

NEUTRALITY OR NUANCE? MAPPING JUDGMENT AND ENGAGEMENT IN JOURNALISTIC DISCOURSE ON TEENAGE PREGNANCY

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Abstract

This study examines the extent to which journalistic objectivity is maintained or nuanced in Polly Toynbee's article on teenage pregnancy, published by The Guardian (<https://www.theguardian.com>, accessed July 2025). Employing Martin and White's (2005) Appraisal Framework, the analysis focuses on two key subsystems: Judgment (evaluations of people's behavior, ethics, and capacity) and Engagement (how other perspectives are acknowledged or suppressed). The study adopts a qualitative content analysis approach with manual coding of appraisal instances, supported by frequency counts to quantify evaluative patterns. The findings revealed that the discourse surrounding teenage pregnancy is far from neutral. A total of 29 Judgement Attitude instances were identified. Of these findings, 64.29% (18 instances) were negative propriety judgments, often directed at the Conservative Party, portraying them as morally neglectful, indifferent, or even hostile to the needs of socially disadvantaged communities. On the other hand, positive judgment (17%) was associated with the New Labour government, and acknowledging the eagerness of a head of social unit. These are linguistically framed as responsible, evidence-based, and socially just, reinforcing a moral contrast between political ideologies. In terms of Engagement, 99 instances were noted. A significant 62.62% (62 instances) were monoglossic or contractive, indicating that Toynbee frequently limits alternative perspectives. The remaining 37.37% (37 instances) of dialogic expansion appear mainly in rhetorical constructions or hypothetical examples, such as imagining how disadvantaged girls perceive their futures. This heavy reliance on negative judgment and contracted engagement suggests that Toynbee uses journalistic discourse not merely to report on teenage pregnancy, but to frame it as a socio-political issue rooted in inequality, institutional failure, and class-based neglect. Overall, the findings show that Toynbee's discourse, while seemingly objective, is deeply infused with evaluative meaning. This reveals how journalistic texts, particularly those addressing complex social issues like teenage pregnancy, function as sites of ideological negotiation, shaping public attitudes through both explicit judgment and subtle engagement.

Keywords: appraisal; engagement; judgment; neutrality; nuance

INTRODUCTION

Journalism has an important role in our society by giving us information regarding things that evolve around our lives, such as politics, society, technology, economy, and many more. However, the use of journalistic language can affect how the journalist wants the piece that they write to shape the public opinion and perception. According Jhunjhunwala and Verma (2024) states that media outlets play a crucial role in shaping public opinion by selecting which issues to cover, how to frame those issues, and the tone and language used in coverage which can influence which issues receive attention and discussion, how they are perceived by the public, and the outcome. When delivering news, the journalist had to be objective to provide factual information and its accuracy. Porlezza (2019) said that accuracy plays an important role as it not only forces journalists to give evidence, but also to check whether the presented facts are true or not. According to Maras (2013), objectivity in journalism, though debated, is a core ethical principle aimed at ensuring that information presented to the public is factual, unbiased, and accurate. This principle is essential for maintaining public trust and journalistic credibility. Schudson (2001) said that objectivity is a concept that helps the journalist to convey only the facts without any emotions and social values. According to Udomisor and Udo (2015), journalists should be taking a neutral ground, not taking a stand on any issue and simply report what both sides believe. Yet this ideal of neutrality is constantly in tension with the realities of editorial journalism. Despite this, in editorial news reports sometimes the journalist's opinion and personal stance are often involved in the writing. Vos & Hanitzsch (2019) said that editorial journalism and opinion pieces deliberately incorporate the journalist's perspective to provide interpretation and alternative viewpoints, enriching public discourse and encouraging diverse perspectives on current issues. By doing this, the journalist not only informs the reader about the information but also gives people a possible different perspective from the journalist's point of view. Besides that, neutrality is considered one of the central standards of journalism. Muschenich (2022) said that neutrality is also considered as one of the central standards of journalism by separating news from opinion.

Neutrality is often expected in journalism. Journalists have to deliver facts without any other influence that might ruin the news. Ward (2008) said that objectivity and neutrality are often regarded as the highest

ideals of journalism, to present information in a balanced and impartial manner, and separate facts from opinion. In this case, editorial news does not have this ideal. In this case, Editorial is designed to take a stance on a social issue or other phenomenon. According to van Dijk (2000) editorials are opinion discourse, as opposed to news reports. He added that since they explicitly state the political stances of newspapers, they are unable to maintain neutrality. To show explicit stance means journalists must strategically use evaluative language to persuade readers, often relying on judgment to construct their arguments. As Smith (2019) said in his book, editorials and opinion pieces are naturally interpretative and judgmental. In this study, the editorial news piece that was chosen to be examined was from The Guardian editorial online newspaper by Polly Toynbee. The news piece talked about the rising rate of teenage pregnancy in the UK, highlighting the government's efforts to handle this growing problem, and the journalist's criticism and suggestions towards the government.

Journalistic discourse can be analyzed with the use of Discourse Analysis. Discourse Analysis provides an important framework for examining language use in naturally occurring social contexts. Van Dijk (1997) defined discourse as a form of language use. According to him, it is a communicative event, whether spoken or written, involving language, participants, and context. In linguistics, discourse can be analyzed with discourse analysis. Stubbs (1983) stated that discourse analysis is concerned with the study of language in context, beyond the level of the sentence. Brown and Yule (1983) emphasize that discourse analysis focuses on "what language users do" rather than simply describing linguistic structures in isolation.

Within discourse analysis, M.A.K. Halliday developed Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL). He views language as a resource for making meaning, and meaning resides in the systemic patterns of choices available to the speaker or writer (Halliday, 1978). SFL focuses on how language is being used and how the choices made form meaning. There are three metafunctions of language, which are ideational metafunction, which represents our experience and the logical relations between phenomena; interpersonal metafunction, which concerns about a speaker's attitude and judgement within meanings; and textual metafunction, which is used to organize meaning into coherent and meaningful text (Halliday and Matthiessen, 2013). Those three metafunctions work to allow the speaker or writer to express how their message wants to be interpreted. By using this, SFL provides a useful tool to reveal how meaning is formed and being presented in various media, like editorial news reports.

Related to this paper, interpersonal metafunction is the perfect tool to dig deeper into the relationship of meanings that express a speaker's attitude and judgments. The journalist language can be analyzed with the use of Martin and White's (2005) Appraisal theory, which is a part of SFL, where it focuses on how the speaker judges or evaluates people or things. Martin and White (2005) said that through the use of appraisal resources, we can see how authors and speakers take stances toward individuals and things and how these positions either align or misalign from those of others. Therefore, Appraisal does not only describe evaluation but exposes how power and stance are negotiated within texts. Appraisal, focusing only on engagement and judgment, is an excellent tool to test whether a journalist is being subjective or objective in delivering the news in an editorial. Or in simple terms, is the journalist being neutral, or are they just making a nuance? That is the main objective of this study. Engagement was chosen because it is used to see who are the evaluation coming from while Judgement, part of Attitude, is used to know how speaker judge people character. As said earlier, through language, journalists can express ideas and thoughts towards others in discourse. Appraisal fell into this metafunction, since it is concerned with the evaluation of attitudes, feelings, and valuation of things or people. To know how subjective or objective a journalist is in the editorial news, only judgment (part of attitude) and engagement were employed during this study. Judgement was used to know how much journalists evaluate the people involved in the phenomenon, whether positive or negative. While engagement was used to know how objective or subjective the journalist is by looking at the dominant type of engagement, whether monoglossic or heteroglossic.

Some scholars have conducted studies on Appraisal systems which includes the system of attitude, graduation, and engagement. Some scholars have conducted studies on appraisal in journalistic discourse. For instance, Ma & Du (2025) analyzed news reports on the Israel-Palestine conflict in China Daily and the Los Angeles Times, revealing differences in ideological stance. While China advocated peace, the U.S. tended to support Israel, reflecting each country's political orientation. Similarly, Yulianti et al. (2021) examined Medcom's news text Berebut Vaksin, finding that newswriters used attitude resources particularly negative appreciation and judgment, towards vaccine manufacturers, governments, and citizens, which reflected the subjectivity of the writers. In political and legal discourse, Aldakhil & Alyousef (2025) investigated courtroom argumentation in Trump vs. the United States Supreme Court using the Engagement system of appraisal. They found that both legal teams strategically deployed heteroglossic resources to disclaim and entertain, with the U.S. team leaning more on contractive strategies to assert authority.

Other than on journalistic and political discourse, there are also studies on educational and applied studies such as Suryaningtyas et al. (2019) applied appraisal in translation studies of tourism texts, showing how evaluation could improve translation outcomes. Finally, in the biographical genre, Cahyono et al. (2024) examined appraisal in Ben Bland's *Joko Widodo: Man of Contradiction*. Their findings showed that the biographer employed positive judgment to highlight Jokowi's achievements as mayor, governor, and president, while negative appreciation and judgment were used to critique his government's handling of the COVID-19 pandemic. Affect resources conveyed Jokowi's personal feelings, making the biography a rich site of interpersonal evaluation.

Unlike previous studies that analyzed various discourses through the lens of Appraisal, the present study focuses on mapping judgment and engagement in Polly Toynbee's editorial on the rising teenage pregnancy rate in Britain. This study fills the gap in understanding how Appraisals were employed in an editorial piece where facts and personal stance are mixed in the writing. Other than that, our study helps to further understand how journalists use evaluative language to give information while influencing readers on a social issue.

METHODS

This study employed a descriptive qualitative method to make this research possible. A qualitative approach is suitable for this research as it focuses on understanding the underlying meanings, patterns, and functions of language within a specific context (Creswell, 2013). Other than that, the data was obtained from The Guardian news website, in the opinion section entitled "*Teenage pregnancy rates are a barometer of Britain's progress. The tale they now tell is not reassuring,*" written by Polly Toynbee and published on July 16, 2025 (<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2025/jul/16/britain-legacy-austerity-teenage-pregnancy>). The goal of this study was to identify the text's realization of engagement and judgment. By applying the appraisal framework, this study was able to determine whether the journalist relied more on objective, factual assertions or subjective assessments by classifying clauses using these techniques. The reason why researchers employed appraisal was to assess the journalist's language in delivering the news.

The unit of analysis in this study will be the individual clause as defined within Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics framework. According to Halliday (1994: 20), the clause represents "the simultaneous realization of ideational, interpersonal, and textual meanings," making it the appropriate grammatical unit for appraisal analysis. This also helped researchers to analyze the news more in detail.

The purposive sampling technique was used as the data collection technique in this study. Creswell and Poth (2018) said that purposive sampling is used so that people can be purposefully informed of an understanding of the main issue at the center of a phenomenon. This method of sampling works especially well in qualitative research, where the objective is to comprehend the meaning implied within the news text. The Guardian is a well-known news media outlet, so that was the reason we chose it. Editorial news was purposefully selected because journalists sometimes include their own opinions and arguments to influence the reader. This type of news is a great source of data to analyze how the journalist was being subjective or objective in writing their news piece.

In analyzing the data, the clauses of the sentences in the editorial news were broken down first. The steps that were taken during the study were the first step, which was data collection by copying the news text from The Guardian online newspaper. After that, the news was turned into clauses because clauses serve as the fundamental units where explicit and implicit evaluations are embedded within a text. Then the clauses were analyzed and categorized into the types of the appraisal framework, focusing only on engagement and judgement based on Martin and White's (2005) appraisal framework. After categorizing, the data was later tabulated into a table that includes the information on the occurrence of each type of engagement (monogloss and heterogloss) and also the judgment in the form of both total occurrence and the percentages. The data was then interpreted to understand the realization of engagement and judgment types in the editorial news on The Guardian online newspaper, which discussed the rising teenage pregnancies in the UK.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

ENGAGEMENT

Engagement and Judgement was found throughout the news text. The table below shows the findings of Martin and White (2005) Appraisal Theory, focusing on the kinds of Engagement such as Monogloss (single voice) and Heterogloss (multi voice) on editorial news entitled '*Teenage pregnancy rates are a barometer of Britain's progress. The tale they now tell is not reassuring,*' written by Polly Toynbee.

Table 1. Engagement System on The Guardian Editorial News about Rising Teenage Pregnancy in UK

Type of Appraisal	Category			Σ	%	
Engagement	Monogloss	Projecting Sources	Projecting Clauses	62	62.62%	
			Names for Speech Acts	12		
	Heterogloss		Projecting within Clauses	4		
			Sacred Quotes	3		
				5	37.37%	
	Modality			7		
				6		
	Concession					
	Total			99	100%	

Engagement system was found in the editorial news. In total there were 99 occurrences, where 62 of them are Monogloss and 37 occurrences are Heterogloss. The table above shows that the most dominant type of Engagement system that was found in the editorial news is Monogloss. This is shown by presenting her interpretations, arguments, as well as judgements. She is speaking in a single voice that rarely acknowledge other perspective voice. This shows that the journalist, Polly Toynbee, was being subjective in the writing of the news. Though being subjective, the appearance of Heterogloss found in the news shows that she was not entirely rely on her voice only. She used other voices when being argumentative by giving other source of voice to support her arguments.

1. Monogloss

Monogloss refers to the use of evaluative resource or a consistent evaluative stance throughout a text (Martin and White, 2005). Based on the findings found in the Guardian editorial news, Toynbee mostly uses her own voice in her writing about the rising pregnancies in UK. This shows that the writer was being subjective, making her own voice as an established fact. Her authoritative stance also plays a part in her writing. The examples and discussion of Monogloss Engagement system can be seen in the clause below:

- 1) *Years of austerity have destroyed the web of services that tackled this complex problem.*

On the first example, the clause shows that Toynbee presented the clause as a historical fact. She pointed out the cause '*years of austerity*' and effect '*destroyed the web of service*', making the statement act as settled fact. In the clause we see that there are no other voices that support her claim, making her clause as a truth.

2) *Compared to our European neighbors, we are failing.*

This is also similar to the previous clause. The journalist gave a statement without any quotes or citing a study. This shows that she is positioning herself as an expert who is delivering a definitive statement and she delivered the statement with absolute certainty.

3) *The UK now has the seventh highest under-18 live birth rate out of the 27 EU countries and us.*

Although the journalist gave a statistic, she didn't imply the source of the data. This makes the statistic acts from her own voice. She wanted the reader to trust her as the source of information. The lack of heterogloss markers such as projection device also show that this is statement that is from sing Other than that, she wanted to highlight UK poor performance by using 'seventh highest' to frame the main point and that is the UK government evidence of failure.

4) *To start with, Labour had to take on the bogus moralising among a particularly nasty cohort of Tories.*

Toynbee states that in at that time (1997) the labor party had to deals with the conservative party when dealing with teenage pregnancies. This shows that she directly criticizes without any other voice intercepting her statement.

5) *What worked was tackling all causes at once, from child poverty to school absence, alcohol use, poor sex education, a lack of access to contraception, mixed messages about sex, dismal future prospects, and the impact of spending a childhood in care.*

The clause above again show that the journalist gave a statement that act as a fact. She presents a conclusion shown by 'What worked was tackling all causes at once'. By making this as a settled fact, its acts as an indisputable truth.

Based on some examples above, it shows that Polly Toynbee was being subjective, giving statement that act as certain and indisputable truth. This is also a monogloss strategy where it presents a one-sided assertion, leaving no room for negotiation of meaning (Martin & White, 2005). The way Toynbee uses monogloss, she is not just giving her opinion. But instead, she using the language in a way that makes her judgement factual.

2. Heterogloss

Heterogloss refers to the presence of multiple evaluative resource or alternative voice within a text (Martin and White, 2005). Heterogloss occurrences were found in the Toynbee's editorial news. This shows that although she relies on her own voice (monoglossic) she still gave other voice to support her statement. The following are some examples of heterogloss clause founded in the news text.

1) ... when **figures from the Office for National Statistics** for 2022 **seemed to show** the second annual rise in teenage pregnancies in England and Wales, after a decade of falling rates.

This clause demonstrate Projecting within Clause. As she mentioned, she got the statistic from UK Office for National Statistic. This shows that she the journalist using extenal sourc. Then the usage of Modality shown by 'seemed to show' also making the clause above a heteroglossic occurence.

2) In 1992, **Peter Lilley**, the minister for social security, **sang a ditty** about "single mothers who get pregnant just to jump the housing queue",

In the example above, Toynbee projecting another voice, that is Peter Liley, rather than speaking directly on her own. Then it clearly show that she uses Projecting Source, especially Projecting Clause by reporting or projecting "single mothers who get pregnant just to jump the housing queue."

3) while **John Redwood**, the Welsh secretary, **castigated** single mothers in Cardiff the following year as "one of the biggest social problems of our day" ("The assumption is that the illegitimate child is a passport to a council flat," **he said**).

Projecting Clauses occured twice in the example. The first one is where she uses John Redwood statement where he blamed single mother as part of the biggest problem. The second one is also from him, where she quoted him explaining the assumption of the problem reason. These occurences made the example as a part of Heteroglossic finding.

4) ... **though** far more slowly than in comparable countries, ...

The clause above is heteroglossic realized through Concession. Toynbee uses concession to make a counter for the main claim that is about the falling rates of teenage pregancies. Journalist acknowledge other position while at the same time making her critique about the lags of Britain supported.

5) ... **that what was done before can be done again.**

The use of the word 'can' shows that this is an example of Heteroglossic occurence, especially Modality. The word 'can' create a room for negotiation for possibility. It marks the clause as heteroglossic because it is not presented as an absolute fact but as a potential.

Based on the presented examples of Heterogloss above, it is clear that Tonybee uses Projection, Modality, and Concession category which allowed her to critique or expressing possibility. These findings demonstrate that although her writing predominantly Monoglossic, she introduces other voice to strengthen her criticism and argument.

Judgement

Judgement was also found in the Polly Toynbee's editorial newspice. The table below shows the findings of Judgement Appraisal system in the news text.

Table 2. Judgement System on The Guardian Editorial News about Rising Teenage Pregnancy in UK

Type of Appraisal	Category	Σ		Sub-Total	%
		+	-		
Attitude	Judgement	Normality	-	-	-
		Capacity	1	8	9 32.14%
		Tenacity	1	-	1 5.57%
		Veracity	-	-	-
		Propriety	-	18	18 64.29%
		Total		28	100%

Judgement is used to evaluate someone. In the news text, the most dominant are Propriety with 18 occurrences (64.29%) and Capacity with 9 occurrences or 32.14%. Propriety deals with how is somebody ethic while capacity deals with somebody reliability. Based on the findings, it shows that the journalist was criticizing mostly toward the Conservative Party on their competence and effectiveness attempt to reduce the teenage pregnancies in the UK.

1. Propriety

Propriety is a kind of judgement that evaluates people morality and ethics (Martin and White, 2005). In the editorial news text, this type is the most dominant one, especially the negative propriety while none of the positive propriety was found. This occurred because the journalist criticizes at the Conservative party, on how badly they solve the rising teenage pregnancies. Here are some examples of the occurrences

- 1) *The outgoing Conservative government had imposed the Section 28 ban on schools discussing homosexuality and gave parents a legal right to remove children from sex education.*

In the example above, Toynbee frame the Conservative Party action as morally wrong. She impliedly condemns Tories' decision as irresponsible and they have a lack of moral commitment to the young people's wellbeing.

- 2) *All of these were attacked by the moralisers as likely to cause an explosion of young sex.*

The moralisers' action was framed as acting unethically by the journalist. This clause implies that the moralizers action attacking is harmful rather than protective. "Attack" shows the misguided nature of their moral stance.

- 3) *And those nasty attitudes still lurk on the Tory right among the likes of Danny Kruger,*

Toynbee deliberately direct this critique on to Danny Kruger, a Conservative supporter. The journalist called out Kruger's behaviour as nasty which implies that she condemns his value as a corrupt, wrongful, and having a regressive quality.

According to examples presented above, Polly Toynbee employed negative propriety to criticize the government, especially the Conservative Party about their moral obligation and behaviour which show how lack of ethics on their decision on making the right decisions to solve the teenage pregnancies in the UK. The lack of positive propriety might be a sign that the journalist didn't think that the Tories has a good moral or in other words, she is opposed to the party.

2. Capacity

Capacity is a type of Judgement that evaluates people's competence, effectiveness, and ability to act successfully (Martin & White, 2005). In the text, negative capacity is the second most dominant type found, with 8 occurrences, while positive capacity occurred in the text once. Here are some examples of the findings.

- 1) ... *how far Britain lags behind similar countries.*

The example above shows that the journalist evaluates the country's performance as incompetent in dealings with the problem and failed to keep up. This is a kind of negative capacity judgement of the country ability.

- 2) ... *while ours lags, largely due to our exceptionally high level of inequality.*

Again, Toynbee evaluates Britain as underperforming. The explicit reason she gives later in the clause emphasize the nation's inability to respond effectively to social challenges, making this a clear example of negative Capacity.

- 3) *Not everything in her social exclusion unit hit its goal, ...*

In this example, the journalist highlights the failure of Moira Wallace, the head of the social exclusion unit, in accomplishing the intended goal. While not as harsh as her critique of the Conservatives, this still functions as a negative Capacity judgment. This is because Toynbee draw attention to the unit's failure to fully achieve its aims.

- 4) *Had New Labour's remarkable programmes around social exclusion been doing their work through these wasted Tory years,*

This is the only occurrence of positive capacity judgement. Toynbee made a positive remark of the New Labor Party's programs. She is in contrast with the Conservatives, and this clause shows her alignment with Labour, supporting her stance.

From those examples, it can be said that Toynbee employs negative capacity judgement to show her dissatisfaction of the Conservative Party. She also employed this to frame the Conservatives as incompetent and incapable of addressing teenage pregnancy effectively. The occurrence of positive capacity might be a sign that she is agreeing with the Labour Party rather than the Conservative Party.

3. Tenacity

Tenacity evaluates whether someone is resolute, persistent, determined, and vigilant (Martin & White, 2005). Tenacity occurrence was found once in the editorial news text. Below is the example of the findings.

... *who say she "watches like a hawk, not an ostrich" the progress or often backsliding of those programmes.*

Based on the example above, the journalist described Moira Wallace as a person who is vigilant and full of alertness like a hawk. This suggest that Wallace is portrayed as a hardworking, attentive, and committed to watch the progress of the programmes although the outcomes were not always achieved. Still, Toynbee highlight Wallace's determination.

Neutrality or Nuance?

The findings above suggest that Toynbee's editorial news piece was not entirely neutral. This news piece act as a social commentary of the phenomenon that was being discussed. The engagement findings that are dominated by Monogloss occurrences (62.62%) revealed that she systematically positioning her subjectiveness as objective facts. Statements like "Years of austerity have destroyed the web of services" are presented without qualification, attribution, or acknowledgment of alternative causal explanations, which shows a violation of neutrality. Moreover, the Heterogloss occurrences do not represent genuine engagement with alternative perspectives but rather function strategically to reinforce her evaluative stance and critiques (Martin & White, 2005). Moving to the Judgement element, the findings reveal that she was being one sided in her positioning. This shown by the lack of positive Propriety but the big amount of negative Propriety (64.29%) towards the Conservative. The Capacity judgement further demonstrate this pattern. The journalist constructs the Conservative Party as immoral and incompetent while highlighting the Labour Party approaches as effective and ethical.

CONCLUSION

This study revealed that journalist's Engagement and Judgement on Polly Toynbee's editorial news published in The Guardian online newspaper that talks about the rising rates of teenage pregnancies in the UK. This study demonstrates that Toynbee's editorial is mainly subjective by employing Monogloss strategies and evaluative language. This is shown by presenting her perspective in authoritative style while including other voices (Heterogloss) to support her critique. The findings indicate that editorial news can function more as a persuasive social commentary than a neutral report. This also reflect how journalist can employ engagement and judgment resources to influence readers' perceptions. Moreover, the deployment of negative Capacity judgments (28.58%) and complete absence of positive Propriety evaluations show Conservative Party's failures during their governance as well as the journalist's subjective positioning in her arguments. The strategic use of heteroglossic elements, particularly projecting clauses and modality, functions not to expand dialogue but to strengthen her ideological critique. These insights might help other researchers and readers to critically evaluate editorial content and recognize evaluative strategies. For future research, similar appraisal analyses could be conducted across different editorial topics, media outlets, or cultural contexts to examine whether patterns of Monogloss and Heterogloss, as well as judgments of propriety, capacity, and tenacity, are consistent or vary depending on the subject matter and ideological stance of journalists.

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APPENDIX

No	Data	Appraising	Appraised	Attitude		Engagement	
				Jud	Het	Mon	
1.	Years of austerity have destroyed the web of services that tackled this complex problem.	destroyed	the web of services				✓
2.	Compared to our European neighbours, we are failing.	failing	we (Britain)	Cap (-)			✓
3.	It takes the passing of time to fully grasp the scale of the previous government's vandalism.	vandalism	previous government	Prop (-)			✓
4.	Think where we would be now	think	we (reader)				
5.	had the Tories not dismantled the social programmes they inherited from New Labour,	dismantled	the Tories	Prop (-)	Mod: Modal		
6.	with so many showing rapid progress.	rapid progress	social programmes				✓
7.	Those watching the statistics had a jolt last week	had a jolt	Those watching the statistics				✓
8.	when figures from the Office for National Statistics for 2022 seemed to show the second annual rise in teenage pregnancies in England and Wales, after a decade of falling rates.	rise	teenage pregnancies		PRS: PC		
9.	This may turn out to be the result of pandemic distortions in the previous year,	distortions	pandemic		PRS: PWC		
10.	when numbers dropped due to teens not meeting.	dropped	numbers (of teenage pregnancies)				✓
11.	The next figures may return to the previous trajectory,	may return to the previous trajectory,	The next figures		PRS: PWC		
12.	but that's still a sluggish rate of falling teenage conceptions,	sluggish	rate of falling teenage conceptions		Con		
13.	and it throws into stark perspective	stark perspective	it				✓
14.	how far Britain lags behind similar countries.	lags behind	Britain	Cap (-)			✓
15.	The UK now has the seventh highest under-18 live birth rate out of the 27 EU countries and us.	the seventh highest under-18 live birth rate	The UK				✓
16.	Many of these countries' rates are falling faster,	falling faster	these countries' rates				✓
17.	while ours lags, largely due to our exceptionally high level of inequality.	lags	ours (Britain)	Cap (-)			✓
18.		remarkable	programmes	Cap (+)			

	Had New Labour's remarkable programmes around social exclusion been doing their work through these wasted Tory years,	wasted	Tory years	Prop (-)	Mod: Modal	
19.	we may no longer be such a social laggard of the Western world.	social laggard	we	Cap (-)	Mod: Modal	
20.	It's worth recounting what was lost.	worth recounting	what was lost			✓
21.	As soon as Labour came to power in 1997,	came to power in 1997	Labour			✓
22.	it founded the social exclusion unit,	founded the social exclusion unit	It (Labour Party)			✓
23.	with 18 taskforces pursuing the causes of deprivation.	pursuing the causes of deprivation.	18 taskforces			✓
24.	Truancy, bad housing, juvenile crime, debt, mental ill-health, addictions, rough sleeping, school expulsions, youth unemployment, and teenage pregnancy each had a dedicated team seeking out social research.	each had a dedicated team seeking out social research.	Truancy, bad housing, juvenile crime, ... and teenage pregnancy			✓
25.	Their results were recorded each year in the index of multiple deprivation, an annual Domesday Book of the dispossessed.	were recorded each year in the index of multiple deprivation, an annual Domesday Book of the dispossessed.	Their results			✓
26.	In 1997, halving teenage pregnancies was regarded as one of the hardest targets.	hardest	targets		PRS: PC	
27.	That type of deeply complex social behaviour seemed beyond the reach of the state.	beyond the reach	deeply complex social behaviour	Cap (-)	Mod	
28.	To start with, Labour had to take on the bogus moralising among a particularly nasty cohort of Tories.	had to take on the bogus moralising	Tories	Prop (-)		✓
29.	The outgoing Conservative government had imposed the Section 28 ban on schools discussing homosexuality and gave parents a legal right to remove children from sex education.	had imposed the Section 28 ban on schools discussing homosexuality	Conservative government	Prop (-)		✓
30.	In 1992, Peter Lilley, the minister for social security, sang a ditty about "single mothers who get pregnant just to jump the housing queue",	sang a ditty about "single mothers who get pregnant just to jump the housing queue",	Peter Lilley	Prop (-)	PRS: PC	
					PRS: NSA	
					PRS: SQ	

31.	The outgoing Conservative government had imposed the Section 28 ban on schools discussing homosexuality and gave parents a legal right to remove children from sex education.	castigated single mothers in Cardiff the following year	John Redwood	Prop (-)	PRS: PC	
					PRS: NSA	
					PRS: SQ	
32.	Moral blame was an excuse to cut lone parent benefits,	excuse to cut lone parent benefits	Moral blame	Prop (-)		✓
33.	a last-minute pre-election trap that Lilley bequeathed to the New Labour government,	that Lilley bequeathed to the New Labour government,	a last-minute pre-election trap (cut lone parent benefits)	Prop (-)		✓
34.	forcing Labour MPs to carry it out,	forcing	Labour MPs	Prop (-)		✓
35.	pledged to stick to Tory spending plans.	pledged to stick to Tory spending plans.	cut lone parent benefits			✓
36.	What worked was tackling all causes at once, from child poverty to school absence, alcohol use, poor sex education, a lack of access to contraception, mixed messages about sex, dismal future prospects, and the impact of spending a childhood in care.	worked	tackling all causes at once			✓
37.	Alison Hadley, who led New Labour's teenage pregnancy taskforce, explains in her book <i>Teenage Pregnancy and Young Parenthood</i> why this matters: young mothers and their children tend to do badly, suffering from higher maternal depression and higher infant mortality, with children left with a delayed verbal ability and a worse life outlook.	explains in her book ... with children left with a delayed verbal ability and a worse life outlook.	Alison Hadley		PRS: PC	
38.	What helped was raising the school leaving age, girls staying on until 18, going to college with an array of courses that raise aspirations, and an education maintenance allowance paid to the poorest.	helped	policy			✓
39.	Pastoral care at school improved,	improved	Pastoral care at school			✓
40.	with school nurses dispensing the morning-after pill.	dispensing the morning-after pill	school nurses			✓
41.	So, too, did sex education.	So, too (improved)	sex education			✓
42.	Alcohol use among young people fell.	fell	Alcohol use			✓
43.	Youth services grew,	grew	Youth services			✓
44.	with Connexions offering 13- to 19-year-olds everything from mental health support to careers advice.	offering 13- to 19-year-olds everything from	Connexions			✓

		mental health support to careers advice				
45.	School absence rates fell	fell	School absence			✓
46.	as the curriculum became more flexible and fun, with a wider range of subjects and activities.	flexible and fun	the curriculum			✓
47.	Sexual health clinics for young people opened, with sessions suiting school hours.	opened, with sessions suiting school hours.	Sexual health clinics			✓
48.	All of these were attacked by the moralisers as likely to cause an explosion of young sex.	All of these were attacked	moralisers	Prop (-)	PRS: PWC	
					PRS: NSA	
					Mod: Modal	
49.	But instead, the opposite happened:				Con	
50.	the number of young people who said they had had sexual intercourse decreased substantially among boys and girls,	decreased substantially	sexual intercourse			✓
51.	and there were fewer conceptions.	fewer	conceptions			✓
52.	When a new government took power in 2010 and axed the programme,	axed	the programme	Prop (-)		✓
53.	so many of these improving indicators went backwards.	went backwards	improving indicators			✓
54.	In the intervening years, teenage pregnancy rates had still been falling,	still been falling	teenage pregnancy rates			✓
55.	though far more slowly than in comparable countries,	far more slowly	teenage pregnancy rates	Cap (-)	Con	
56.	as so many key services have been lost.	lost	key services			✓
57.	Brook's special sexual health clinics for the young have closed in places such as Wirral, Burnley, Southwark, Liverpool, Lambeth, and Oldham.					✓
58.	The Connexions youth service was abolished.					✓
59.	Schools cut drama, sport, music, arts, and technical subjects					✓
60.	as Michael Gove's curriculum reforms sidelined anything but his five-subject Ebaccs.	sidelined	Michael Gove's curriculum	Prop (-)		✓
61.					PRS: NSA	
62.	In England, attendance fell	fell	attendance			✓
63.	and school expulsions rose,	rose	school expulsions			✓
64.	as did the off-rolling of pupils					✓
65.	who were likely to reduce a school's results,			Prop (-)	Mod: Modal	

66.	all reasons for Britain falling so far behind.	falling so far behind	Britain	Cap (-)		✓
67.	The poorest places still have the highest rates of teenage pregnancy:	poorest places	teenage pregnancy			✓
68.	there is still a seven-fold difference in rates between well-off and destitute areas.	well-off and destitute	areas			✓
69.	And those nasty attitudes still lurk on the Tory right among the likes of Danny Kruger,	those nasty attitudes	Tory	Prop (-)		✓
70.	who has called for a return to "normative" family values.	normative	family values	Prop (-)	PRS: PC	
					PRS: SQ	
71.	The former Tory MP Miriam Cates was forever attacking sex education with grotesque parodies of what was taught.	attacking	sex education	Prop (-)		✓
72.	She asked Rishi Sunak at prime minister's questions	asked Rishi Sunak at prime minister's questions	Miriam Cates			✓
73.	if he knew about "graphic lessons on oral sex, how to choke your partner safely and 72 genders – this is what passes for relationships and sex education in British schools",	knew about "graphic lessons on ... sex education in British schools",	Rishi Sunak		PRS: PC	
					PRS: SQ	
74.	then demanded he launch an independent inquiry,	then demanded he launch an independent inquiry,	Miriam Cates		PRS: PC	
75.	which he duly did, a month before the last election.	duly did, a month before the last election.	Rishi Sunak	Prop (-)		✓
76.	What did it take to address the problem? Everything.					✓
77.	But the unit is a hopeful reminder	hopeful	the unit		Con	
78.	that what was done before can be done again.	can be done again.	what was done before		Mod	
79.	Today, the education department issues bolder broader sex and relationships education guidance, a good sign, bringing schools closer to encouraging their students to think and talk about relationships, misogyny, pornography, bad influencers, and internet threats.	issues bolder broader sex and relationships education guidance. and internet threats.	the education department			✓
80.	All of this has been recorded by Moira Wallace, a permanent secretary	has been recorded by Moira Wallace, a permanent secretary	All of this		PRS: PC	

81.	who became the head of the social exclusion unit from 1997 to 2002,	became the head of the social exclusion unit from 1997 to 2002,	Moira Wallace			✓
82.	who say she “watches like a hawk, not an ostrich” the progress or often backsliding of those programmes.	say she “watches like a hawk, not an ostrich” the progress or often backsliding of those programmes.	Moira Wallace	Ten (+)	PRS: PC	
					PRS: SQ	
83.	Her recent survey on school absence shows	recent survey on school absence shows	Moira Wallace		PRS: PC	
84.	the number of students persistently missing is rising sharply, linked to multiple bad outcomes, especially teenage pregnancy.	rising sharply	the number of students		PRS: PC	
85.	Not everything in her social exclusion unit hit its goal,	Not everything unit hit its goal,	her (Moira Wallace) social exclusion	Cap (-)	Con	
86.	but many areas did,	but many did,	areas		Con	
87.	with action on teenage pregnancy exceeding its target, and youth employment, rough sleeping, and early years metrics among other notable successes.	exceeding its target, and youth employment, rough sleeping, and early years metrics among other notable successes	action on teenage pregnancy			✓
88.	The unit’s ambition propelled an optimism about what can be done.	propelled an optimism about what can be done.	The unit’s ambition	Cap (+)		✓
89.	Lessons to be learned?	to be learned?	Lessons			✓
90.	Nail down improvements in the public mind,	Nail down	improvements in the public mind,			✓
91.	so no future government dares commit such social sabotage again.	dares commit such social sabotage again	no future government	Prop (-)		✓