

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

This lesson will help you to:

- prepare for answering non-fiction exam questions.

## KEY POINT

To ensure the most efficient use of time, a direct approach to answering the question is usually best, rather than spending a long time getting to your main points.

**humitas** A sweet, steamed fresh corn cake, traditional in the Ande, similar to the Mexican tamale. What is the effect of using these South American words?

**red** Why are they 'disturbingly red'? What is the effect?

**usual suspects** What is the tone here? Where does this phrase come from?

**gizzards** Stomach parts.

**maize** Crop from which sweetcorn grows.

**like freshly run over roadkill** An unusual simile – what is the effect?



▲ A street scene in Quito, Ecuador

## PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE

The passages you will be given for Paper 1 are likely to be between 800 and 1400 words long, or at least 60 lines in length. The following example is shorter than this, but you can use it to practise your reading, planning and writing skills in preparation for the exam. Read the unseen passage and answer the questions that follow. One of the questions also requires you to consider *Beyond the Sky and the Earth* from the Anthology. Aim to complete all five questions from Section A in 90 minutes.

▼ FROM *THE HUNGRY CYCLIST* BY TOM KEVILL-DAVIES

Sheltering from torrential rain in a dirty roadside hamlet just north of Quito, I surveyed my options for dinner. A few limp limbed chickens did another turn in their mechanical rotisserie; a plate of worn-out **humitas**, a sweet tamale, waited for that unlucky customer to save them from another night under the heat lamp; a bored teenager with too much hair-gel prodded and probed a row of disturbingly **red** hotdog sausages. Not at all tempted by the **usual suspects** that made up the options in these small Ecuadorian towns, I began to wonder if my hunger could hold out until breakfast.

But hello! What's this?

At the end of the street, sheltering from the rain under a tatty umbrella, an old lady was fanning frantically at the coals of her small grill. I took a seat on the cold steps of the grocery store from which she served, and watched her work while a steady stream of customers pulled in from the rain.

I ordered a bowl of grilled chicken **gizzards**, served on a heap of sweet corn and fried kernels of salted **maize** and it was immediately clear that she knew what she was doing. As the evening passed by the buses, trucks and pick-ups splashed through the rain filled potholes of the main street. We didn't talk much, but that seemed normal here in Ecuador, but from what little was said, and my persistent interest in the secret of her giblets, it was obvious we enjoyed a common love of food, and it wasn't long before our conversation turned to Cuy. I expressed my dismay at having only found this traditional dish strung up **like freshly run over roadkill** in front of the tourist restaurants en route from Otavalo to Quito, and my keenness to see how these rodents were prepared at home. I was invited for lunch the next day.

Cuy, **conejillo de Indias** – Indian rabbits, or guinea pigs as we know them in the pet shop – have been an important food source in Peru and Ecuador since pre-Inca times. Fifteen centuries later, they still remain an Andean **delicacy**, and on average Peruvians and Ecuadorians gobble down twenty-two million of these tasty rodents every year. Most Andean households keep cuy at home in the same way that we might keep chickens. Considered a speciality, they are mostly saved for special occasions. Rather like a bottle of champagne or perhaps