

GENERAL INFORMATION

The examination samples as holistically as possible, appropriate and balanced elements of the *English Study design* 2000–2003 and takes account of the differential development of skills in students as they mature over the course for the whole year, thus avoiding assessment conclusions which might be drawn had testing occurred around the actual time some material was initially taught.

The examination consisted of two sections. The first, **Text**, has two distinct parts where one response is required from each part, and the second, **Writing Task**, has two parts, the first concerning language use analysis and the second, where one piece of writing is required in response to three different options in form and purpose.

Assessment is global and norm-referenced. It is based upon criterion-referenced indicators and applied holistically. The assessment used in these ways balances all qualities for worth and awards scores that reflect the assessor's estimate of the *whole* answer. Descriptions of this in the *Expected Qualities for the Mark Range* guided the process. These descriptions are based on the criteria and are general indicators of what might be found in the mark range. Specificity occurs when the exact characteristics of responses for any one year are analysed. The assessment criteria for the 2001 examination were published as a Supplement to the December 2000 *VCE Bulletin*, No. 160.

The standard of answers was quite good, with some students displaying high levels of skill.

SPECIFIC INFORMATION

Text response – Part 1

These questions required a close analysis of the workings of a text. One topic was available for each of the 30 texts. The most popular texts and their mean scores out of an available 10 marks were:

Text	% of students	Mean
<i>Montana 1948</i>	16.45	5.10
<i>Medea</i>	13.08	5.98
<i>Cabaret</i>	9.05	5.56
<i>Dead Letter Office</i>	6.97	5.73
<i>The Longest Memory</i>	6.14	5.33

The least popular texts included *Rock Springs*, *A Choice of Emily Dickinson's Verse*, *Frontier* and *Bearbrass*.

Assessors reported that answers were longer than in previous years and students knew the content of the texts reasonably well.

The most successful answers varied in the qualities that they displayed, and since a normative assessment regime is applied, the highest scoring answers were not necessarily 'perfect'. Nevertheless, they were excellent in a range of ways, and especially so since this was first draft writing done under the time constraints of an examination. Assessors commented on the spontaneity many responses displayed rather than giving the reader a feeling of looking at set responses, well rehearsed.

Most responses dealt with the question statement as a whole, rather than focusing on key words alone. They showed the capacity to actually balance ideas. They used detail, discussed the implication of characters' actions and events with intuition and reflectiveness. In short, the most successful answers showed some evidence of the writer consciously and deliberately creating the response. In contrast the least successful responses were often simplistic in their understanding of the text, frequently retelling plot or action. The actual focus chosen was sometimes quite skewed, perhaps in an attempt to adjust the question to some gaps in knowledge or preparation. Less successful responses gave the impression of being, on creation, as much of a surprise to the writer as to the reader. There was certainly little evidence of premeditation. There were some startlingly similar responses using the same supporting details. Frequently, a less successful response indicated a considerable struggle with ideas and language as a vehicle for those ideas.

Finally, it is worth mentioning that in some cases very obvious aspects of texts proved to be a stumbling block, for example Lucas as narrator in *Falling*, the importance of images in *Dead Letter Office* and 'indifference' in *The Outsider* often being taken as 'difference'. Such ostensibly small matters militate against the capacity to produce a high-scoring answer.

Text response – Part 2

The most popular texts and their mean scores out of an available 10 marks were:

Text	% of students	Mean
<i>Montana</i>	17.64	5.34
<i>Cabaret</i>	12.46	5.38
<i>The Divine Wind</i>	9.58	5.93
<i>Fly Away Peter</i>	9.48	5.92
<i>Dead Letter Office</i>	7.42	5.68
<i>Shakespeare in Love</i>	7.05	5.45
<i>Medea</i>	5.96	5.50

The least popular texts included *Rock Springs*, *The Brush-off*, *A Choice of Emily Dickinson's Verse*, *Frontier* and *Bearbrass*.

It is quite clear now that this aspect of text teaching and assessment has bedded down and that there is a growing awareness, indeed sophistication, showing through in the teaching and classroom experiences that are obviously occurring. The same points can also be made in relation to understandings of the expectations of the examination and its necessary reflection of the design 'core skills and outcomes'.

Answers in last year's examination were often quite lengthy, and were able to set the response into a clear context of text in relation to question. There is a wealth of evidence of deliberate and very capable teaching and preparation for the requirements of this Part, and of handling new texts as they appear in subsequent Text Lists. Part 2 is a very obvious stage for intelligent, thoughtful writing, guided by the pattern of questioning which has grown up with this Part. It is the place for reflective, conceptual thought, dealing with the abstract in reading and life experience, and the best answers displayed these qualities. This can be quite a sophisticated undertaking and is obviously a real challenge for students in the context of their developing maturity levels and aptitudes.

Less successful responses did not leave the text in pursuit of an answer or, conversely, ignored the insights which the text might offer.

Some had difficulties with the questions; for example, the obvious and central notion of 'justice' in *Montana* was a problem one might not have predicted. A handful had no idea whatsoever of the requirements of Part 2. Part 2 does offer the opportunity for reflective insights into texts' relevance in our lives and societies. Such writing does not lend itself easily to formulaic responses.

Text advice over the two parts:

- Choose texts carefully. Teachers need to continue to give thought to choosing texts that they feel they can show are of worth and relevance to the unique group of students they are to teach – texts which they feel will lend themselves to intensive study and then produce the range of outcomes which the study design outlines. This will vary for each of us and possibly for each class. Certainly a weaker cohort and an ostensibly 'easy' text may not always be the way to go.
- Students need to know a text thoroughly – and knowing goes beyond remembering.
- Teach analysis but remember that excessive dissection can, on occasion put at risk those holistic, intuitive reactions to good literature, which we strive for.
- Teach thinking and engage in hard, challenging discussion at every opportunity.
- Encourage and guide students to move towards their own coherent and complete set of positions and understandings.
- Try to show that very often, texts and the ideas that they raise, matter vitally
- Teach planning, do practice, but always show students the worth of informed spontaneity and writing easily and sincerely.

Writing task – Part 1

The material for 2001 seemed to work well. Students were able to engage with the issue and format very well. This allowed clear entry into the analysis of language use. The plausible context, the relevance of the debate occurring and the clarity of the layout – had a consequence of virtually no students misreading the task. The most successful responses displayed very real and precise skills of language use analysis. Many students actually synthesised their analysis of the language in the two texts, comparing, contrasting and commenting in a most productive manner.

Certainly at all levels of achievement the perennial concern of paraphrase and summary was less in evidence. Nevertheless, very many students demonstrated a shaky grip of the way in which this task of language use analysis may be most productively tackled. The least successful responses continue to label (apparently according to the laws

of logical dissertation – which the study design does not prescribe, even though its equivalent may have once). Some examples of these things are given in the samples that follow.

Writing task – Part 2

This part continues to be a concern and presents a somewhat diluted assessing experience. While there were a number of quite superlative and masterly pieces of writing, dull average writing was much in evidence.

The best knew all of the forms outlined in the study design and had thought about them and were well experienced in handling them. Such answers indicated that the writer had taken the time to carefully study the scenario presented, the form and position proposed and the audience, which was to be taken into account. They deliberately and carefully constructed their response about these conditions and, in real life, it was clear that their piece would work brilliantly.

The least successful responses were unclear and simply wrote. A speech, for a few, was an editorial or an essay or anything else, to all intents and purposes. ‘Voice’ was non-existent. Many students could increase their marks significantly with more time and care spent on this part of Writing Task.

These answers are presented for illustrative and informative reasons. The best of them are not to be taken as ‘the best’ that is possible: indeed none is without shortcomings of one sort or another. Yet they are typical of a range, where students worked under examination conditions to produce and submit first draft writing. It is in these contexts that they should be viewed. Likewise, teachers will want to make other observations about their qualities.

Text – Part 1

The Outsider

‘It is Meursault’s laziness and indifference which lead to his execution.’

Discuss.

Sample 1

Comments

- upper-range response
- the answer quite deftly and succinctly addresses the topic in the opening paragraph, using apt textual detail as supporting evidence
- the piece resists any temptation to simply retell plot, but rather is sharply focused in its close textual analysis
- there is sophisticated reading of the novel apparent: contrasting the Magistrate’s views with ours as readers; awareness of the narrative approach utilised
- the argument builds throughout in a clear and consistent manner
- the answer displays articulate, clear and assured expression

Student response

“I probably did love mother quite a lot but that didn’t mean anything.” Apparently indifferent to his mother’s death and cut off from the socially expected and required expressions of “grief and anguish”, it is Meursault’s attitude and character which ultimately lead to society’s condemnation of him. Branded an “immoral monster” who “buried his mother like a heartless criminal”, society judges Meursault as being a man “with no access to humanity” and yet it is Camus’ suggestion that rather, Meursault is simply a character misunderstood, executed for his non-conformity to social convention. Speaking with his lawyer and then later the examining magistrate following his murder of a nameless Arab, Meursault concedes that rather than remorse, he felt a “sense of annoyance.” Contemplating his mother’s death he makes the comment that “to a certain extent, all normal people sometimes wished there loved ones were dead.” However in Meursault’s apathy and this lack of concern for the socially appropriate, Meursault breaches social taboo in uttering the unspeakable and hence threatens society. “I could tell I made him uncomfortable” says Meursault of his lawyer. The lawyer, representative of society’s moral and judicial codes is “disgusted” by Meursault and leads Meursault to note with some indignation that “he didn’t understand me and rather held it against me.”

Similarly, the magistrate is unable to comprehend Meursault’s character. Thrusting a crucifix in Meursault’s face in an attempt to make Meursault express repentance, Meursault remains unmoved, as God “does not interest” him and he thus remains indifferent to the magistrates “symbol of suffering”. Camus seems to be suggesting that society was unwilling to accept this non-conformity to social protocol, unable to accept Meursault’s lack of faith in the existence of a supervenient being.

“I had the impression that he did not understand me,” says Meursault, and it is this misunderstanding and misinterpretation of Meursault’s indifference that leads to the judgement society casts on him.

“Why? Why did you shoot at a dead body?” The magistrate implores Meursault to answer but Meursault himself “didn’t know what to say” and so remained silent. To the magistrate Meursault would justifiably have appeared to be the “hardened soul” he is assessed as being, but the reader, privy to Meursault’s inner motivation and feelings, gain a different perception of Meursault and are thus able to empathise with him.

This manipulation of the narrative construct is evident again at the trial. Meursault becomes bored by the very proceedings that are to decide his fate, struck instead by the “utter pointlessness” of it all. He thinks of making a statement and standing up for himself, yet decides that he cannot “be bothered” just as he couldn’t “be bothered” going down to buy bread on the weekend, thus eating his eggs

straight out of the pan. While this scene could be interpreted as being indicative of Meursault's laziness, we as readers with an understanding of Meursault are inclined instead to the suggestion proposed by Camus that Meursault is merely content to let things take their own course, as any "one life was as good as another".

In his relationship with Marie, the woman asks him to marry her and he replies that "they could do if she wanted to but it didn't really matter." When Marie tells him she has to leave, he, in a seemingly lazy fashion, doesn't "think" of asking her where she is going. To Meursault these details are insignificant and he is aloof to the appeals of the socially imposed institution of marriage. Meursault's is a sensual existence, the certainty of death and absurdity of existence rendering society's convention ridiculous notions that "didn't really matter".

As such Meursault's *raison d'être* is the pure enjoyment of life itself, expressed in the "paroxysm of joy" he later feels, his body "delirious with joy" at the mere thought of life. However society does not see this side of Meursault in Camus' deliberate juxtaposition of there depicted judgements with ours and nor does society accept or understand the nature of Meursault's. He seems lazy in his lack of ambition and in the expression that Paris was simply "dirty", indifferent to society's symbolic capital of passion and imposed romanticism. The distinction was that Meursault's passion lay elsewhere, but the irony of his situation was that plead as Salamano might that people "had to understand", "nobody listened" and nobody understood.

As the eponymous title suggests, Meursault was an outsider within his own society, a man misunderstood and executed for the perceived "laziness" and "indifference" he displayed to society where in fact, they were both merely the implication of his honesty to a "profound and tenacious passion" for existence.

Sample 2

Comments

- middle-range response
- the introduction demonstrates an uncertainty in how precisely to tackle or approach the topic, and is further marred by imprecise expression and ambiguity
- there is a tendency to resort to vague statements, such as 'Christian conventional behaviour', which do little to clearly or relevantly present a compelling case
- there is too much reliance on extended plot recollection and there is some failure to demonstrably link textual events to the topic or central argument
- there is little apparent topic resolution; rather, various textual events and situations which have potential relevance have been vaguely referred to

Student response

Meursault is a character who contains no emotions. He goes by his day to day duties without even considering the future or the consequences of his actions. Some aspects of Meursault's character may portray him as being a little lazy. However it is his indifference which leads him to his execution.

Meursault is a person who lives only for the present. He has no emotions, this is obvious when Marie asks him if he loves her, he replies in an indifferent tone probably not. The French Colonial Algerian society Meursault lives in, places great importance on conventional behaviour, especially common Christian values. Due to Meursault lacking emotions this leads him to emotionless behaviour and this does not sit well with the Algerian courts.

The court's prosecutor learns of Meursault's behaviour at his mother's vigil. This is where Meursault's indifference is present. At the vigil he drinks white coffee and smokes a cigarette. In Meursault's mind he ponders whether it would make a difference if he smoked a cigarette. He concludes in an indifferent manner that it would not make a difference any way. It is this lack of concern in which the prosecution focuses on, which leads to his execution.

This society Meursault is involved in is so attracted to maintaining these Christian conventional behaviour that the prosecution focuses on his indifference, rather than the crime he has committed. After all the court would have probably seen the victim as only an Arab. What makes it worse for Meursault is his lack of emotion at his mother's funeral. Yet again his indifference is shown here. He does not shed one tear from the sight of never seeing his mother again. The prosecution at Meursault trial is focussing once again on Meursault's indifference towards his mother's death. The jurors at Meursault's trial would have seen this indifference and this was one aspect which lead to the eventual guilty verdict.

After the funeral, when Meursault should have been in mourning, he decides to go for a swim. Being a person who only lives for the present; his mother's death was already in the past and it was time for Meursault to move on. His actions when he should have been in mourning would have shocked the prosecution, as his actions showed quite an amount of indifference. During the swim he ran into Marie and what followed this was the beginning of a relationship. They went to see a comedy film and then went to bed and had sex. The prosecution knew how much Christian values would have meant to the jury, so the focus was still on his indifferent actions. Meursault could not possibly mourn, mourning was for those who had emotions. This lack of emotion seen as indifference by the court lead to his execution.

Meursault's lack of regret further effected his trial. Before the trial the examining magistrate asked him whether he regretted the murder. Meursault's reply was that it was more of an annoyance. This

shows Meursault's lack of concern for the victim and knowing this the legal system would have taken his lack of regret into account. Yet another aspect which lead to his execution

In conclusion, Meursault's character is one that contains no emotions. It is this which leads him to indifferent behaviour. The Christian dominated trial with its conventional values focussed on this unconventional behaviour. The victim that Meursault murdered barely played a role in the trial. The prosecution instead focussed on his indifferent behaviour, it was this behaviour which lead to Meursault's execution.

Text response – Part 2

Great Expectations

'*Great Expectations* illustrates the danger of seeing status and money as the most worthwhile aims in life.'

Discuss.

Sample 1

Comments

- upper-level range response
- from the outset, this student has sought to wrestle with the central social values which both underpin the novel, and this Part 2 question
- there is an awareness of the contemporaneity of Dickens' commentaries, which ensures that the essay focuses directly on the actual topic
- despite the rich array of examples and evidence from which to choose, the student selects astutely, and resists any tendency to allow such descriptions to be overly dominant in the essay
- the piece covers the whole latitude of Dickensian characters within the novel
- the response presents a clear and controlled argument
- the answer displays assured expression on the whole, such as in 'Pip can finally begin moral regeneration'

Student response

Charles Dickens uses *Great Expectations* to comment on the social changes occurring during his time. Industrial Revolution ushered into London increased population, unemployment crime and pollution, but more importantly it resulted in a growing emphasis on capitalism. As illustrated in the novel, many characters are corrupted by want of money and the social status it brought. By passing judgement on all characters within *Great Expectations*, Dickens condemns the 'stupendous power of money', the Victorian definition of a gentleman characters who hanker after class and suggests the joyless existence one can lead when absorbed by money and status.

Dickens questions the nature of money itself. There are links made between the fashionable, wealthy world and the criminal world. Odd as it may seem, Pip's and Wemmick's 'expectations' are only different in their scale, both are gained from criminals. Compeyson moves in both social and criminal circles. Jaggers is lawyer to both Magwitch and Miss Havisham. By making such connections, Dickens implies that the riches of the few are gained by the exclusion and exploitation of the many, and there is no such thing as clean money. Although Pip was disgusted with his calling and life before coming into his 'great expectations' the acquisition of money gives him a false confidence to assert his snobby notion over everyone. He 'handsomely forgives' Biddy naturally assuming she is grudging and envious, with 'disdainful emphasis', he rejects that Joe could be proud and plans to bestow a dinner and a 'gallon of condescension' upon his village.

In London, as an idle cad, his sole purpose is to gain the status of a gentleman. In the Victorian sense being a gentleman meant having no job and living off someone else's money. His better instincts are corrupted in a place 'all a smear with filth and fat and dirt and foam.' Joe's incongruity in the genteel classes convinces Pip that their association is not worth keeping, and when Joe comes to visit we realise the importance that Pip has placed on money. By opting to pay Joe, it seems to prevent his coming to London, shows how much he has disregarded the true good qualities in his friend. A 'gentle Christian man' finds no compensation or consolation in money. He dismisses the thought of visiting him at the forge simply because the object of his infatuation, Estella, openly supposed that 'what was fit company for you once would be quite unfit company for you now.' Instead as reparation for not having gone, Pip believes Joe will be satisfied on receiving material things, 'a penitential codfish and barrel of oysters' By corrupting the simplicity of Herbert's life and falling into debt, Pip shows that the life of a gentleman who has status and money can be idle and dissipated, corrupting better instincts.

It is by the loss of money that Pip can finally begin moral regeneration. The return of Magwitch causes Pip to be in agony, and although he initially abhors him with an 'insurmountable aversion' the loss of money results in his humility and eventual love for Magwitch. By losing all he had once deemed worthwhile, money and status, Pip becomes a true gentleman in the Dickensian sense, noble, just, humble, and forgiving. He forgives Miss Havisham for her cruel leading on and secures her good opinion of Matthew Pocket. He forgives Estella and implores her to marry a man who will make her happy instead of a 'stupid brute' like Prummle, which shows Pip's selflessness. He also loves her despite discovering her parentage. Most importantly, he rejects money from Miss Havisham and does not attempt to reclaim Magwitch's money. When Pip says 'I sold all I had' we are reminded of the parable of the rich man entering heaven, and know that this is a step in the right direction towards redemption. By the loss of status and money, Dickens presents a true gentleman. Dickens supports his

own criticisms of London as a dismal, corrupting place, by having Pip make his honest money in a discrete business house abroad. He wished to shift the definition of a gentleman from notions of class and polished manners to one that emphasises social responsibility and no rational commitment. Dickens also rightly punishes those who hanker after money and status. Mrs Joe is assaulted by Orlick, Pumblechook for his sycophantic persistence for 'more capital' has his house broken into and his mouth stuffed with flowering annuals. The 'toady and humbug' Pockets, for all their efforts receive derisory sums of money for, in Mrs Camilla's case, 'rushlights' to to put her in spirits when she woke up in the night!

Wemmick on the other hand, although constantly on the look-out for 'portable property' is not trapped in the dangers of worshipping money and status. His careful balancing of his rich, fulfilling home life and his cold business life is enough, perhaps for him to not be self-imprisoned in pretentious notions of class and wealth.

Money does not necessarily bring happiness. Despite all her wealth, Miss Havisham lives a perverse, necrophyllic life planning revenge, but then, by Pip's confessed love for Estella, becomes utterly remorseful and regrets the years wasted.

Although Jaggers is a feared figure in London society, his status does not bring him a fulfilling, satisfying life. Unlike Wemmick, the 'Newgate cobwebs' come home with him, (even Pip notices that the pictures of garlands on the walls remind him of nooses). He is so suspicious, that he will not give a definite opinion, in case he is later held accountable for it later if something went wrong, and reverts to the language of cross examination to instil fear into his clients, as a testament to this 'detrimental mastery'. So despite Jaggers' status and prolific profession, he traps himself inside his work represses his humane emotions, save for one moment of compassion when he reveals the truth of his work to Pip, and lives a most desolate existence.

Money in moderation is seen as healthy. Clarriker, Herbert and Pip make their profits, but were 'no way in the grand of things'. The dangers of money and status come from having all the sweat of someone else's brow, and hankering after more than necessary.

As illustrated by Joe, the most worthwhile aim in life is to live well and die happy, which Pip eventually does. Dickens rewards him with Estella, and reveals the harm of pursuing the empty ideals inherent in money and status, whilst administrating justice to those who did.

Sample 2

Comments

- middle-range response
- the introduction reveals the severe limitations in the student's consideration and reflection of '... money is not everything ...'
- generally there is a significant lack of expressiveness and language control
- there is evidence of some textual analysis, but this is too superficial and insubstantial with respect to the actual nature of the topic
- ultimately, there is no real sense of topic resolution, nor awareness of the central values which underpin the entire novel, and lie at the heart of the topic

Student response

Dickens uses Great Expectations as a tool to show us that money is not everything. Set in Victorian times Dickens used the hypocrisy of the Aristocracy to undermine the values and pretentiousness of money.

Pip's journey from rags to riches was not just of material possessions, but of morals & values. As Pip had not been bought up in the 'Aristocrat' society he could see how profound it was. But as his 'snobs progress' deepened he began to see how fake and deluded, money had made these people. The novel idea that money made who you are is still suggested in today's society, but now also comes with the notion, 'that money can't buy happiness. In Victorian times money meant 'social stature'. For characters such as Miss Havisham money was everything. But Dickens showed us that a rich old lady could be so damn sad, & the filth of the wedding feast and rats symbolises her sadness. It shows us that money can be disgusting. Not only could money be disgusting, but corrupt too.

In the case of Magwitch & Compeyson. Magwitch a working class man (a nothing) and Compeyson had money, & social stature. Compeyson's sentencing for a crime which the two committed was far lighter than Magwitch's sentencing. The fundamentals that money bought back in Victorian times was stature, but as Herbert Pocket explains "A true gentleman must be a gentleman at heart.... and at manner." And therefore we only see Mathew Pocket come close to being a true gentleman. For Pumblechook & other characters like him, they are not gentlemen at heart only by manner, & manner comes with money.

Great Expectations gives a sense that good will prevail over evil & this is shown through 'Pip's progress' & his journey to find out what money & stature really means.

It is believed, that only through experience will someone see the danger that status & money can bring. And that it isn't the 'most worthwhile aim in life'.

Writing task

Part 1 – Analysis of language use

In a coherently constructed piece of prose, analyse the ways in which language is used to present a point of view both in the Medi-Info Card Home Page and in the email response from Dr Tom Brown.

Sample 1

Comments

- upper range response
- a sophisticated, though perhaps excessively effusive approach is immediately established with the relatively rare style of comparing and contrasting the two texts throughout
- the student consistently resists any tendency to ‘translate’ lines or explain their meaning; rather, there is a consistent exploration of how the language serves to persuade the reader
- explanations are provided with assurance and clarity : ‘... delivers it with a more sobering tone’
- the student continually makes an over-arching comment and then proceeds to analyse the two texts within this context
- notwithstanding the above, the answer would have been enhanced with a discussion on the potential effect on the intended audience

Student response

The M-I Card: A wealth of knowledge or an unwanted intrusion? This controversial issue has attracted many responses, yet none so infused with persuasive language as the M-I Home Page and Doctor Brown’s e-mail. Coupling an attractive layout with animated sentences, the home page ensures an enlightened and interested browser. Dr Brown puts his position as a medical physician to effective use in his emotive reply. When read in conjunction with one another, such accounts work wonderfully to give the reader a more rounded view of the issue.

What predominately links both the web page and Brown’s accompanying email is their endorsement of the proposed card. Suitable to a web-page, new-age terminology and futuristic concepts are used to advocate the M-I card. Phrases such as “breakthrough technology,” “the ultimate cool techno accessory,” “512-bit encryption key” and “state-of-the-art” imbue the page with auditory interest whilst appealing to the browser’s certain desire to understand such notions! Though many browsers may not grasp what a “1 Ghz microchip” entails, such language is nonetheless affective in persuading the reader, for it sounds appealing. Indeed, the dynamic sentences with which the piece is saturated serve to add colour to the document, imbuing it with saliency. Phrases like “...save your life!” “keep healthy the informed way!” and “... trust our technology!” work much like a television commercial, a potent tool of persuasion.

Brown has similar enthusiasm for the card, yet delivers it with a more sobering tone. He makes effective use of his status as a doctor to imbue his email with credibility. “I know...” he claims repeatedly this opening line in which he mentions his wealth of experience- “35 years,” in fact, establishes this credibility from the outset. He writes of his “work... improv[ing] dramatically” should the M-I card be implemented. Finally, he writes, the innovation will yield “piece of mind for everyone,” certainly an appealing notion.

The issues of security, convenience and safety invariably accompany such a personal issue. The home page extract highlights the convenience of the card, using colloquialisms such as “on the spot, on time, on the screen” to clarify its firm support for the card. It continues to read “fast... no forms...” ensuring a thoroughly convinced reader. The issue of security is also alluded to as “your precious data” is noted. Brown demonstrates consideration not only for patients, but also for doctors. He mentions “wast[ing] everybody’s time just reeling off... medical histories.” Such a phrase evokes a sense of monotony, thus the contrast between this and the “safe and secure” M-I card works as an effective persuasive mechanism. Furthermore, his use of emotive imagery no doubt arouses a sense of discomfort in the reader, once again pointing to the benefits of the proposed card. The chilling images of “a child suffering” and “epileptic fit[s]” reinforce the disadvantages of the current medical situation.

Finally various appeals to the reader are included both in the web-page and in Brown’s email. The former personalises the notion of the doctor labelling him/her a “carer” instead of a physician, certainly a more comforting image. The piece once again mentions the effectiveness of the card with its accompanying rhetoric- “... can you be sure?” Such a question forces the reader to question his/her own security, a powerful tool of coercion. The notion of giving someone else the “the chance of a new life” works also to appeal to the browser’s sense of communal responsibility. Brown too makes his appeals lucid. Mentioning “peace of mind for everyone” implies the general public, not only the patient in concern. Finally, he successfully elicits sympathy from the reader as he talks of the male who suffered an epileptic fit. In fact, through asserting that “We can all sympathise” – twice, in fact, he assumes the reader has the same humanitarian interests as he does, a potent persuasive device. Together these pieces work remarkably to endow the reader with a fresh perspective on this hot topic. Coupling dynamic sentences with a clear and concise layout, the web page ensures a thoroughly informed browser. With extensive years of experience at his disposal, Dr. Tom Brown makes this issue more personal, his account becoming all the more compelling.

Sample 2

Comments

- middle-range standard
- the opening of this analysis immediately indicates the lack of precision which characterises it throughout, for example ‘uses an extremely positive tone’
- the response is too much inclined to paraphrase the content and ideas, and too little inclined to actually analyse the language and its intentional impact
- we see some of the difficulties inherent in a very separate analysis of each of the two texts with little or no linking
- the piece shows some sense of how the language works, but very little capacity to know how to actually approach this

Student response

MEDI – CARD INFO HOMEPAGE

In the piece constructed on the web page the author uses an extremely positive tone throughout the opening paragraph, with catchy phrases such as, “Keep Healthy the informed way” and “Get in early.” The positive tone used is then conveyed through loaded language such as breakthrough technology, Ultimate, cool and accessory. The opening paragraph then leads onto the second by highlighting exactly why you need this card by stated “It could save your life”!

The second paragraph then leads into some rhetorical questions and some loaded language. The rhetorical questions grab attention of the readers by involving loaded language such as, “Imagine, accident and vital information.

The third paragraph again involves exiting loaded language, more examples of its use and some rhetorical questions, loaded language includes blood group, asthma, epilepsy, distressed, organ donor and new life.

The final stages of the web page again dive into loaded language and guarantees getting the readers confidence and attention. The pages ends in a very clever way, it places a sentence telling the readers to send in their emergency stories, which will suck the readers in and in doing so will spend more time on the subjected enabling more rhetorical questions to be posed and for extreme amounts of loaded language and positive gestures to be thrown at the reader

MI – CARD RESPONSE

The response at first states that he is a doctor of 35 years experience, giving the article credibility and the reader a sound mind to create an opinion based on an experts point of view. The first paragraph includes loaded language such as, medication experience, prescribed and suffering.

The second paragraph involves an attacking tone in the form of support for the new cards, it involves a stern rhetorical question and loaded language as well as examples of points of view supporting his cause, loaded language includes the use of the word, sympathise twice and emergency, immediate and suffered once.

The third paragraph again is repetition of his support for the product, loaded language is used and he also draws attention to the fact that he is a professional and understands the need for such cards.

The sting in the tail is definitely there; he ends with a swift statement that clearly highlights his intentions, its very simple, and no loaded language, simple and to the point.

Part 2

You have been asked to give an oral presentation to your class giving your views on the issue of the introduction of the compulsory Medi-Info Card.

Write the speech you will give to your class.

Sample 1

Comments

- upper-range response
- the answer immediately establishes a clear and decisive voice, with a strong awareness of the form of a speech and how interaction with an audience is critically important
- the inclusion of a hypothetical link with the situation of the email is most apt
- an assured level of argument is presented, and reinforced through the careful and controlled use of language
- the argumentative logic is strong and adept for the task; even with interspersed rhetorical questions
- the conclusion is carefully managed and rational

Student response

Fellow students,

I would like to thank the student council for giving me the opportunity to address you all this morning on the subject of the proposed compulsory introduction of the Medi-Info card.

For those of you who don’t keep up-to-date with current affairs, and I can see from the confused faces around the room that there are a few, the Medi-Info Card, or M-I card, is a card which will be issued to every Australian citizen, and it will contain, in short, your entire medical history. This could

include information on any conditions you may have- asthma, epilepsy, depression, anorexia- you name it, details on your medical insurance and a list of recent infections you may have suffered from. My father is a doctor at the Royal Melbourne hospital, and, through witnessing the problems he sometimes encounters through inadequate documentation or the inavailability of medical records for certain patients- in the most serious cases, sometimes involving a patient who cannot be identified- I cannot dispute that the Medi-Info card has some unquestionable advantages. It will make my fathers job immeasurable easier, as it provides a practical, time efficient method to access not only a person's medical history, but even basic information such as identification and contact numbers for family. However, I think it is imperative that the potential advantages be weighed up against the very real, and often overlooked, disadvantages in the Medi-Card system. What with banks, government agencies and companies on the Internet having our personal information in any number of databases, every day our privacy and our right to privacy is further eroded. How many of you receive unsolicited correspondence? You know, junk mail, unwanted email, advertising material through the post? Ah.... nearly all of you. Many companies sell our details to marketing advertising companies and it is from this sale of our details, our very privacy that the junk mail stems from. In the age of they Internet revolution, and junk mail, there is no such thing as a "private life" anymore, and the introduction of the M-I card will only serve to inflame the problem.

My real concern with the M-I card is that it will become an "across the board" means of identification, more widely used than drivers licenses and passports, so, anyone requiring identification becomes privy to your personal medical history, literally warts and all. Where this can create problems is when discrimination stems from this knowledge. How many of you would employ someone with a history of depression over someone whose medical history constitutes half a page of minor infections? None of you. While it is not a crime to want the most fit as your employees, it is a crime to make highly personal, previously confidential information open for public scrutiny. In the justice system, doctor-patient privilege cannot be abused, and a person's medical and psychiatric background may not be divulged. Why, then, should it become available to potential employers, health insurers, and all those who gain access to this card?

Simply put, it shouldn't.

The M-I card promises far more legal battles and discrimination suits than it does easy answers to faster healthcare. Sure, it makes my father's job that much easier, but at what cost? Shall we surrender our privacy and right to discrete healthcare for shorter queues, faster checkups and quicker prescriptions?

Those who have no qualms about the world having access to the most intimate details of their medical history should be issued with an M-I card and be allowed to enjoy the few perks. However, those who value the little remaining privacy they have left should not be forced to have their life details available on a silver platter to all those requiring identification, all in the name of quick fixes and easy health.

Thankyou for your time.

Sample 2

Comments

- middle range standard
- the entire response fails to reveal any sense of this being a speech
- much of this is a mere paraphrase of the content of the given material
- there is almost no sense of considered view being developed nor articulated to us
- the entire piece lacks the coherent and consistent development required of proper argumentative writing
- lack of expressive language or control of language.

Student response

The Medi-Info Card is a small credit card sized device that stores a persons medical information which can be used by doctors and hospitals for obtaining vital records when the patient may not be in a fit state to give such information. The card will be able to reveal things like:

blood group

accounts of any recent infections

contact details of relatives and doctor

medical insurance

medical history

This information will be downloaded from your card into card readers used after major accidents and during times of sickness. It will also show whether or not you want to be an organ doner in the event of your death.

The card has received support from Dr. Tom Brown, a respected family doctor for over thirty-five years, who says about medi-info card "My work as a doctor would improve dramatically.... and my patients lives would be improved by the security a Medi-Info card would surely bring." Dr. Brown also went on to say "your Medi-Info card means peace of mind for everyone." Despite Dr. Brown's glowing recommendation, the card has received some criticism from a member of a Civil Liberties lobby group. Christina Singh is less than impressed with the idea of this card and says "There are too many risks with this seemingly innocuous little card." Ms. Singh goes on to raise concerns about

security and privacy of the data and even raises the point that perhaps the card could be viewed by potential employers and tertiary institutions before applications were processed.

I tend to agree to an extent with Christina Singh. While the card seems wonderful at first, how can we be sure its use won't expand into becoming a profitable business of selling databases, or that we won't be judged by society on what our cards contain. Thanks very much. Any questions?