

## Abitur 2004 Mündliche Prüfung im Fach English (GK En/Br)

**Text:** News report from the online edition of .....(slightly abridged) Date: June 4, 2004

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# Who gets petrol pounds?



Cost ... where does the money go?  
[Click picture to enlarge](#)

**By ANDY WILKS**

MOTORISTS will be shocked at the huge amount of tax Gordon Brown siphons off for Treasury coffers at the petrol pump.

5 From a 7,700-gallon petrol tanker, a whopping 5,621 gallons is poured straight into the Chancellor's kitty in duty and VAT.

That's £21,753 from a single tanker carrying fuel worth £29,798.

10 The remainder — 2,079 gallons worth £8,045 — covers the cost of producing petrol, delivering it to forecourts and retailers' profits.

The fuel costs £5,662, the retailer takes £2,085 and delivery costs £298.

The Treasury's share from petrol amounts to 73 per cent, leaving just the scraps to the petrol stations, distributors and producers. [...]

15 The Treasury takes a bigger cut than just about anywhere in the world.

The tax toll explains why the UK pays more at the pumps than other nations.

While we fork out 61p to the Treasury for every 83p litre of fuel, lucky Americans stump up just 8p tax in a 30p litre. That's the equivalent of 27 per cent. [...]

20 Richard Haddock, fuel protests organiser in the South West, said: "This does not just affect hauliers, farmers and the like. It hits everybody because extra transport costs can only be absorbed for so long before they are passed on to the consumer.

"The Government is profiteering out of this with its VAT on fuel. We are asking for a freeze on VAT and the proposed 2.2 per cent in September to be cancelled.

Everybody is fed up to the back teeth with hidden taxes."

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**Annotations:** Brown – Gordon Brown – Chancellor of the Exchequer (responsible for taxes) **3** siphon off – Germ: absaugen (consider entry 2 in DCE) **6** whopping – (informal) **8** kitty –(informal) pot of money **11** forecourt – open area (in front of a service station); retailer – shop that sells a product **13** Treasury – government department in charge of collecting and managing taxes **16** toll – amount that has to be paid **17** fork out – (informal) spend **18** stump up – (BrE informal) pay money even when you don't want to **20** haulier - haulage contractor **23** VAT – Value Added Tax (Germ. Mehrwertsteuer)

### Assignments:

- 1) Give an outline of the contents of the text.
- 2) Analyse the linguistic means that the author uses in order to get his message across.
- 3) Comment on the journalism that articles like the above one stands for.

## 1. Teil

1) rising petrol prices, ratio of taxes deducted by Treasury in figures and actual production, shipping and distribution costs, international comparison, consumers' reactions and protests demanding a tax freeze instead of a rise

2) general perspective: people oriented ("us"), critical view of government policies ("them")

- consumer side: 1 *shock(ed)* reactions – emotionality of the issue 19 *fork out / stump up* (informal) – implies consumers falling victim to state profiteering; *lucky Americans* – comparison underlines disadvantage for British consumers 27 *fed up to ... teeth* – breaking point is reached, consumer organisations are threatening to take action
- government side: 3 *siphon off* – suggestion of immorality (gutter) 3/8 [Chancellor's] *coffers/kitty* – verbal denigration of state institutions making them less authoritative and accessible to taxpayers' and voters' criticism 6 *whopping* – amount suggesting greediness 13 scraps – production side involving workers is much worse off than government side 15/25 *take a cut/profiteering* – imagery suggests selfishness and greed on behalf of government/politicians

source: The Sun, yellow press

3) General possible approach: Yellow press polarizes to instigate emotions siding with the underdog against those "at the top of the pile."

Positive evaluation: keep the political process alive, enliven the media landscape

Negative evaluation: simplification and distortion of facts, danger of manipulation of simple-minded mass of readers, moral low ground: ruthless business practises

## 2. Teil

common thread: self perception vs. others' perception / reputation / slander

- literature 1: Shakespeare: Desdemona, Hamlet, Macbeth's victims (defectors) and/or: Commander v Offred in *Handmaid's Tale*
- science orientation: Columbia catastrophe and NASA's reputation
- literature 2: Alzheimer's patient and nurse (*Iris Murdoch*)