



TRAINS powered by human poo and food waste could be coming to a platform near you soon...

by editor in chief Nicky Cox

The BioUltra train is being developed to replace dirty diesel engines, to help cut air pollution and greenhouse gases. Diesel trains are set to be banned by the Government from 2040, so more green technologies are needed.

Beverley Nielsen, Chair of Ultra Light Rail Partners, the developers of the BioUltra train, told *First News*: “I’m really aware of how little time we have to tackle climate change and want to help make a real difference.”

The challenge Councillor Nielsen and her team of experts faced was how to find a way to power trains that wouldn’t take too much energy to produce and wouldn’t pollute the world through carbon dioxide and other harmful emissions.

Clr Nielsen explained: “Biomethane is very good as a

solution. It’s produced from organic waste – animal, human, crop, food – and by using it we prevent very harmful methane emissions, which are up to 34 times more damaging as a greenhouse gas than carbon dioxide.”

Only 3% of the 90 million tonnes of animal manure produced each year in the UK is processed. So there is no shortage of poo to make the biomethane.

The plan is for the BioUltra train to run in urban and rural places, creating public transport that is clean, affordable and safe. And, with an eye on the coronavirus pandemic, Clr Nielsen added: “We’ve also tried to make sure it will keep our passengers from getting COVID or other viruses with a clever air filtration system.”

The new train is due to go into production over the coming year.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY, GRETA!



GRETA Thunberg turned 18 on Sunday 3 January.

Officially now an adult, the climate activist thanked her fans on Twitter and made some jokey remarks aimed at her critics.

She tweeted: “Thank you so much for all the well-wishes on my 18th birthday!

“Tonight you will find me down at the local pub exposing all the dark secrets behind the climate and school strike conspiracy and my evil handlers who can no longer control me! I am free at last!!”

SWANSEA



● Solar-powered hospital

Morrison Hospital will be getting a quarter of its power from a nearby solar farm soon. The £5.7m solar farm is part of the Welsh Government’s attempt to save energy and reduce carbon emissions. Swansea Bay University Health Board spends £6.9m each year on electricity, gas and water, and expects to save £1.5m a year using the 10,000 solar panels, as well as reducing annual carbon emissions by around 3,000 tonnes.

GLOSSARY

diesel — A fuel made from petroleum, or other oils, but heavier than petrol

councillor — An elected member of a local government

biomethane — A renewable natural gas that can be used as fuel

solar farm — An area of land in which a large number of solar panels are set up to absorb the sun’s rays in order to generate electricity

carbon emissions — The release of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere. Planes, cars, factories, etc, produce carbon dioxide and evidence shows that this is harmful for the environment



Questions on: Front Page: ‘Poo poo train’, Big News: ‘Happy birthday, Greta!’ and Home News: ‘Swansea – Solar-powered hospital’

Questions on: ‘Poo poo train’

Part A: Find and explain the facts

- A1. Why is the BioUltra train being developed?
- A2. Who is Councillor Beverley Nielsen?
- A3. What challenge was faced by Nielsen and her team of experts?

Part B: Deduce and infer information

- B1. Explain the benefits of using biomethane as a fuel.
- B2. Apart from being powered by clean fuel, how else is the BioUltra train beneficial?

Part C: Analyse the writing and presentation

- C1. What makes the headline: ‘Poo poo train’, effective?

Questions on: ‘Happy birthday, Greta!’

Part A: Find and explain the facts

- A1. Answer the following quick-fire questions about Greta Thunberg.

What is she well known for?	
When is her birthday?	
How old is she?	

Part B: Deduce and infer information

- B1. The age that Greta turned this birthday is significant. Why?
- B2. On her birthday, Thunberg thanked her fans and made some jokey remarks aimed at her critics. Based on her remarks, what can you infer about what Thunberg’s critics say about her?

Part C: Analyse the writing and presentation

- C1. Comment on the choice of green font for the headline.

Questions on: ‘Swansea – Solar-powered hospital’

Part A: Find and explain the facts

- A1. Identify whether the following statements are true or false. If false, write the correction.

Statement	True or false	Correction (if applicable)
<i>Morrison Hospital will be getting a quarter of its power from a nearby solar farm soon.</i>		
<i>The £5.7m solar farm is part of the Scottish Government’s attempt to save energy and reduce carbon emissions.</i>		
<i>Swansea Bay University Health Board spends £6.8m each year on electricity, gas and water.</i>		

Part B: Deduce and infer information

- B1. Why is the hospital going to be getting some of its power from a nearby solar farm?

Part C: Analyse the writing and presentation

- C1. Which features of writing to inform can you identify in this report? Give examples to support your answer.

GLOSSARY

diesel — A fuel made from petroleum, or other oils, but heavier than petrol

councillor — An elected member of a local government

biomethane — A renewable natural gas that can be used as fuel

solar farm — An area of land in which a large number of solar panels are set up to absorb the sun’s rays in order to generate electricity

carbon emissions — The release of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere. Planes, cars, factories, etc, produce carbon dioxide and evidence shows that this is harmful for the environment



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Questions on: ‘Poo poo train’

Part A: Find and explain the facts

A1. Why is the BioUltra train being developed?

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A2. Who is Councillor Beverley Nielsen?

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A3. What challenge was faced by Nielsen and her team of experts?

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Part B: Deduce and infer information

B1. Explain the benefits of using biomethane as a fuel.

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B2. Apart from being powered by clean fuel, how else is the BioUltra train beneficial?

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Part C: Analyse the writing and presentation

C1. What makes the headline: 'Poo poo train', effective?

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Questions on: 'Happy birthday, Greta!'

Part A: Find and explain the facts

A1. Answer the following quick-fire questions about Greta Thunberg.

What is she well known for?	
When is her birthday?	
How old is she?	

Part B: Deduce and infer information

B1. The age that Greta turned this birthday is significant. Why?

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Questions on: ‘Swansea – Solar-powered hospital’

Part A: Find and explain the facts

A1. Identify whether the following statements are true or false. If false, write the correction.

Statement	True or false	Correction (if applicable)
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<i>Swansea Bay University Health Board spends £6.8m each year on electricity, gas and water.</i>		

Part B: Deduce and infer information

B1. Why is the hospital going to be getting some of its power from a nearby solar farm?

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Part C: Analyse the writing and presentation

C1. Which features of writing to inform can you identify in this report? Give examples to support your answer.

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Teacher Answers

AIM OF THE NEWS COMPREHENSIONS: News reports are unique non-fiction texts. Being real, they naturally engage students, and with the range of topics that are covered, help to develop pupils' knowledge and understanding of the wider world outside the classroom. The reports are ideal for short, focused comprehension or discussion activities. Along with the opportunity to find fascinating facts and appreciate the opinions of those involved, there is plenty to be inferred and deduced to understand in more depth what is being reported. Like authors, journalists play with language, so news 'stories' are rich nuggets of text to investigate and provide the opportunity for literacy programmes.

TEACHER ANSWER GUIDE: The teacher answers are intended to provide a guide to the reading skill each question is practising. Suggestions are given for a starting point for responses that students would be expected to give at the start of KS3. Further suggestions then give fuller, more developed responses that students will work towards by the end of KS3, in preparation for the non-fiction elements of GCSE English language.

Questions on: 'Poo poo train'

Part A

A1. Why is the BioUltra train being developed?

READING SKILL — Find and explain information

Possible answer

Starting point

- The BioUltra train is being developed to replace dirty diesel engines to help cut air pollution and greenhouse gases.

Development

- Diesel trains are set to be banned by the Government from 2040, so more green technologies are needed.

A2. Who is Councillor Beverley Nielsen?

READING SKILL — Find and explain information

Possible answer

Starting point

- Councillor Beverley Nielsen is the Chair of Ultra Light Rail Partners, the developers of the BioUltra train.

Development

- She told First News: "I'm really aware of how little time we have to tackle climate change and want to help make a real difference."

A3. What challenge was faced by Nielsen and her team of experts?

READING SKILL — Find and explain information

Possible answer

Expected response

- The challenge they faced was to find a way to power trains that wouldn't take too much energy to produce and wouldn't pollute the world through carbon dioxide and other harmful emissions.

Part B

B1. Explain the benefits of using biomethane as a fuel.

READING SKILL — Infer information and justify with evidence from the text

Possible answer

Starting point

- Using biomethane as a fuel is much better for the environment. This is because, by using it, we prevent very harmful methane emissions, which are up to 34 times more damaging as a greenhouse gas than carbon dioxide.

Development

- Also, biomethane is produced from organic waste – animal, human, crop and food. This is readily available. Only 3% of the 90 million tonnes of animal manure produced in the UK is processed. Therefore, "there is no shortage of poo to make the biomethane"!

B2. Apart from being powered by clean fuel, how else is the BioUltra train beneficial?

READING SKILL — Infer information and justify with evidence from the text

Possible answer

Starting point

- The BioUltra train is also beneficial because it is designed to be affordable and safe.

Development

- Indeed, even the coronavirus pandemic has been considered. A "clever" air filtration system has been used to try to keep passengers from getting COVID or other viruses.

Part C

C1. What makes the headline: ‘Poo poo train’, effective?

READING SKILL — Explain methods used by the writer with appropriate use of terminology

Possible answer

Starting point

- The headline is effective because the reference to “Poo poo” is likely to pique the interest of the reader. People are often fascinated and amused by toilet humour and a humorous headline hooks readers. Readers will want to know what the connection between poo and a train is!

Development

- The headline is also effective because of the way in which it plays on sound. “Poo poo” sounds like “choo choo”, the sound a train is said to make. This adds to the humour and makes the headline memorable.

Questions on: ‘Happy birthday, Greta!’

Part A

A1. Answer the following quick-fire questions about Greta Thunberg.

READING SKILL — Find and explain information

Possible answer

Expected response

What is she well known for?	• Being a climate activist
When is her birthday?	• 3 January
How old is she?	• She turned 18 on 3 January

Part B

B1. The age that Greta turned this birthday is significant. Why?

READING SKILL — Infer information and justify with evidence from the text

Possible answer

Starting point

- Greta Thunberg has just turned 18 and this is significant because it means that she is officially an adult.

Development

- Therefore, she has gained all the rights of adulthood. Among other things, she will be eligible to vote in the next Swedish general election. Thunberg made a huge impact on the world as a child, so it will be interesting to see what she will be able to do as an adult.

B2. On her birthday, Thunberg thanked her fans and made some jokey remarks aimed at her critics. Based on her remarks, what can you infer about what Thunberg’s critics say about her?

READING SKILL — Infer information and justify with evidence from the text

Possible answer

Starting point

- Thunberg talks about exposing the “dark secrets” behind the “climate and school strike conspiracy”, which suggests that some of her critics believe that climate change is being lied about and isn’t really happening. It shows that they think Thunberg was using fake concerns about the climate to truant from school.

Development

- The mention of her “evil handlers” implies that critics think she is being manipulated and made to speak out about the environment by adults like her parents.

Part C

C1. Comment on the choice of green font for the headline.

READING SKILL — Identify benefits of text organisation and presentation

Possible answer

Starting point

- The choice of green font is bright and eye-catching. It draws the eye even though the story is relatively short and is positioned at the bottom of the page.

Development

- Furthermore, the colour green is associated with growth, nature and the environment. Thus, the use of this colour for a headline about Greta Thunberg is appropriate because she is such a well-known climate activist.

Questions on: ‘Swansea – Solar-powered hospital’

Part A

A1. Identify whether the following statements are true or false. If false, write the correction.

READING SKILL — Find and explain information

Possible answer

Starting point — statements correctly identified as true or false

Development — corrections given if applicable

Statement	True or false	Correction (if applicable)
<i>Morrison Hospital will be getting a quarter of its power from a nearby solar farm soon.</i>	• TRUE	
<i>The £5.7m solar farm is part of the Scottish Government’s attempt to save energy and reduce carbon emissions.</i>	• FALSE	• The hospital is in Wales so it is the Welsh Government’s attempt.
<i>Swansea Bay University Health Board spends £6.8m each year on electricity, gas and water.</i>	• FALSE	• It spends £6.9m

Part B

B1. Why is the hospital going to be getting some of its power from a nearby solar farm?

READING SKILL — Infer information and justify with evidence from the text

Possible answer

Starting point

- The hospital is going to be getting some of its power from a nearby solar farm because it is cost effective and better for the environment.

Development

- Swansea Bay University Health Board (which manages Morrison Hospital) expects to save £1.5m a year using the 10,000 solar panels, as well as reducing annual carbon emissions by around 3,000 tonnes.

Part C

C1. Which features of writing to inform can you identify in this report? Give examples to support your answer.

READING SKILL — Understand writer’s intent

Possible answer

Starting point

- This report contains lots of facts and figures. For example, the reader is informed that, “Swansea Bay University Health Board spends £6.9m each year on electricity, gas and water.”

Development

- The report is written in the third person. Also, the initial sentences are simple or compound in order to give the report a clear opening. These are all features of writing to inform.