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# GCSE ENGLISH LANGUAGE (8700)

Paper 2 Writers' viewpoints and perspectives

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## Insert

The two Sources that follow are:

Source A: 21<sup>st</sup> Century non-fiction

An extract from a Newspaper Article, *Ghost stories: There was something about our new home* by Hannah Belts

Source B: 19<sup>th</sup> Century non-fiction

An extract from a Newspaper Article *The Tennessee Ghost* by Oscar Wiltman

**Please turn the page over  
to see the Source**

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## Source A

Source A is taken from a newspaper account by Helen Belts written in 2013 about her experiences with suspected ghosts in her Midland's family home.as a teenager.

### Ghost stories: There was something about our new home...

This is a story I have never told in print for fear that I would sound mad. I was 16 when, one June, my family moved to a lofty Victorian villa in the Midlands: ivy-strewn, hidden behind trees, high-ceilinged and replete with corridors. To be sure, our new house had a degree of notoriety. Local gossip held that it boasted three "presences": a woman who stalked the ground floor, an elderly doctor forever racing up its stairs searching for a dying grandson and, in its upper reaches, the victim of an argument that had spilled over into murder. There was even what appeared to be the requisite bloodstain that could not be removed, since covered with carpet.



The more credulous would not step inside it. We were not so naive. And yet, there was something unsettling about our new home, a personality, a sense that we were installing ourselves in a place already occupied. It never felt quite empty. Doors would shut of their own volition, footsteps would sound. It felt as if we were being watched, assessed.

Back then, we didn't use the G-word. In fact, we strove not to use any word at all – not to acknowledge our summer haunting, certainly not to discuss it. And so the house tried harder, with what, I imagine, would be referred to as classic poltergeist activity. We would return home to find the taps turned on full-force, requiring wrenching back into inaction. An oven, on the third floor, would have its rings switched to red hot, making the house's already airless attics crackle dangerously with heat. After the second time it happened, we had it disconnected. It happened again. (And, believe me, as I write this, I too think it is mad.)

Matters became worse. One night, the boarded-over fireplace in my room ripped open with a clamour. I wrenched my pillow over my ears, telling myself it must be a trapped bird. In the daylight, I investigated. Behind the fireplace, crammed up the chimney, were Victorian newspapers recording the house's murder. I couldn't read them.

Still, the part of the narrative that brings most fear to the few friends in whom I've confided it is this. One bright August day, drinking tea in the kitchen, we elders – me, my sister, Nanny and mother – finally admitted that something was happening. We laughed and teased each other but, my God, it was a relief.

Suddenly, a mirror sprang off the wall and shattered. On the back of its glass, in an old-fashioned script, the numbers 666 were repeatedly etched, along with the

message: "I'm going to ----- kill you all." I know you won't believe this – I don't believe it. But it happened.

40 Like you, I am wary of ghost stories: their linear march and relentless building to a crescendo. This is a story with no denouement. Over time, a year or two, events gradually petered out. Again, I am told that this is standard form: ghosts (I can barely type the word) act up with newcomers, then they – and you – adjust.

45 Today, I love my parents' house with its greenery and servants' bells. It is our home. Yet still it has the capacity to act up. Our neighbour's new cleaner recently informed him that she would not be returning, having seen a woman walk through a wall (our buildings were once joined). On another occasion, one brother's girlfriend remarked that everything in her room had shaken at 4am. Was there some sort of quake?

"Some sort of quake," we replied.

**Turn over for Source B**

**Source B**

Source B has been taken from a newspaper account from Oscar Wiltman on a suspected haunting of the Bell family in 1856 in Tennessee.

Seeing news of the “Cocklane Ghost”, of London, I am reminded of another ghost of which I have not before thought for years, that made a great noise and created a tremendous excitement at the time. It made its appearance in Robertson country, Tennessee, some thirty years ago, or upwards, at the house of an old Mr Bell. Hence I  
5 call it the “Tennessee Ghost”, or perhaps I had better call it the “Bell Ghost”, as it seemed to have visited his house on account of a daughter he had, familiarly called, “Miss Betsey Bell”. It was in the form of a voice speaking in different parts of the house. It generally, as ghosts are wont to do, manifested itself only in the night; and , if  
10 I am not mistaken, the lights had all to be put out, before it would speak. It would be heard sometimes in one part of the house, and sometimes in another; moving about from the floor, under the floor, and the walls, to the beds, open space in the midst of the house, the roof and so on.

It would often follow the same routine within the family – Mr Bell, a moustache hung elegantly upon his upper lip, would raise an arm and ask the ghost to speak. Whilst the  
15 audience would wait upon a response, Mrs Bell would frantically wait upon any guests like a chaotic mouse. The ghost would then give a cold greeting, causing commotion amongst guests. They would all be dressed in their Sunday finery, the older boys with shoes gleaming with polish and the younger children’s hair scraped back into tight partings, resembling more of a stage show than a family gathering.

20 The ghost would converse freely with persons; and such was the excitement it created, that the house was constantly thronged with persons from all parts of the country – coming even fifty miles or more to hear it. When asked how long it was going to remain, it would reply “Until Joshua Gardner and Betsey Bell get married.” Now, Mr Gardner was a very likely young man, who resided in the neighbourhood, and with  
25 whom the writer of this subsequently became well acquainted. Such was the number of people who thronged the house, night after night, that they came near eating old Mr Bell out of “house and home.”

I remained sceptical of the entire affair. Being more accustomed to the affairs of  
30 business and commerce, I refused to accept the supernatural origin of the Bell spectacle. Other hauntings I had read about contained shakings of buildings, sightings of ghostly figures and notable change in temperature, all of which were absent from this particular case. Yet the people continued to come.

But the thing could not last always; the spell of enchantment was destined to be broken. It turned out that Miss Betsey Bell was a ventriloquist<sup>1</sup> – had, from some  
35 circumstance, become aware of the possession of such powers – had fallen in love with Mr Gardner, and wished him to marry her – and had fallen upon this plan to bring to bring about a matrimonial union. But Joshua Gardner and Betsey Bell never married; and the ghost at length “vanished into thin air”, as is generally the end of all  
40 ghosts. There are numbers now living in Robertson county, Tennessee, and elsewhere, who heard this ghost, and were well acquainted with the circumstances.

**GLOSSARY**

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<sup>i</sup> The ability to speak without moving lips, often using puppets.