every pore. There is nothing more gloomy or disquieting than the aspect of the city on a day of fog or rain or black frost. Only succumb to its influence and your head becomes painfully heavy, your digestion sluggish, your breathing laboured for lack of fresh air, and your whole body is overcome by fatigue. Then you are in the grip of what the English call “spleen”: a profound despair, unaccountable anguish, cantankerous hatred for those one loves the best, disgust with everything, and an irresistible desire to end one's life by suicide. On days like this, London has a terrifying face: you seem to be lost in the necropolis of the world, breathing its sepulchral air. The light is wan, the cold humid; the long rows of identical sombre houses, each with its black iron grilles and narrow windows, resembles nothing so much as tombs stretching to infinity, whilst between them wander corpses awaiting the hour of burial.

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On such black days the Englishman is under the spell of his climate and behaves like a brute beast to anybody who crosses his path, giving and receiving knocks without a word of apology on either side. A poor old man may collapse from starvation in the street, but the Englishman will not stop to help him. He goes about his business and spares no thought for anything else; he hurries to finish his daily task, not to return home, for he has nothing to say to his wife or children, but to go to his club, where he will eat a good dinner in solitude, as conversation fatigues him. Then he will drink too much, and in his drunken slumber forget the troubles which bother him during the day. Many women resort to the same remedy; all that matters is to forget that one exists. The Englishman is no more of a drunkard by nature than the Spaniard, who drinks nothing but water, but the climate of London is enough to drive the most sober Spaniard to drink.

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Summer in London is hardly any different than winter; the frequent chilling rainstorms, the heavy atmosphere charged with electricity, the constant change of temperature, cause so many colds, headaches and bouts of colic that there are at least as many sick people in summer as in winter.

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Air pollution in London's Oxford Street has already breached the legal limit for the whole of 2015 – in just four days!

Air pollution in one of London's busiest roads has already exceeded the legal limit for the whole of 2015, in the space of just four days, experts have warned.

Campaign group Clean Air In London has reported that the excessive levels for nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) in Oxford Street had passed the limit set by the EU by January 4, the Evening Standard has reported. Simon Birkett, founder and director of Clean Air In London, told *The Independent* the EU and UK regulations limited NO₂ levels so they must not exceed 200 micrograms per cubic metre for more than 18 hours in an entire year.

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But Mr Birkett said Oxford Street had already reached 19 hours in excess of the limit by January 4, while Putney High Street also passed the limit yesterday.

According to statistics supplied by Clean Air In London, in 2014 Oxford Street clocked up 1,361 hours where the NO₂ levels were exceeded. Putney High Street meanwhile saw a total of 999 hours where the levels were exceeded. The road with the highest number of hours where NO₂ levels were exceeded in 2014 was Brixton Road, with 1,732 hours.

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Mr Birkett said: "The Mayor has taken a succession of backward steps on his proposed Ultra Low Emission Zone (ULEZ) since announcing it two years ago. The gap between what the Mayor says and what he needs to do and actually does has never been wider. Meanwhile, concerns about air pollution, particularly NO₂ and diesel exhaust, have risen exponentially. Leading scientists say that many roads in central London will tend to have the highest NO₂ concentrations in the world."

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Mr Birkett has called for a ban on diesel from the worst affected areas by 2020. He said: "The Mayor seems to have a love affair with diesel that must end."

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A spokesperson for the Mayor of London said: "At the heart of his plans is the world's first Ultra Low Emission Zone in central London from 2020, and already, progress is being made. The oldest and most polluting vehicles have been taken off the streets, and around Oxford Street alone, the Mayor's measures have reduced emissions by a third in two years. Unlike many cities, London has met EU rules on particulate matter. The number of Londoners living in areas above NO₂ limits has halved since 2008. Under this Mayoralty, emissions of NO_x (nitrogen oxides) are down by 20 per cent and PM₁₀ by 15 per cent. Furthermore, the Mayor has set out how, with government and EU support, London can meet targets for nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) emissions by 2020, ten years ahead of government predictions."

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In November, the Government's scientific advisors were reported to be set to warn that air pollution, largely from diesel vehicle road traffic, may be to blame for as many as 60,000 early deaths in Britain each year.

Q1: Read **lines 10-20** of **Source A**. Tick **4** statements below which are **TRUE**.

- The writer thinks smog makes London seem gloomy ☐
- The author claims that the houses resemble tombs ☐
- The narrow windows are why the light is so dim ☐
- She describes Londoners as the dead, awaiting burial ☐
- She says that the smog causes you to feel fatigued ☐
- The author regards London as an attractive city ☐

[4 marks]

Q2: Refer to **Source A and Source B**.

Write a summary of the writers' attitudes to air pollution in London.

[8 Marks]

Q3: Now refer to **Source A**.

How does the writer use **language** to convey her opinions of smog in London?

[12 marks]

Q4: **Compare** how the two writers convey their **attitudes** to air pollution.

In your answer you should:

- compare their attitudes
- compare the methods they use to convey their attitudes.
- support your ideas with quotations from both texts.

[16 marks]