

my son's after-school job /1/ foot put down

When we returned from Spain and opened our mailbox, a mountain of **bills** and **junk mail spilled** out of **it**. **A** letter for our 13-year-old was buried in it, among other things, **offering** him **a job delivering** the local **weekly** newspaper. He **is going to** get L7 for one evening a week with the possibility **of earning** more if **there** are advertising leaflets **to deliver**. He is **thrilled**. He starts today.

The boy **has been trying** to find a job **ever since** his older brother, George, began writing a weekly column more than a year ago. He **has been** quietly **envious of** the heaps of **money** that George **has made** in his writing career (well, heaps for a teenager who **has nothing to spend it on but** CDs, clothes and pizzas).

At first, the 13-year-old **suggested that he could** write a column for The Telegraph, too. I **put my foot down** and refused to **pass his suggestion on**, **feeling** that two columns coming from this family were already **one too many** to **bother** the readers with.

He then suggested that he **might try asking** the neighbours if they would **like him to wash** their cars. But my wife **rightly pointed out** that he is not very **good at washing** cars. We have **let him wash ours a couple of times**, and each time he **was going to be paid** L1 for **a job well done**. **Every time** we **made** this mistake, the car **ended up looking filthier** than when he'd started.

His **next** idea was to **cash in on** his **passion for** cooking **by selling** home-baked bread and chocolate brownies **door-to-door**. Although **it hurts me to say it**, he is more **enthusiastic** than **skillful** in the kitchen. He had a school friend **over** when he baked his first loaf of bread, which **was going to have been** the first of thousands that would **make his fortune** on the doorsteps of south London.

It **was** not a success - **actually**, it was an **astonishing failure**. The bread came out of the oven, very flat, black and heavy, **glued** to the bottom of the baking **tray**. I tried **not to** laugh, but then I **caught his friend's eye** and he **collapsed** on to the floor. There he **rolled**, **tears streaming down** his cheeks. I **would never have believed** that a loaf of bread could **make someone laugh so hard**. But **even** the cook **himself** had to agree that this **was** the most **hilarious** loaf ever baked in the history of the world.