



**GCSE**

**ENGLISH LANGUAGE**

**Paper 2 Writers' viewpoints and  
perspectives**

**8700/2**

**Insert**

**The two sources that follow are:**

**SOURCE A: 21st Century non-fiction**

**'How I beat my insomnia'**

**An extract from an article  
written in 2016 by journalist  
Arifa Akbar**

**SOURCE B 19th Century literary  
non-fiction**

**'A sleepless night'**

**An extract from an article  
written in 1872 by journalist  
Fanny Fern**

**[Turn over]**

**SOURCE A**

**SOURCE A is an extract from a newspaper article written in 2016 by journalist Arifa Akbar about her experience of insomnia, which is when a person has difficulty sleeping.**

**1 Now, I am about to say something  
that I never thought I would: I had a  
good night's sleep last night. And  
the night before that. All week in  
5 fact, I have tipped into bed, my  
mind restless for one shuddering  
moment before I turn to lie flat on  
my back and repeat a well–  
rehearsed script, at which point my  
10 thoughts drop off into dark velvety  
sleep.**

**A full night's sleep could never  
have happened a few years ago. I  
am 44 now but, until my late 30s, I**

**15** had insomnia that clung on from  
childhood and progressively beat  
**17** me down.

**20** It began when I was ten — I would  
deliberately keep myself awake to  
pick over the day. It would take me  
five or six hours to get to sleep  
and, even then, it would be  
interrupted. My immune system  
was shot. I lived on the edge of my  
**25** nerves. I fought it with remedies  
from the herbal to the hard stuff,  
but it just seemed to get worse.

**30** Two decades into the insomnia, at  
the age of 30, I was waking up — if I  
had fallen asleep at all — with sore  
eyes, itchy skin and a high-pitched  
sense of mental hysteria, which, at  
its worst, made me feel as though  
my life was unravelling.

**[Turn over]**

**35** I felt as if I had tried every known  
cure going — and there are plenty,  
given almost a third of us admit to  
being sleep deprived. I tried giving  
up coffee, sugar and heavy dinners.  
**40** Still awake. Baking at 3am. Still  
awake and getting fatter. Hypnosis,  
which did nothing at all. In  
desperation I bought a therapeutic  
electromagnetic mattress to  
**45** ‘recalibrate my energy field’. It just  
gave me a stiff back. Sleeping pills  
knocked me out for a few days,  
then the insomnia crept back.

**50** So when I came across a magazine  
article mentioning AT (Autogenic  
Training – a form of self-hypnosis  
and an apparent fix for insomnia,  
formulated by a German  
psychiatrist in the 1930s),  
**55** scepticism kicked in. I took the  
article to my doctor anyway —

**what harm was there in running it  
past him?**

**60 That is how I found myself sitting  
with 11 strangers, memorising a  
script to focus on our bodies from  
limb to limb, and then our organs,  
like a strange, verbal body scan. I  
was told to repeat the exercise  
65 three times a day, for 15 minutes  
each time — ideally in a quiet spot,  
sitting back on a chair or lying  
down.**

**70 It looked like I was merely resting  
with my eyes closed, but in my  
head I was repeating sentences:  
'My right arm is heavy and warm',  
'my heartbeat is calm and regular'  
and 'my neck and shoulders are  
75 heavy and warm'.**

**[Turn over]**

**The script had to be followed in a certain order, and repeated three**

**times. There was nothing more to it than that. And so I started**  
**80 chanting. To myself, that is, silently, three times a day.**

**A few weeks into my course, I began to feel something. My insomnia hadn't disappeared but I**  
**85 began to feel calmer, brighter, and less wired all the time. I felt my memory get sharper. I didn't have to write constant reminders to myself or search for the right words**  
**90 while speaking as I'd become used to doing.**

**My insomnia, at my most tormented, was excruciatingly noisy. I could feel my brain rev up**  
**95 in the night and start to chatter, sorting out things I hadn't given it**

**time to reflect on. Self–hypnosis began to turn down the noise.**

**100 Then it happened. Around Week Four, sleep came like a welcome black tide, knocking me out suddenly. It felt miraculous. I was overjoyed, but suspicious. This had happened before and insomnia**  
**105 had always returned with a vengeance.**

**But the insomnia hasn't come back. I still think of self–hypnosis as some form of magic, despite the**  
**110 science. I fear the spell will break and the insomnia will creep back one day.**

**And so I carry on repeating the script — and, so far, it carries on**  
**115 working its magic.**

**END OF SOURCE A**

**[Turn over]**

**SOURCE B**

**SOURCE B** is an extract taken from a magazine article written in 1872 by American journalist Fanny Fern. Here, she writes about her experience of being unable to sleep.

**1** You know what it is to lie awake at  
night, I suppose, while every human  
creature in the house is sleeping,  
with perspiration standing in drops  
**5** on your forehead; with twitching  
fingers, and kicking toes, and  
glaring eyes; with disgust at the  
distant tap, tap, tap, of feet on the  
sidewalk; planning your revenge  
**10** tomorrow (should you survive to  
see it) upon the owner of that blind  
across the street, which has been  
flapping to and fro all night, and yet  
never dropped on somebody's  
**15** head, as you hoped it might, so that



**you were saved from the noisy  
nuisance.**

**20 In vain have you tried saying the  
Multiplication Table; in vain have  
you repeated poetry by the yard, or  
counted to one hundred; in vain  
have you done any of the foolish  
things recommended in such  
cases. Two o'clock has just struck,  
25 and no sleep has followed. Well—if  
you can't sleep, you won't sleep,  
that's all. You'll just get up, and  
strike a light and read. You do it;  
but the fire is low, and cold shivers  
30 run up and down your back-bone.  
Three o'clock! You're hungry!  
Yes—that must be it. You'll go to  
the cupboard and get a bit of cold  
chicken. Good heavens! It's gone!  
35 Those lumpish, snoring wretches  
have devoured it before going to  
bed!**

**[Turn over]**

**40** You walk to the window. It is some  
comfort that the stars have to wink  
all night as well as you. Good!  
You're glad of it. Four o'clock!  
Gracious! How will you feel  
to-morrow? Suppose you should  
run from the top of the stairs to the  
**45** bottom, as fast and as loud as you  
could, and wake up the whole  
family. And as the vision of  
terrified night-gowns appears in  
your mind, you start grinning like a  
**50** maniac; then laughing hysterically;  
then crying outright; and the next  
thing you know it is eight o'clock in  
the morning, and coffee and rolls  
are awaiting your arrival.

**55** And as to mosquitoes. Ah! You  
too must have suffered. You have  
lain, hour after hour, listening to  
that never-ceasing war-song, till  
you were as nervous as a cat. You  
**60** have turned over; you have lain on

**your side, lain on your back, lain on  
your face. You have doubled your  
fists up under your arm-pits, and  
twisted your feet into hard knots  
65 under your night-clothes, to no  
avail. You have then fallen back on  
your dignity and the pygmy-ness of  
your tormentors, and folded your  
arms resolutely over your chest,  
70 and looked fiercely up to the  
ceiling... And yet, at that very  
moment, an “owdacious” bite has  
sent you flying, with a smothered  
exclamation, into the middle of the  
75 floor, bewailing the day you were  
76 born.**

**Next day you get a mosquito net.  
What a fool not to think of it before.  
You drape it round your bed. It  
80 looks safe. You explore it carefully  
that night before getting in, that**

**[Turn over]**

there is no treacherous hole left for  
the enemy. You put out the light,  
and oh! blissful happiness, listen to  
85 their howl of rage outside, and fall  
asleep. Next morning you wake  
with a splitting headache. Can it be  
the confined air of the net?  
Horrible! You spend that day  
90 nursing your head and your anger.

That night you refuse to gasp under  
a net, for all the mosquitoes that  
ever swarmed. You even light your  
gaslight defiantly, open the  
95 windows, and sneer at the black  
demons as they buzz in for their  
nocturnal raid. You sit and read—  
occasionally boxing your own  
ears—till the small hours, and  
100 then—to bed; only to dash  
frantically against the wall, throw  
your pillows at the enemy, laugh  
hysterically, and rise at daylight a

**bleary-eyed, spotted, dismal  
105 wretch!**

**END OF SOURCES**

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