

<b>EAE 0422 A</b>	<b>Sujet Jury</b>	<b>Sujet Candidat</b>	<b>Code Sujet</b>	<b>CLG 15</b>
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**Your main commentary should be focused on *modal auxiliaries*. Other topics may also be addressed.**

Shortly after this fourteenth picture was taken, my relations with Beatrix reached their lowest ebb.

I am not sure that you could guess that however, from looking at the five smiling faces captured here. The year is 1962, and, my goodness, we look young in this picture, Bea and I! But then I realize, with a shock, that we *were* still young. I would have been twenty-nine, she would have been thirty-two; at which age, of course, the three year difference between us, which seemed so momentous when we were both children, can have meant nothing at all. Twenty-nine, though! Is that all? A stripling, I would have been, an infant, and yet... and yet in my memory, the day this photograph was taken, I feel *ancient*. The reason can only be, I suppose, that a cycle was coming to an end; a circle was closing; the story of my friendship with Beatrix had not much further to run. That part of me which had been tied to her for so long was about to die.

Anyway, the important thing, as I must always remember, is that I describe the picture to you, that I help you to see. So, let me focus my attention, once more.

Very well:

A beach hut, painted a rich blue, with the long grass of the sand dunes behind it. The thin strip of sky you can see at the back of the picture is several shades paler than the blue of the beach hut. The hut itself is a simple enough structure, just a wooden shed, really, with the two halves of the roof forming an apex at the top. Just beneath the apex, someone has painted the number of the hut, 304, and its name, 'Sasparella', which I think means the west wind or something.

The twin doors of the hut are flung open, and are painted white on the inside. They open to reveal a wide doorway, with a white lace curtain which has been pulled back and tied into place. Behind the doorway, the interior of the hut is shadowy but a few details can be made out. There is a small cupboard unit also painted white and on top of it, a little gas hob and a kettle. It is

standing against the back wall of the hut, which is bisected diagonally by a large cross-beam. The interior of the hut is by no means large – about six feet square, I would guess. To the right there are three hooks on the back wall, one of them with a blue and yellow striped beach towel hanging from it. In the same corner, two children's fishing nets are leaning against the wall. There are some buckets and spades, I think, on the floor – a confusion of more blues, yellows and reds, any way, although this part of the picture is really too shadowy to make out very much more.

On either side of the hut, you can just see the walls of its immediate neighbours. There is only about two feet of space between each hut. In front of the hut is a wooden platform about the same area again as the hut's interior, and raised about one foot above the level of the beach. There is a windbreak set up on the left-hand side, patterned with wide blue, orange and yellow stripes. There are five people sitting on the platform: Beatrix and myself, to the rear, in deckchairs, and sitting to the front of the platform, with their legs dangling over the edge, her two youngest children Joseph and Alice. Your mother, aged almost fourteen when this photograph was taken, is standing to the right of the others, positioning herself between the adults and the young children. Beatrix's husband, Charles, is not in the photograph so I assume he must have taken it.

It is always possible, however, that Charles was simply not with us on the beach that day, and that we asked a stranger to take the photograph. The whole of that long summer, which Beatrix and her family spent down on the south coast, he only came down to see them at weekends. The rest of the time he remained in Pinner, and went to work every day in the City.