**Classwork – Listening - Stop coddling dumb undecided voters**

Here is the link to the programme From Our Own Correspondent from 29 SEptember. Listen to the clip and fill in the blanks.

Saturday 29 September: 06’57” <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b01n0sc9>

After listening, click on the link below to check the answers.

**Viewpoint: Stop coddling dumb undecided voters**

**http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-us-canada-19789868**

It's long past time for undecided voters to pick a side, says Justin Webb

**The difference between President Barack Obama and Republican challenger Mitt Romney is vast, yet a small but crucial segment of the electorate remains undecided. The BBC's Justin Webb asks why some US voters just cannot make up their minds between the two.**

I must have …………………………………… on Miami beach the other day. It was very hot, …………………………. sunshine, glorious waves - but I was not dressed for the seaside. I was making a film for BBC's Newsnight programme and wearing a formal shirt and what one rather unkind correspondent described as "BBC trousers" - chinos with lots of pockets. I had a microphone receiver …………………… into a belt. And I was running. Madly. ………………………… up and down the beach, looking for my lost wallet.

After 10 minutes I was ……………………………and panting, and still without it. Thinking it was gone for good, I dried off, addressed the camera, and went back to our hotel.

**The unconvinced**

The next day I received a tweet - a picture of my wallet. It was sent by a Mexican woman who had found it ………………………… in some bushes near the beach and had taken it back to Mexico with her. She'd looked me up on Twitter and was happy to send it back.

This is a story of kindness and the usefulness of modern communications, but it is also a story of action. The woman who found the wallet took a decision - I will take the wallet home with me - and used her initiative to find me. She is, ………………., a person who knows what she thinks is right and wrong and is willing to act on it.

How ……………………………! And how unlike a certain group of people over whom the American media tend to ……………………….. at this stage of a presidential race, but who, in my opinion, deserve much less attention than they get: the undecided voters.

In Florida I met a man walking his dog who told me very proudly that he was still to be convinced by either candidate this year. "They're going to have to work harder," he said.

**Fawned over**

Then he told me - in the course of a conversation about America's space programme - that 9/11 had happened because America had lost its domination of space. If America was still sending people to the moon Osama Bin Laden would have held back.That conversation summed up for me the two aspects of America's undecided voters that I dislike the most.

First, they have become so used to …………………………………………………….. that they have become quite arrogant. They want to be seduced by the politicians - spoken to personally. They have a …………………………….. desire to have their …………………………. tickled. It's all about them.Secondly, they are often really stupid.

The American media suggest that these …………………………………. are programming their computer-like mental machinery with so many wickedly abstruse arguments and counter-arguments for each candidate, that it is simply and naturally and wonderfully taking a long time to come up with a result. Oh, …………………………………………….

I remember back in 2008 reading an interview with an undecided voter who was asked more about her life. Well, she said, she liked cats but she'd been thinking about getting a dog. How long for? Five years. I ……………………………………………………...

To paraphrase one of America's wiser political commentators, undecided voters are the kind of people who, when eating pickles, get their heads stuck in the jar.

There is a ……………………………. amount of political ignorance in America but let us not ………………………… the Ivy League of ignoramuses - those who can see, at this moment, no difference between Mr Obama and Mr Romney.

And let us hope too that the candidates do not ………………………………. to these folk.

It made me ……………………………….. to see Mr Romney on some idiotic television programme the other day talking about his technique for getting toothpaste out of a tube.

He didn't want to be there but his advisers will have suggested it as a way of getting to the undecided, who spend a lot of their time watching daytime television.

**Middle-ground bilge**

The president's advisers tell him the same thing - and he takes the same notice, preferring, on the first day of the United Nations General Assembly, to be on ……………………………TV instead of meeting world leaders.

Let's hope they abandon that ………………………… in the presidential debates and set out competing visions. Let's hope they ……………. and enthuse those Americans who have bothered to think about politics and have a view, a passion.

Yes, it is true that political partisanship and the ……………………….. that can come with it is at what feels like an all-time high in America. But being certain about what you think and being unable to compromise are not the same thing. The American media often fail to ……………………………… that.

And here's a practical point: only just over half of Americans will vote in this presidential contest. Getting your own core supporters to the polls ought to be enough to win it - if the candidates have the courage to forget all this middle-ground bilge.

I wonder if that woman has decided whether to get a dog yet. Whatever it is or is not, I am glad that neither she nor any other undecided voter found my wallet.