

Agrégation interne d'anglais
Session 2019
Épreuve ESP
Explication d'un texte extrait du programme

**ESP
214**

Explication de texte

Ce sujet comprend 2 documents :

- Document 1 : BOWLES, Samuel. *Our new West. Records of travel between the Mississippi River and the Pacific Ocean. Over the plains—over the mountains—through the great interior basin—over the Sierra Nevadas—to and up and down the Pacific coast. With details of the wonderful natural scenery, agriculture, mines, business, social life, progress, and prospects... including a full description of the Pacific railroad; and of the life of the Mormons, Indians, and Chinese. With map, portraits, and twelve full page illustrations.* Chapter III, "Laying the Track of the Pacific Railroad". Hartford, Connecticut: Hartford Publishing, 1869. 55-57.
- Document 2 : *The Iron Horse* (Le Cheval de fer, John Ford, 1924). [01:09:02 – 01:11:27]
Le document 2 est à consulter sur la tablette multimédia fournie.

Explication de faits de langue

Le candidat proposera une analyse linguistique des segments soulignés dans le texte du document 1.

Long trains brought up to the end of the completed track loads of ties and rails; the former were transferred to teams, sent one or two miles ahead, and put in place upon the grade. Then rails and spikes were reloaded on platform cars, these pushed up to the last previously laid rail, and with
5 an automatic movement and a celerity that were wonderful, practiced hands dropped the fresh rails one after another on the ties exactly in line, huge sledges sent the spikes home, the car rolled on, and the operation was repeated; while every few minutes the long heavy train behind sent out a puff from its locomotive, and caught up with its load of material the
10 advancing work. The only limit, inside of eight miles in twenty-four hours, to the rapidity with which the track could thus be laid, was the power of the road behind to bring forward the materials.

As the Railroad marched thus rapidly across the broad Continent of plain and mountain, there was improvised a rough and temporary town at its every public stopping-place. As this was changed every thirty or forty days, these settlements were of the most perishable materials,—canvas tents, plain board shanties, and turf-hovels,—pulled down and sent forward for a new career, or deserted as worthless, at every grand movement of the Railroad company. Only a small proportion of their populations had aught
20 to do with the road, or any legitimate occupation. Most were the hangers-on around the disbursements of such a gigantic work, catching the drippings from the feast in any and every form that it was possible to reach them. Restaurant and saloon keepers, gamblers, desperadoes of every grade, the vilest of men and of women made up this "Hell on Wheels," as it was most
25 aptly termed.

When we were on the line, this congregation of scum and wickedness was within the Desert section, and was called Benton. One to two thousand men, and a dozen or two women were encamped on the alkali plain in tents and board shanties; not a tree, not a shrub, not a blade of grass was visible;
30 the dust ankle deep as we walked through it, and so fine and volatile that the slightest breeze loaded the air with it, irritating every sense and poisoning half of them; a village of a few variety stores and shops, and many restaurants and grog-shops; by day disgusting, by night dangerous; almost everybody dirty, many filthy, and with the marks of lowest vice;
35 averaging a murder a day; gambling and drinking, hurdy-gurdy dancing and the vilest of sexual commerce, the chief business and pastime of the hours, —this was Benton. Like its predecessors, it fairly festered in corruption, disorder and death, and would have rotted, even in this dry air, had it outlasted a brief sixty-day life. But in a few weeks its tents were struck, its
40 shanties razed, and with their dwellers moved on fifty or a hundred miles farther to repeat their life for another brief day. Where these people came

from originally; where they went to when the road was finished, and their occupation was over, were both puzzles too intricate for me.