
Textaufgabe für das 1./2. Abiturfach

- 1.) **Textvorlage:** Literarischer Text, Aufgabenart A1/A2 (Textaufgabe mit analytisch-interpretierendem Schwerpunkt bzw. analytisch-interpretierende Textaufgabe mit anwendungs-/produktionsorientierter Aufgabenstellung)
- 2.) **Fundstelle des Textes:** Edward Bellamy, **Looking Backward: 2000-1887** (Harmondsworth, 1986, ¹1888), pp. 82-84
- 3.) **Wortzahl:** 789
- 4.) **Verfasser:** Edward Bellamy
- Titel:** "Buying and Selling Is Essentially Anti-Social"

"Buying and Selling Is Essentially Anti-Social"

"I saw very little that was not new," I replied. "But I think what surprised me as much as anything was not to find any stores on Washington Street, or any banks on State. What have you done with the merchants and bankers? Hung them all, perhaps, as the anarchists wanted to do in my day?"

5 "Not as bad as that," replied Doctor Leete. "We have simply dispensed with them. Their functions are obsolete in the modern world."

"Who sells you things when you want to buy them?" I inquired.

"There is neither selling nor buying nowadays; the distribution of goods is effected in another way. As to the bankers, having no money we have no use for those gentry."

10 "Miss Leete," said I, turning to Edith, "I am afraid that your father is making sport of me. I don't blame him, for the temptation my innocence offers must be extraordinary. But, really, there are limits to my credulity as to possible alterations in the social system."

"Father has no idea of jesting, I am sure," she replied, with a reassuring smile."

15 [...]

"You were surprised," he said, "at my saying that we got along without money or trade, but a moment's reflection will show that trade existed and money was needed in your day simply because the business of production was left in private hands, and that, consequently, they are superfluous now."

20 "I do not at once see how that follows," I replied.

"It is very simple," said Doctor Leete. "When innumerable unrelated, and independent persons produced the various things needful to life and comfort, endless exchanges between individuals were requisite in order that they might supply themselves with what they desired. These exchanges constituted trade, and money was essential as
25 their medium. But as soon as the nation became the sole producer of all sorts of commodities, there was no need of exchanges between individuals that they might get what they required. Everything was procurable from one source, and nothing could be procured anywhere else. A system of direct distribution from the national storehouses took the place of trade, and for this money was unnecessary."

30 "How is this distribution managed?" I asked.

"On the simplest possible plan," replied Doctor Leete. "A credit corresponding to his share of the annual product of the nation is given to every citizen on the public books at the beginning of each year, and a credit card issued him with which he procures at the public storehouses, found in every community, whatever he desires
35 whenever he desires it. This arrangement you will see totally obviates the necessity for business transactions of any sort between individuals and consumers. Perhaps you would like to see what our credit cards are like."

"You observe," he pursued as I was curiously examining the piece of pasteboard he gave me, "that this card is issued for a certain number of dollars. We have kept the
40 old word, but not the substance. The term, as we use it, answers to no real thing, but merely serves as an algebraical symbol for comparing the value of products with one another. For this purpose they are all priced in dollars and cents, just as in your day. The value of what I procure on this card is checked off by the clerk, who pricks out of these tiers of squares the price of what I order."

45 "If you wanted to buy something of your neighbor, could you transfer part of the credit to him as consideration?" I inquired.

"In the first place," replied Doctor Leete, "our neighbors have nothing to sell us, but in any event our credit would not be transferable, being strictly personal. Before the nation could even think of honoring any such transfers as you speak of, it
50 would be bound to inquire into all the circumstances of the transaction, so as to be able to guarantee the absolute equity. It would have been reason enough, had there been no other, for abolishing money, that its possession was no indication of rightful title to it. In the hands of the man who had stolen it or murdered for it, it was as good as in those which had earned it by industry. People nowadays
55 interchange gifts and favors out of friendship, but buying and selling is considered absolutely inconsistent with the mutual benevolence and disinterestedness which

should prevail between citizens and the sense of community of interest which supports our social system. According to our ideas, buying and selling is essentially anti-social in all its tendencies. It is an education in self-seeking at the expense of
60 others, and no society whose citizens are trained in such a school can possibly rise above a very low grade of civilization."

ANNOTATIONS

The present text has been taken from Edward Bellamy's novel **Looking Backward: 2000-1887**, in which the narrator falls asleep in the year 1887 and wakes up again in 2000 in Boston in his former house, which is now owned by a Dr Leete. In the novel, this passage does not have a headline.

pasteboard (l. 38): cardboard
consideration (l. 46): (here) payment

to honor (l. 49): (to keep an agreement) to pay
title (l. 53): claim; right

GUIDELINES FOR ANALYSIS

- (1) Describe the economic system as shown in the present excerpt from **Looking Backward**. (**Comprehension**)
- (2) What is the effect - on the reader - of the point of view and mode of presentation of (some of) the economic principles of the state of **Looking Backwards**? (**Analysis**)
- (3) You have a choice here. Choose one of the following items:
 - a) Do you think such a system is a viable alternative to our present-day society, which is often criticised as being overly commercialised? Write a critical comment. [In your answer you may also refer to the economic principles of **Brave New World**.] (**Evaluation**)
 - b) Write a letter to the editor of a quality newspaper, maintaining that such a system as described in the present excerpt is a viable alternative to our present-day society, which is often criticised as being overly commercialised. [In your answer you may also refer to the economic principles of **Brave New World**.] (**Evaluation/Re-Creation of Text**)

Erlaubtes Hilfsmittel: A.S. Hornby, **The Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English** (London, ⁵1995)