



YEAR 12 *Exam Practice*

2021

English

Section C Exam Practice

Argument and persuasive language

This book contains:

- ten practice scenarios for Section C of the English exam
- high-level sample responses for three scenarios
- tips and guidelines for responses.

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* Note that some texts that have been previously published have been edited for the purposes of the Section C task.

Exam guidelines

Section C of your end-of-year exam will focus on analysing argument and persuasive language. You will be required to write an extended piece of prose that analyses how argument and language, including visual language, are used to persuade others to share a point of view.

This section is worth one-third of your total mark for the examination.

Allow one hour for this task. As a guide, you should spend approximately five minutes planning, 50 minutes writing and five minutes proofreading.

Exam criteria for Section C – Argument and persuasive language

Criteria	What you have to do
Understanding of the argument(s) presented and point(s) of view expressed	• Show a clear understanding of the point(s) of view by identifying the main contention and the main points or arguments that are used to support it.
Analysis of ways in which language and visual features are used to present an argument and to persuade	• Demonstrate an understanding of some of the persuasive strategies used to present a point of view and position readers to agree. • Show how the piece of text is designed to have an impact on the audience through its structure and approach, and through particular word choices and visual features. • Look for explicit and implicit appeals to the values that this audience might be expected to endorse; this will allow you to show a perceptive understanding of how argument and language are used.
Control and effectiveness of language use, as appropriate to the task	• Use clear and precise language, with accurate spelling and correct grammar. • Make effective use of appropriate vocabulary, including metalanguage for discussing argument; persuasive language; and the positioning of the reader.

How can you improve your score for Section C?

The table below presents the typical characteristics of high-, medium- and low-level responses. To achieve a top mark for Section C, aim to have your analysis resemble the description in the left-hand column of the table below.

A high-level response:	A medium-level response:	A low-level response:
shows that the student has read the 'Background information' carefully and demonstrates their understanding of the context of the piece and the intended audience	shows some evidence that the student has read the 'Background information' and shows some understanding of the context of the piece and the intended audience	shows little or no awareness of the context or intended audience of the piece
focuses on analysing how argument and language are used to persuade rather than on simply identifying language techniques	focuses too much on identifying language techniques rather than on analysing the writer's use of argument and language and the intended effects on the audience	only identifies language techniques, showing little or no awareness of why the writer has used these techniques or the intended effects on the audience
analyses the ways in which argument and language work together to persuade and to create particular effects on the intended audience	adequately analyses the argument and the language with which it is presented but demonstrates limited awareness of the ways in which both aspects of the persuasive text work together to create particular effects	fails to recognise or analyse the connections between the argument and the language used to present it
incorporates analysis of visual material smoothly , noting how it supports or contradicts the point of view presented in the text	includes analysis of visual material but does not necessarily incorporate it smoothly into the response	excludes analysis of visual material or the analysis is very basic

SECTION C – Argument and persuasive language**Scenario 1: Olympus High life skills open letter****Instructions for Section C**

Section C requires students to write an analysis of the ways in which argument and language are used to persuade others to share a point(s) of view.

Read the background information on this page and the material on pages 6 and 7, and write an analytical response to the task below.

For the purposes of this task, the term ‘language’ refers to written, spoken and visual language.

Your response will be assessed according to the assessment criteria set out on page 3 of this book.

Section C is worth one-third of the total marks for the examination.

Task

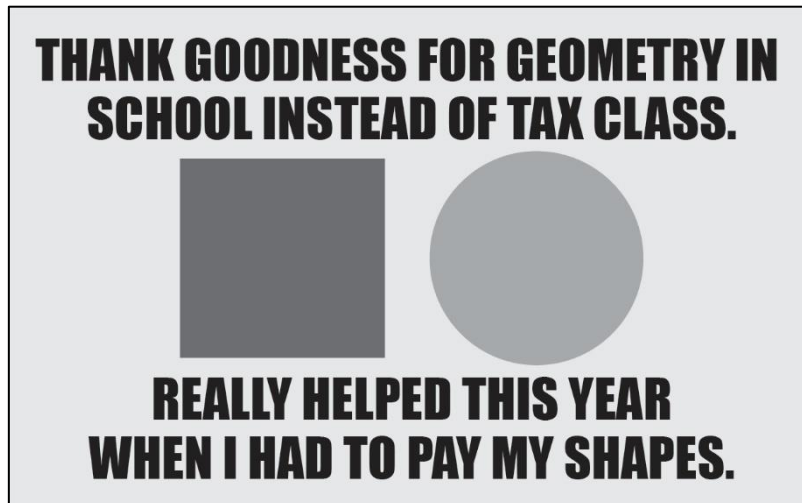
Write an analysis of the ways in which argument and written and visual language are used in the material on pages 6 and 7 to try to persuade others to share the points of view presented.

Background information

The Student Representative Council at Olympus High School has written an open letter to be circulated among Olympus High students, asking them to sign their petition. The council is seeking support from the student body to present a petition to the school board requesting that dedicated classes on life skills be introduced at the school for students in Years 7–10.

The Olympus High Student Representative Council needs your help!
Please sign our petition to show your support for the idea of
dedicated life skills classes for Year 7–10 students.

Fellow students, something is wrong with our school system. Something is wrong when students know Pythagoras' theorem but don't know how to lodge a tax return. Something is wrong when students know that the mitochondria are the powerhouse of the cell but don't know how to manage conflict in their personal lives. The steps to the Nutbush might be handy to know at weddings, but surely mindfulness strategies and ways to cope with stress would be handier to know as we make the transition from adolescence to adulthood.



Our teaching and learning program should be focusing on the skills we need to succeed, not only in the professional world but also in our personal lives, and the government agrees. Personal and social capability is part of the Australian Curriculum. Across all year levels and studies, it is expected that students will develop skills in self-management and relationship building. Such skills are designed to support students in 'becoming creative and confident individuals with a sense of self-worth, self-awareness and personal identity that enables them to manage their emotional, mental, spiritual and physical wellbeing, with a sense of hope and optimism about their lives and the future'. The government recognises the importance of developing both resilience and the capacity for positive relationship building in the next generation, so why doesn't Olympus High?

The expectation is that these skills will be taught across all study areas, but this is not happening. The school seems to think that setting group projects in science classes is enough to help us develop our communication and goal-setting skills, and that reading other people's work in history and English classes is enough to help us to develop empathy. But this is not enough. The Student Representative Council proposes that at least once per month a dedicated class be held focusing on the practical applications of these skills. The classes would be open to all students across Years 7–10 and could be held at lunchtime if scheduling proved an issue.

Each class would be led by a teacher from a different study area. We would have arts and music classes that focus on mental, emotional and spiritual wellbeing and mindfulness. We would have mathematics classes devoted to financial literacy and budgeting. We would have health and physical education classes focused on physical activity as a form of stress relief.



Providing students with practical strategies for dealing with stress and anxiety, in particular, should be a priority for our school leaders. The latest youth mental health report from Mission Australia and the Black Dog Institute found that, in the last seven years, psychological distress has risen by 5.5% among young people, and almost one in four young people in this country is experiencing mental health challenges. There is hope, however.

According to research conducted by the

Black Dog Institute, over 75% of mental health issues develop before the age of 25, indicating that early intervention is key. These classes would therefore be an investment in our long-term mental and emotional wellbeing.

Parents also agree that life skills should be taught in school. A 2019 study undertaken by Deana Leahy and Neil Selwyn of Monash University showed that parents want their children to receive a more holistic education. Responses to the question ‘What new learning areas do people think should be taught in public schools?’ referenced money management, home loans and taxes; job preparation such as résumé writing and interviewing; domestic tasks such as laundry and cooking; and conflict de-escalation.

While some may argue that these are skills we should be learning at home from our parents, it must be remembered that modern-day economic pressures mean that both parents are likely to be working full-time. According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, in over half of Australia’s two-parent households, both parents worked full-time in 2020. Parents’ roles and responsibilities have changed in recent times, but our school system has not kept up. Our parents need support in passing on the skills necessary for us to thrive in the adult world.

So please, if you agree that Olympus students deserve to be given the best possible opportunity to succeed after high school, sign our petition and ask your parents to do so too. The school board meets next month. Let’s try to get at least 100 signatures!

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SECTION C – Argument and persuasive language**Scenario 2: One cat, one year, 110 native animals: lock up your pet, it's a killing machine****Instructions for Section C**

Section C requires students to write an analysis of the ways in which argument and language are used to persuade others to share a point(s) of view.

Read the background information on this page and the material on pages 10 and 11, and write an analytical response to the task below.

For the purposes of this task, the term 'language' refers to written, spoken and visual language.

Your response will be assessed according to the assessment criteria set out on page 3 of this book.

Section C is worth one-third of the total marks for the examination.

Task

Write an analysis of the ways in which argument and written and visual language are used in the material on pages 10 and 11 to try to persuade others to share the points of view presented.

Background information

The following article was first published on *The Conversation* by a team of professors and academics about the danger outdoor cats can pose to local wildlife.

One cat, one year, 110 native animals: lock up your pet, it's a killing machine

by Jaana Dielenberg, Brett Murphy, Chris Dickman, John Woinarski, Leigh-Ann Woolley, Mike Calver and Sarah Legge



We know feral cats are an enormous problem for wildlife – across Australia, feral cats collectively kill more than three billion animals per year. Cats have played a leading role in most of Australia's 34 mammal extinctions since 1788, and are a big reason populations of at least 123 other threatened native species are dropping.

But pet cats are wreaking havoc too. Our new analysis compiles the results of 66 different studies on pet cats to gauge the impact of Australia's pet cat population on the country's wildlife.

The results are staggering. On average, each roaming pet cat kills 186 reptiles, birds and mammals per year, most of them native to Australia. Collectively, that's 4,440 to 8,100 animals per square kilometre per year for the area inhabited by pet cats.

If you own a cat and want to protect wildlife, you should keep it inside. In Australia, 1.1 million pet cats are contained 24 hours a day by responsible pet owners. The remaining 2.7 million pet cats – 71% of all pet cats – are able to roam and hunt. What's more, your pet cat could be getting out without you knowing. A radio tracking study in Adelaide found that of the 177 cats whom owners believed were inside at night, 69 cats (39%) were sneaking out for nocturnal adventures.

Surely not my cat

Just over one-quarter of Australian households (27%) have pet cats, and about half of cat-owning households have two or more cats. Many owners believe their animals don't hunt because they never come across evidence of killed animals.

But studies that used cat video tracking collars or scat analysis (checking what's in the cat's poo) have established many pet cats kill animals without bringing them home. On average, pet cats bring home only 15% of their prey.

Collectively, roaming pet cats kill 390 million animals per year in Australia.

This huge number may lead some pet owners to think their own cat's contribution wouldn't make much difference. However, we found even single pet cats have driven declines and complete losses of populations of some native animal species in their area. Documented cases have included: a feather-tailed glider population in south-eastern NSW; a skink population in a Perth suburb; and an olive legless lizard population in Canberra.

Urban cats

On average, an individual feral cat in the bush kills 748 reptiles, birds and mammals a year – four times the toll of a hunting pet cat. But feral cats and pet cats roam over very different areas. Pet cats are confined to cities and towns, where you'll find 40 to 70 roaming cats per square kilometre. In the bush there's only one feral cat for every three to four square kilometres. So while each pet cat kills fewer animals than a feral cat, their high urban density means the toll is still very high. Per square kilometre per year, pet cats kill 30–50 times more animals than feral cats in the bush.

Most of us want to see native wildlife around towns and cities. But such a vision is being compromised by this extraordinary level of predation, especially as the human population grows and our cities expand.

Many native animals don't have high reproductive rates so they cannot survive this level of predation. The stakes are especially high for threatened wildlife in urban areas.

Pet cats living near areas with nature also hunt more, reducing the value of places that should be safe havens for wildlife. The 186 animals each pet cat kills per year on average is made up of 110 native animals (40 reptiles, 38 birds and 32 mammals). For example, the critically endangered western ringtail possum is found in suburban areas of Mandurah, Bunbury, Busselton and Albany. The possum did not move into these areas – rather, we moved into their habitat.

What can pet owners do?

Keeping your cat securely contained 24 hours a day is the only way to prevent it from killing wildlife.

It's a myth that a good diet or feeding a cat more meat will prevent hunting: even cats that aren't hungry will hunt. Various devices, such as bells on collars, are commercially marketed with the promise of preventing hunting. While some of these items may reduce the rate of successful kills, they don't prevent hunting altogether.

And they don't prevent cats from disturbing wildlife. When cats prowl and hunt in an area, wildlife have to spend more time hiding or escaping. This reduces the time spent feeding themselves or their young, or resting. In Mandurah, WA, the disturbance and hunting of just one pet cat and one stray cat caused the total breeding failure of a colony of more than 100 pairs of fairy terns.

Benefits of a life indoors

Keeping cats indoors protects pet cats from injury, avoids nuisance behaviour and prevents unwanted breeding. Cats allowed outside often get into fights with other cats, even when they're not the fighting type (they can be attacked by other cats when running away).

Roaming cats are also very prone to getting hit by vehicles. According to the Humane Society of the United States, indoor cats live up to four times longer than those allowed to roam freely.

Indoor cats have lower rates of cat-borne diseases, some of which can infect humans. For example, in humans the cat-borne disease toxoplasmosis can cause illness, miscarriages and birth defects.

But Australia is in a very good position to make change. Compared to many other countries, the Australian public are more aware of how cats threaten native wildlife and more supportive of actions to reduce those impacts.

It won't be easy. But since more than one million pet cats are already being contained, reducing the impacts from pet cats is clearly possible if we take responsibility for them.

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SECTION C – Argument and persuasive language

Scenario 3: Giving gifts, not things

Instructions for Section C

Section C requires students to write an analysis of the ways in which argument and language are used to persuade others to share a point(s) of view.

Read the background information on this page and the material on pages 14 and 15, and write an analytical response to the task below.

For the purposes of this task, the term ‘language’ refers to written, spoken and visual language.

Your response will be assessed according to the assessment criteria set out on page 3 of this book.

Section C is worth one-third of the total marks for the examination.

Task

Write an analysis of the ways in which argument and written and visual language are used in the material on pages 14 and 15 to try to persuade others to share the points of view presented.

Background information

Athena and her large family have gathered for a Christmas meal together to exchange gifts. The following is a transcript of the speech Athena, a young professional woman, gave at the table while she handed out personalised cards to her family members. The image accompanying the text is a copy of the flyer Athena provided inside each card.

OK, well, since none of us could possibly eat another mouthful of Mum and Dad's festive meal, I've got something I'd like to say. First, merry Christmas to you all. I really love Christmas. It's not just about the food – though I have to say, Dad, this was your best custard yet! It's not just the traditional Lee family lawn bowls tournament (watch out, Uncle Rod, I've been practising!). Instead, as all the clichés say, Christmas is a time of giving.

This year, though, you've probably noticed that I didn't buy gifts for any of you – and not because I was disorganised. The real reason is that I've learned there are better ways to show my love for my family, and I'm trying to change my mindset. In each of your Christmas cards, you will find my present to you.

For some of you, I've made vouchers for things we can do together – I think they're called 'experience gifts'. (Spoiler: Gran, I'm finally taking you out for high tea.)

For some of you, I've made IOU vouchers for things I will do. This year I'll be weeding the garden (you're welcome, Mum); sewing (the twins will be the cutest-dressed kids at Morton Primary); and baking brownies (you're all hoping that's for you, right?!). Plus some other fun stuff.

But mostly, I've made contributions in your names to a bunch of different charities. I've thought really hard about them all, and chosen things that I hope will mean a lot to you. Hai, I think you will love knowing that your 'gift' this Christmas is school fees for a teenager in South Sudan. Jo (and Rover!), you'll be happy to know yours is a donation to RSPCA Victoria. Food banks, homeless shelters and medical aid all feature too.

Whether we are supporting communities and individuals close to home, or making connections with the global society we are part of, I think we have a responsibility to understand our privilege. I think we have a duty to share some of our financial and social wealth. Because most people aren't as lucky as we are in this family. In a country with free speech and a relatively functional healthcare system, we have plenty of food, we have jobs, we have homes, we have each other. But most of all, we have THINGS. Too. Many. Things.

It's easier than ever these days to spend money buying STUFF we don't need. Even kids without credit cards can buy online using Afterpay and Zip. We can pretty much have whatever we want. But have you thought about your carbon footprint with all that online ordering? The environmental costs of production, marketing and transport? What about ethical sustainability? What about treatment of workers – do you know who made your new handbag or your latest tech gadget? Do you know if they were paid fairly?

And aside from the moral cost of things, you *know* you'll spend more online, even when it looks like a bargain at first. Think about those ridiculously high fees you have to pay because you've left it too late and need express postage!

Or maybe you're shopping in person and supporting local small business? Awesome. Do it. Love your work. But have you thought about the cost of petrol, public transport or parking? Have you realised you're wasting hours and hours of your life panicking and searching for that perfect present for someone who has everything? A perfect present, by the way, that doesn't exist.

That's it. I'm not buying stuff for presents anymore.

And hey, there are extra benefits for you guys too. Nobody has to pretend they love the present I've given them. Nobody has to pretend they don't already have the exact same Bluetooth speaker at home. Nobody has to pretend they enjoy apricot nougat when they really don't. You all know what I'm talking about.

I know families who use a Secret Santa app where everyone only has to buy one gift. Sure, that's pretty cool – it's fun, and it reduces the sheer volume of presents. It means nobody is left out by accident. And it cuts out the stress about how much money to spend on cousins

you don't know very well, or how many presents to give your siblings. It even cuts out the worry about giving someone something they don't want – the apps let you request specific gifts! But where's the joy in that? It's just a blatant shopping list. It's greedy. It's disgusting. It's consumerism gone mad. And it's nothing to do with the true Christmas spirit.

So that's why you won't find boxes from me under the tree for you this year. I'm honestly not judging the rest of you for buying presents – presents aren't all bad. But this was my choice for this year, and I hope some of you consider making the same choice next time you want to buy something for someone. (In your cards I've included a little flyer for one of my favourite charity organisations, if you want somewhere to start.) I hope you at least stop and think about whether the present you are giving is really heartfelt, personal and meaningful. If the answer is no, then remember that there are always other options. And if the answer is yes – or maybe if it's just a particularly awesome present – then go for it!

Now, let's get the lawn bowls going!

LEVEL UP

Helping young Victorians increase psychological resilience

**WE HELP -
CAN YOU HELP?**

Young Victorians face tough experiences every day: mental and physical health challenges, social and familial conflicts, financial crises, employment struggles – you name it. We empower them to develop the strength and skills to face whatever comes their way.

Instead of buying **THINGS** for your loved ones, buy them something that really matters. Make a donation on their behalf, and they'll know they're building a better world for all of us.

Why not take your next gift to the next level?

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SECTION C – Argument and persuasive language**Scenario 4: ‘Good luck fella, stay safe’: a snake catcher explains why our fear of brown snakes is misplaced****Instructions for Section C**

Section C requires students to write an analysis of the ways in which argument and language are used to persuade others to share a point(s) of view.

Read the background information on this page and the material on pages 18 and 19, and write an analytical response to the task below.

For the purposes of this task, the term ‘language’ refers to written, spoken and visual language.

Your response will be assessed according to the assessment criteria set out on page 3 of this book.

Section C is worth one-third of the total marks for the examination.

Task

Write an analysis of the ways in which argument and written and visual language are used in the material on pages 18 and 19 to try to persuade others to share the points of view presented.

Background information

The following article was first published on *The Conversation* by snake catcher Gavin JD Smith in response to the common fear of snakes. The article is followed by a comment from a reader.

‘Good luck fella, stay safe’: a snake catcher explains why our fear of brown snakes is misplaced

by Gavin JD Smith

Sun, sea ... snakes: all three are synonymous with the Australian summer, but only the first two are broadly welcomed. And of all Australia's snake species, brown snakes are among the most feared.

To some degree, this is understandable. Brown snakes are alert, nervy and lightning-fast over short distances. When threatened, they put on a spectacular (and intimidating) defensive display, lifting the front half of their body vertically, ready to strike.

They are also fairly common, and well adapted to suburban life – especially the eastern brown species. And of course, certain species have a highly toxic venom designed to immobilise the mammals they prey on.

Besides my work as a sociologist, I'm also a professional snake catcher and handle scores of venomous snakes during the warmer months. I don't expect people to love snakes, but I believe greater knowledge about them will help with their being respected more as keystone ecological creatures.

Not just wicked serpents

Around two Australians die each year from snake bites, and the brown snake family causes the most human – and, likely, pet – fatalities. But compare that figure with the annual road toll (1188 deaths in 2019) or the 77 people killed by horses and cows in Australia between 2008 and 2017. You can see why many herpetologists – or snake experts – feel our fear of snakes is somewhat misplaced.

Where does this fear come from, then? It partly arises from the representation of snakes throughout human history as menacing. The fact that snakes are cold-blooded, with an unblinking stare, means humans have often depicted them as callous and cold-hearted. Examples include the serpent who corrupts Eve in the Book of Genesis, and monstrous mythological characters such as Medusa.

Partly because of these and other depictions, snakes are often considered something to be feared. When they slither into our manicured backyards, they are seen as a 'problem' that has transgressed our sanitised domestic lives. And this fear is often transferred down the generations.

In my snake-catching work, I have extricated snakes from backyards and homes, a shopping centre, parks and school classrooms. I've even removed snakes from a woman's boot, under a soccer team's kit bag and inside a weapons bunker! About 85% of the snakes I work with on callouts are eastern browns.

Many callers wanting a snake removed experience intense emotions, from shock and hostility to awe and reverence. Most want the snake taken as far away from their property as possible.

After catching a snake, I release it into a suitable non-residential environment. I always wonder what happens to it next. The threats snakes face are numerous. They can be harmed or killed by humans, pets, feral animals or predators. They are also threatened by habitat loss, climate events and contaminated prey items.

I release each with the departing words: 'Good luck fella, stay safe, stay out of trouble.'

Tracking snake movements

Eastern brown snakes are timid and reluctant to strike unless provoked. They are generally solitary animals except during breeding periods. They perform a crucial ecological role by eating vermin such as mice and rats, controlling the numbers of other native species and providing a food source for various animals.

Information on how brown snakes move through and use urban space is limited. We urgently need more understanding of their daily habits, especially as urban development encroaches on their natural habitat, increasing the chances of conflict with humans or pets. More insight is also needed on whether it's damaging to relocate hundreds of snakes each year.



A study in Canberra funded by the Ginninderry Conservation Trust aims to answer these issues. A team of researchers, including myself, will track the movements of 12 eastern brown snakes in the urban environment.

Our team will also explore the effects of catching a snake and releasing it into new habitat within a designated range (5km in the ACT, and 20km in NSW). We will examine how the snake responds to the stress of being captured and moved, the risks it might confront in an unfamiliar landscape, and whether it survives. We will also explore the implications for other snakes in the release habitat and the genetic consequences of interbreeding between geographically distinct populations.

Knowledge breeds greater tolerance

We anticipate the study's findings will help educate the public about how snakes operate in suburbia. It will also inform translocation policies and conservation efforts.

We also hope to show how eastern browns are vital – not superfluous or undesirable – parts of thriving ecosystems. The better we understand snakes, the less we might fear them. This may also mean we are less disposed to relocating or harming them.

ConcernedMum202

While I appreciate the research that you're doing, you're fighting an uphill battle here. People will always be afraid of snakes, the same way that we're scared of blazing fires and tsunamis. Snakes are dangerous, and it's our natural instinct to shy away (or run screaming, in some cases) from these deadly animals. I have two children under three years old, not to mention a curious dog, who are just not able to understand how to 'respect' a dangerous snake (and, I might add, face a higher risk of complications if they're bitten). If I find one in my backyard, you can guarantee that I'm going to be calling someone to come and relocate it as far away from my family as possible. And heaven forbid we find one in the house! What am I meant to do then? Just open the door and hope for the best?

Again, I'm sure your research is very important, but I'm not going to be considering how stressed a snake might get if I find it in my house threatening my children.



Tips for Scenario 4

- *The writer begins by addressing common concerns about snakes and identifying the negative perceptions that exist about them within the Australian community. By opening his piece in this manner, Gavin JD Smith presents himself as empathetic and understanding about how snakes are perceived, which positions readers to view him as balanced and reasonable. This is further reinforced by his reference to his 'work as a sociologist', which depicts him as someone who understands humans well.*
- *Note the clear, logical structure to Smith's article. He addresses and downplays common concerns about snakes, before moving on to highlight the benefits that they bring on an environmental and ecological level. By suggesting that snakes are 'vital ... parts of thriving ecosystems', the writer represents them positively, seeking to tap into the value that readers may place on the environment.*
- *Consider the language that Smith uses to subtly influence readers' perceptions of snakes. While he does acknowledge the fear they can engender, he uses predominantly scientific vocabulary and positively connotated language to refer to snakes and their actions. In highlighting the work of 'herpetologists', he seeks to present snakes as a topic for scientific research, rather than as 'monstrous' creatures, while his discussion of their portrayal in human history refers to the Bible and to Greek mythology, which might be read as suggesting such depictions are outdated and unrealistic. Snakes are described as being 'harmed', 'threatened' and 'timid', while also playing 'a crucial ecological role'. He suggests that humans are somewhat to blame for the threat posed by snakes, referring to 'our sanitised domestic lives', implying that it is humans that have encroached into the snakes' natural environment.*
- *Note the contrast in the approaches adopted by the article and the comment. As highlighted above, Smith approaches the issue in a calm, scientific way, downplaying the threat that snakes pose. This contrasts with ConcernedMum202, who is far more personal and emotive in her response, which befits her position as a parent of young children.*

SECTION C – Argument and persuasive language**Scenario 5: Should we be raising our kids on fairy tales?****Instructions for Section C**

Section C requires students to write an analysis of the ways in which argument and language are used to persuade others to share a point(s) of view.

Read the background information on this page and the material on pages 22 and 23, and write an analytical response to the task below.

For the purposes of this task, the term ‘language’ refers to written, spoken and visual language.

Your response will be assessed according to the assessment criteria set out on page 3 of this book.

Section C is worth one-third of the total marks for the examination.

Task

Write an analysis of the ways in which argument and written and visual language are used in the material on pages 22 and 23 to try to persuade others to share the points of view presented.

Background information

The following article was first published on *The Spinoff* by a children’s storyteller, Baz Macdonald, about why he believes fairy tales should not be taught to children.

Should we be raising our kids on fairy tales?

by Baz Macdonald

It would be difficult to find anyone in Australia who doesn't know the stories of Cinderella or Little Red Riding Hood. We were all raised on the fables of the Brothers Grimm and Hans Christian Andersen, whether through the original stories, modernised retellings, or film and TV adaptations. Regardless of how you first encountered them, it's unlikely you made it through childhood without becoming intimately familiar with these centuries-old stories.

These fables have become a fixture of Western culture, and as such we unblinkingly introduce each new generation to their magic. But perhaps we should blink before reading these stories to our kids. Maybe we should be questioning whether the 19th-century values they were written to impart are the lessons we want or need in the 21st century.

I have the privilege of being a children's storyteller and have hosted a weekly story time in Wellington for almost three years. My primary concern when choosing books each week is to make sure the session will be fun and engaging for the kids, but a secondary consideration is always how inclusive the stories are. I try hard to make sure the books I read don't reinforce negative stereotypes and archetypes, particularly around gender.

As such, I don't include fairy tales in my story time sessions.

This omission has never been an act of protest, or an attempt to take a stand against these books. In fact, I have a lot of my own nostalgia for them. Rather, I don't include them because there is little they do that modern children's books don't do equally well, if not better. The fact is, for every Brothers Grimm fable there are a thousand books that tell equally magical stories but do so in a way that is far more relatable for modern kids, and without the inclusion of problematic stereotypes and archetypes.

Take, for example, the quintessential fairy tale, 'Cinderella'. Ignoring for a moment just how alienating the agrarian, medieval setting of the book can be for kids, it's clear that 'Cinderella' has several wonderful themes such as courage in the face of adversity and the importance of kindness. But underlying these relevant messages are a number of problematic ones – like the damsel construct, in which Cinderella's only salvation can come from being rescued by a man.



Are these the kind of stereotypes we want to be reinforcing to our children?

In place of 'Cinderella', I can name a handful of modern picture books which contain all of the same positive attributes, without any of the negative. Take *Pig the Pug*, a series of books about a selfish pug whose greed and envy hurts all of the other dogs around him. In each book, Pig is confronted with the consequences of his negative actions and is humbled by the experience. These books are just as whimsical as 'Cinderella' (I mean who doesn't love animals acting like humans?), but keep the kids more engaged, and impart the same lessons without the retrograde themes.

I'm sure this sounds to many of you like I am being preachy. But the truth is I actively try to avoid picking stories that try to teach lessons – and that includes fairy tales, which are inherently preachy. Instead I look for books which focus on being entertaining for kids, but do so in inclusive ways. For instance, the *Witch with an Itch* series focuses on telling hilarious

and magical stories, but with a diverse cast of characters, in which both girls and boys are represented as equals.

Of course there is merit to having books with specific lessons and morals to impart. They can be a useful tool for parents, who can pick books to reinforce ideas relevant to the stage of their child's development. But how appropriate are these fables in preparing children for the modern world? Sure, the theme of stranger danger in 'Hansel and Gretel' is still relevant – but is the delivery, with its disturbing tale of a stepmother who wants her husband to take the kids into the woods and kill them? Why not use a modern book that teaches the same lesson, but without the murdering children with axes and ovens?

When I tell other storytellers about my 'no fairy tales' policy, I tend to be met with shock. They often react as if it is an act of sacrilege on par with spitting on a flag.

But why should avoiding these books be sacrilege? What do we owe them? It seems to me that we are retaining them simply because they're classics. I understand the feeling – I agree that it's important to preserve classic literature. But is forcing outdated stereotypes on incredibly impressionable children the right way to do so?

A huge amount of effort is put into trying to alter these stories, to make them more palatable to a new generation of readers. But no matter how they are adapted, you cannot change some of the most problematic plot points without it becoming a completely different story: Cinderella will still get saved by the Prince, Sleeping Beauty will still get kissed awake (without consent, might I add), and stepmothers of all kinds will continue to try and murder young women. There is no limit to the stories we can tell, especially to children whose imaginations know no bounds. So maybe instead of trying to update these stories, we should be creating and telling the new fables of our time – ones which reflect the values we try to live by today.

In the end, the problem isn't that kids are reading fairy tales. It's that these are our best-known stories for children. Ask any kid about Cinderella and they will be able to recite the story beat for beat. But ask them who Malala Yousafzai is and of course they are not going to know. But if imparting information and lessons to kids is what you are looking to do, maybe Malala's is the story your child should know by heart.

Malala actually released a picture book version of her story last year, and I would encourage any parent to read it with their children. It deftly, and with great sensitivity, illustrates the circumstances and challenges of Malala's story in a way kids can understand. A book like this arms kids with knowledge about the challenges of the world they actually live in, rather than that of a peasant living in 19th-century rural Germany.



Tips for Scenario 5

- Note that Baz Macdonald opens by emphasising the widespread nature of fairy tales, and positions them as a common shared experience for his audience. By stating that ‘we were all raised on’ similar material, regardless of the medium (‘original stories, modernised retellings, or film and TV adaptations’), he highlights the ubiquity of these tales in Western society. Targeting an audience of parents – note the repeated references to ‘our kids’ – he identifies the difference between the world in which they grew up, and the world in which they are raising their own children, positioning them to question the continued relevance of fairy tales.
- Discuss how the included image reinforces the writer’s assertion that fairy tales perpetuate inappropriate gender stereotypes. The image presents a scene that is likely to be familiar to most readers, of a Disney-style prince on a horse rescuing or protecting a helpless female character. Macdonald highlights the ‘problematic’ messages of many fairy tales, where a woman’s ‘only salvation can come from being rescued by a man’, and states that he prefers to tell stories where ‘both girls and boys are represented as equals’. The familiar image invites readers to consider the messages being conveyed by traditional fairy tales, and assess whether they are appropriate in today’s world, where gender equity is a key consideration.
- Consider the impact of the writer’s repeated acknowledgement of potential opposition to his stance. He downplays his own opposition to fairy tales, stating it ‘has never been an act of protest’ and that he has ‘a lot of ... nostalgia for them’, later acknowledging that to some he may sound ‘preachy’, and that fellow storytellers often react to his opinions ‘with shock’. By demonstrating his awareness of opposition to his views, he seeks to present his stance as reasoned and considered, and this provides him with the opportunity to refute and rebut opposing points.
- The writer makes repeated use of rhetorical questions in the second half of his article. This aligns with his desire to avoid seeming ‘preachy’, as it guides readers towards his views on the negative aspects of fairy tales, while seemingly allowing them to reach their own conclusions.

SECTION C – Argument and persuasive language**Scenario 6: Ban reality TV show participation for children aged 16 and under****Instructions for Section C**

Section C requires students to write an analysis of the ways in which argument and language are used to persuade others to share a point(s) of view.

Read the background information on this page and the material on pages 26 and 27, and write an analytical response to the task below.

For the purposes of this task, the term ‘language’ refers to written, spoken and visual language.

Your response will be assessed according to the assessment criteria set out on page 3 of this book.

Section C is worth one-third of the total marks for the examination.

Task

Write an analysis of the ways in which argument and written and visual language are used in the material on pages 26 and 27 to try to persuade others to share the points of view presented.

Background information

Gweneth Ambrose, a concerned mother, has started an online petition to ban reality television shows from involving children aged 16 and under. The petition is followed by a comment.

Gweneth Ambrose shared this petition with the public.

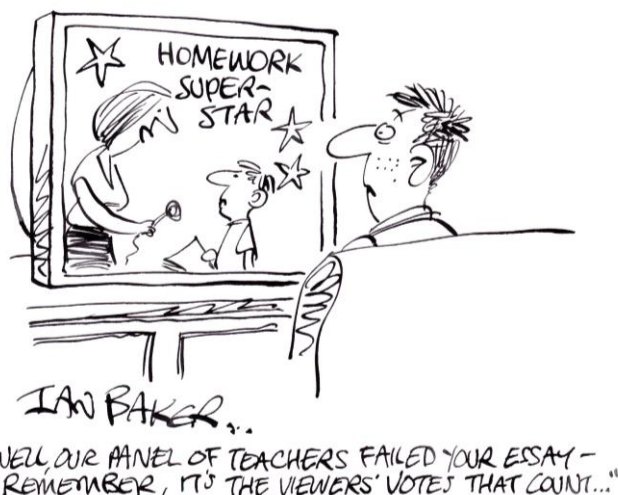
PLEASE SHARE THIS PETITION WITH AS MANY PEOPLE AS YOU CAN – THIS IS A VERY IMPORTANT ISSUE.

PART ONE: BACKGROUND

Spurred by the reaction to Netflix's addition of the absolutely appalling French film *Cuties* to its catalogue, fervent argument has once again been ignited about the role of child beauty pageants in society. In particular, debate swirls around whether their continued existence is healthy for individual participants, and if it is damaging to the moral fabric of any culture that allows them. While child beauty pageants unquestionably have no place in any society that claims to care about the welfare of children, I strongly believe that a ban on beauty pageants alone does not nearly go far enough. Instead, I propose that any and all reality TV shows featuring minors be removed from our airwaves, and the further commissioning of such programs be made illegal.

PART TWO: REASONS

There are an overwhelming number of reasons why a ban such as this is imperative, and if I attempted to list them all I might never finish writing this petition. Below are what I consider some of the most relevant concerns.



1. Reality TV shows frequently place enormous physical and psychological stress on their participants.

Imagine, as a child, performing in front of the whole world. In a volatile environment, at a volatile time in your life, every mistake, every emotional outburst broadcast to all. It's difficult to see how that could be anything but damaging for our children. Even adults struggle to cope in such an environment. And that's assuming you're a perfectly healthy kid to begin with! According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), a staggering 16% of children aged 10–19 are battling some form of mental health issue. Yes, 16%! In Australia almost one in seven children aged 4–17 are battling similar problems. That's nearly 600 000 children. And we're willing to simply throw them to the wolves (in some cases almost literally!) purely for the sake of our entertainment? Surely we, as a society, are better than that. It is paramount that we put the health and wellbeing of our children before anything else, and I don't think any of us would argue that reality TV is doing that.

2. Reality TV shows are horribly exploitative, taking advantage of the naivety and inexperience of innocent children.

The reality is this – children are simply incapable of giving informed consent to the kinds of exploitation they're frequently forced to endure when forced to take centre stage on a reality

TV show. We restrict children from participating in all sorts of things until they're old enough to understand the consequences of their actions – many of them far less damaging than reality TV. These days we're a generation of helicopter parents, too paranoid to even let our kids walk to the store unaccompanied, and yet we're positively cavalier about something statistically far more likely to be detrimental to our children. Unfortunately the glitz and glamour of appearing on television can be tempting for children, but it's our responsibility as adults to not allow them to be victims of exploitation, and to keep them safe, in the same way that we insist on seatbelts in the car to shield them from accidents, or the way that we restrict junk food for the sake of their physical health.

3. Reality TV shows promote unhealthy values.

I think any of us who have watched any reality TV, whether it features children or adults, understands that very rarely are things like good moral character or intelligence given emphasis. At best, reality TV shows focus on completely pointless skills like surviving in the wilderness (this should hardly be a pressing concern for a child!), while some of the more offensive ones will outright encourage harmful behaviours and teach children to valorise negative attitudes. Our children should be focused on things like school, ensuring that they have the necessary grounding for a successful future. Instead, reality TV shows are frivolous wastes of time, instilling neither good character nor the tools to succeed later in life.

Furthermore, these reality TV shows are nigh-universally infused with an element of competition. Even shows like *MasterChef*, which could lay claim to fostering actually useful skill sets in children, let themselves down by contextualising these learnings in the form of a competition. This is not a healthy mindset to be imbuing children with. Surely none of us wants to teach our children to see everything through the lens of competition? What sort of a society would that lead to?

PART THREE: GOALS

The goal of this petition is simple: to increase awareness of the dangers reality TV shows pose to kids, and to hopefully force our ineffectual government to actually address such an important issue.

By signing our petition, you can play a crucial part in making sure this happens. If we get enough signatures, the government will have no choice but to take action. So please, if you, like me, understand the importance, share the petition with as many people as you can, for the sake of our children. Every signature counts!

Comment

Hi Gweneth,

A friend linked me to this petition and I have to say, while I respect how invested you seem to be, I think you're dead wrong on this issue, and I'd like to share some of my experiences as a young person who has featured in a reality TV show. For me personally, that was one of the best things I've ever done – it helped me develop confidence in myself and allowed me to pursue a passion I'd always wanted to pursue. I can safely say that I wouldn't be the person I am today without that experience. I would've been devastated if someone had told me I was forbidden from chasing my dream – which is really what this boils down to, isn't it? Kids having the opportunity to learn and grow through these unique opportunities. I think there'll be a little less joy in the world if your proposal goes through.

– Ezekiel O'Malley



Tips for Scenario 6

- Remember that different text types have different purposes, which can influence their style. The text here is a petition, so it is seeking to raise awareness about an issue and – most importantly – to encourage readers to show their support by signing the petition. Note that the language use is more forceful here than in other texts, and it opens with a simple and direct demand at the top. While there is nothing subtle about the heading – ‘PLEASE SHARE THIS PETITION ... THIS IS A VERY IMPORTANT ISSUE’ – it aims to draw readers’ attention from the outset, and encourage them to read further in order to discover what is so important.
- This article has a very ordered structure, breaking the issue up into three clear sections, detailing the key reasons for the proposed ban. Consider how the use of bold headings, capitalisation and lists helps to emphasise the key information. As noted above, the purpose of the text is to encourage people to sign the petition; therefore, providing key points for readers, without requiring them to read the whole text, may assist with garnering signatures.
- The writer of the petition is described as ‘a concerned mother’, and she is evidently predominantly targeting an audience of other parents. Note the frequent use of inclusive language, which seeks to place parents in a position of responsibility for the wellbeing and safety of their children. Note also her repeated use of the word ‘children’ throughout the text – while her petition relates to young people up to the age of 16, the use of ‘children’ suggests a much younger, and hence more vulnerable, group.
- While the petition focuses on the responsibility of parents, notice that the comment presents a different perspective. Unlike Gweneth Ambrose, who makes extensive use of inclusive language to emphasise the shared responsibility, Ezekiel O’Malley’s comment is littered with first-person singular pronouns as he focuses on his personal experience of reality television. His comment further contrasts in its easy-going, conversational manner, with informal phrases such as ‘dead wrong’ and ‘what this boils down to’ reflecting his youthful nature.

SECTION C – Argument and persuasive language**Scenario 7: *Centaurs in the City*: Film review****Instructions for Section C**

Section C requires students to write an analysis of the ways in which argument and language are used to persuade others to share a point(s) of view.

Read the background information on this page and the material on pages 30 and 31, and write an analytical response to the task below.

For the purposes of this task, the term ‘language’ refers to written, spoken and visual language.

Your response will be assessed according to the assessment criteria set out on page 3 of this book.

Section C is worth one-third of the total marks for the examination.

Task

Write an analysis of the ways in which argument and written and visual language are used in the material on pages 30 and 31 to try to persuade others to share the points of view presented.

Background information

Seasoned film critic Sanderson Bently writes a weekly column where he reviews new films and advises his readers on their merits. The following is his review of the children’s film *Centaurs in the City*, followed by a comment from a reader.

***Centaurs in the City*: Film review**

by Sanderson Bently



The theatre darkens. The screen begins to glow. Music begins to swell around me, and the title flashes in front of my eyes.

Centaurs in the City.

The neon purple letters are glittering over a scene of rolling hills, green enough to be a generic desktop background on a computer. And as I'm cringing and questioning all of my choices that brought me to this point in my career as a film reviewer, the title fades away and I, along with the rest of the audience, am thrown into the strange, uber-childish world of this movie.



Centaurs in the City brings to life a never-before-seen attempt to squeeze money out of parents with young children (not to mention squeezing out the sanity of every adult in the room at the same time). The story begins with our hero, a spunky down-to-earth girl named Larson, starting her training as a centaur healer. I can't help but wonder where the plot is as I'm bombarded with scene after scene that looks as if it was plucked right out of the dreams of little kids wishing for a pony of their own. And as the 'story' finally starts to take shape and Larson sets off on her quest to find the elusive Thunder Blessing Centaur, all I can picture is the millions of dollars in merchandise that these poor, unsuspecting parents will be forced to purchase.

By the end of the movie, I'm not sure that I haven't just watched an hour and forty-two minutes of an advertisement.

Of course, I knew what I was getting into when I was given my ticket to *Centaurs in the City*. This particular studio is known for cranking out mediocre movies for kids to watch again and again, with pretty colours and lilting music to keep them entertained while parents take a much-needed break. But as I sat through the credits, seeing name after name of all of the people involved in making this movie, I couldn't help but feel disgusted.

Studios recently have started choosing scripts for children's movies purely based on their merchandising potential, and it's easy to see that this is the case with *Centaurs in the City*. Restaurant chains have been offering special 'centaur' meals for kids, and I've even seen commercials for different snack foods that feature these cartoon characters. And I'm not even counting the millions of dollars in toys that the children sitting around me will have already started begging for before they've left the theatre.

Here we are, in a golden age of television and film. We have incredible technology at our disposal, and the film industry is filled with talented professionals. So why are we wasting their energy on this type of consumerist rubbish that trains vulnerable minds from the earliest ages to believe that entertainment is only about making money?

We are treating our children like mindless drones who will watch anything we give them, as long as they get to buy a cuddly Thunder Blessing Centaur of their own. Do we not owe them something better? This movie is clearly marketed towards small children, but there's a surprising lack of evidence in regards to the benefit of children younger than two years old watching movies or television. In fact, the few studies that have been done, including a recent

comprehensive study by Northwestern University, have found that consuming media can have *negative* effects on language development. And who's to say it gets better for older children, like the ones sitting around me in the theatre? Is there any reason to suspect that watching this movie is aiding their development?

Sure, treating your child to one or two movies might not have much of an impact, but it was clear from the tired adult faces that this was not the case. And the studio has already announced that *Centaurs in the City* will be spawning a sequel, which means more theatre tickets, more commercials, and more characters to be turned into figurines. And who knows, there could be a third movie. And a fourth. Even a fifth.

And that's just from one franchise, from one studio. There are dozens more terribly written movies currently being made that are ready to harm your children by dulling their minds and reinforcing shallow consumerist values.

So, are you going to let them?

Parents, I beg you, don't take your kids to see this mockery of a movie. As long as parents keep making this lazy choice to let these billion-dollar studios babysit their children for an hour or two, we'll just end up with more and more fluffy, empty material.

As someone who has dedicated their life to the art of filmmaking, please believe me. We can do better. We can make children's movies that are actually enjoyable for *all* ages. We can write scripts that are more than just glorified ads for the toys we want to sell. And we can help our children to appreciate great stories, if only we take a stand against the studios that are trying to make a quick buck off how exhausted you are.

Comment

Dear Sanderson,

I've been a long-standing fan of your movie reviews, but I'm very disappointed in this one. As a father of three, I obviously took my daughters to see this film, and we all loved it. Is the plot on par with Shakespeare? No. Was the writing a little simplistic? Sure. But do I still believe that this movie was worth all the money and work that it took to make? Absolutely.

It's these types of children's movies that truly bring me joy as a father. Though you claim that the plot was nowhere to be found, my girls found it easy to understand and follow. And yes, I bought them toys from the movie, but even as I'm typing, I can hear them playing in the next room, using their imaginations to the full, writing their own stories with these characters.

These kids don't have degrees in film criticism and certainly don't understand what a cliché is, but *Centaurs in the City* helped them think about simple lessons in imagination and empathy that we adults take for granted—particularly when we write harsh reviews of movies that other people enjoy.

Please stop discouraging people, especially parents, from seeing this movie. While I understand it is not to your particular taste, there is still great value to be found in this film, and I challenge you to take a page from the Thunder Blessing Centaur's philosophy and find some empathy for the kids that loved this movie.



Tips for Scenario 7

- The writer, Sanderson Bently, is introduced in the background information as a 'seasoned film critic', which presents him as someone with a level of experience and expertise. This positions him as being respected and trusted by his readers, through their familiarity with his reviews in his weekly column.
- Note the structure of the review, and how the writer builds towards a call to action that targets an audience of parents in particular. While ostensibly a review of the film, barely a quarter of the text actually discusses the content of the movie itself – the rest is devoted to criticising the commercialism that Bently views as a driving force in the film industry.
- Consider the writer's language choices and how he positions the film studios as cynical and money-driven. The opening of the film is compared to 'a generic desktop background', and described as 'consumerist rubbish' and a 'mockery of a movie', with the studios only interested in 'the millions of dollars in merchandise'. Bently is direct and scathing in his assessment of the motivations of the film studios, and he contrasts their financial motives with the innocence of the children they are targeting, who he depicts as 'vulnerable minds' and 'mindless drones' in order to suggest that such films are not just bad, but developmentally damaging. This appeal to fear seeks to tap into his audience's desire to protect and nurture their children.
- The writer of the comment presents a starkly different viewpoint, calling on his experience as one of the parents Bently has targeted in his review. Note the use of short questions and answers at the beginning of his comment, as he rebuts several of the concerns that Bently raises. The commenter acknowledges the film's limitations, but positions readers to see Bently as a snob who has missed the point of the film – that it is aimed at children!

SECTION C – Argument and persuasive language**Scenario 8: Stop social media censorship****Instructions for Section C**

Section C requires students to write an analysis of the ways in which argument and language are used to persuade others to share a point(s) of view.

Read the background information on this page and the material on pages 34 and 35, and write an analytical response to the task below.

For the purposes of this task, the term ‘language’ refers to written, spoken and visual language.

Your response will be assessed according to the assessment criteria set out on page 3 of this book.

Section C is worth one-third of the total marks for the examination.

Task

Write an analysis of the ways in which argument and written and visual language are used in the material on pages 34 and 35 to try to persuade others to share the points of view presented.

Background information

A group of academics, concerned over the rise of censorship in social media, penned the following open letter directed towards tech companies. The letter was published in the opinion section of a national newspaper.

Stop Social Media Censorship

As social media continues to have a dangerous stranglehold over various facets of our lives, questions about the role of these platforms in regulating speech have become increasingly urgent. In a world where we're constantly confronted by misleading media coverage, out-of-context quotes and outright fabrications, trying to tell fact from fiction poses a greater challenge than at any other point in our history. Amidst this chaos, pressure mounts on those corporations who control the internet to 'deal with' the current epidemic of misinformation. We strongly feel, however, that these well-intentioned cries for social media companies to serve as ambassadors for truth represent a dangerous shift in the nature of online discourse, and could have dire consequences for freedom of speech and the democratic principles we hold so dear. It is vital that we do not allow what we can and cannot say to be dictated by others, and especially not by social media corporations.

Of course, the very first stumbling block is that it is clearly not just impractical but impossible for social media sites such as Facebook, frequented as they are by hundreds of millions of people around the world daily, to effectively police content. The owners of these sites clearly understand this impracticality as well. To combat the problem of false information being circulated, the 'solution' that these sites have devised is to use algorithms trained to automatically flag and delete any content deemed 'misleading'. It isn't feasible to have actual humans monitor all content, so a level of automation is necessary – but algorithms are not always reliable judges of truth. You hardly have to search far for stories of algorithms doling out bans indiscriminately, incapable of differentiating between fact and fiction. Take, for instance, the story of Canadian farmers having their photos of onions banned, presumably because Facebook's algorithm for detecting bannable content had, in its infinite wisdom, deemed them 'inappropriate'.



Both arising from and contributing to this issue, social media policies regarding what qualifies as misleading news, and how vigorously social media companies should pursue the removal of offending content, are in a constant state of flux. Different sites tackle the issue in different ways and rules are constantly changing in response to shifting attitudes. This uncertainty makes sharing any controversial content a risky venture. This in turn has grave repercussions for the free and open sharing of information, which is the very foundation of the internet. Misguided attempts to censor free speech on social media platforms are a clear attack on our ideals. As academics devoted to preserving society, we feel strongly that silencing those we disagree with, no matter how troubling their ideas might be, puts the intellectual health of our country at serious risk.

Algorithms and their function can never be separated from the people who create them. While it can be reassuring to believe that these programs are impartial judges, this could not be further from the truth. Unconscious biases inevitably seep in like insidious toxins, preventing any attempt at an unbiased form of content-checking. The attitudes and beliefs of those responsible for creating these algorithms shape the information they target. Are we really happy to allow the billionaire owners of tech companies, who represent a tiny, privileged minority, to decide what information is ‘safe’ for the general public to be exposed to?

But the problems run deeper than just an inability to police content. Even if there was some magical way in which content moderation could be done effectively and in an unbiased manner, the strategy of censorship would still have serious repercussions. A 2019 *Nature* study suggests that while censorship can limit the spread of fake news, it can also lead to individuals abandoning mainstream social media platforms in favour of ‘dark pools’ where they become further radicalised. It’s easy to see why. If people feel that they are limited in the sort of content they can share, and that free and open discussion is a privilege no longer available to them, who can blame them for seeking greener pastures? Would any of us act differently, if offered the choice between the battleground that many social media platforms have become, and a place where we can not only freely participate in sharing ideas but even find support for our beliefs? And people most certainly *do* feel that they are unfairly targeted on the basis of their beliefs: a recent survey by a prominent research centre showed that three in four Australians feel that political viewpoints are being censored by social media sites. It seems inevitable that rather than leading to the utopia that idealistic supporters of strict censorship dream of, further crackdowns on misleading news will instead lead to nothing more than large-scale radicalisation.

We believe passionately that the free flow of information is vital for a healthy society. It is impossible for people to be good citizens with informed and rational opinions if they are shielded from important ideas because some faceless corporation or invisible algorithm has decided they are too controversial. We call on tech companies to abandon useless and patronising attempts to ‘protect’ us by censoring content on social media sites.

Signed,

Professor J White, Ahmed Naidoo, Dr Lisa Lu, Nicholas Tomic, Sandra Collins, Carolina Mendez and BT Chan.



Tips for Scenario 8

- *Careful reading of the background information is particularly important here. It highlights that the open letter is written by 'a group of academics'. Take note of this. The letter includes extensive use of the pronoun 'we', which students often associate with inclusive language. Here it is being used to refer to the group of writers, rather than as an attempt to include the audience. It highlights an important distinction in the way pronouns are used – not all uses of 'we' and 'us' are inclusive language!*
- *Note the calm tone and formal register used throughout the piece; this is fitting given the identity of the authors and the form of the text. It approaches the issue in a reasoned, sustained and logical manner, introducing the context and contention at the beginning, then exploring a series of supporting arguments, before concluding with a call to action.*
- *Make sure that you understand what an open letter is, as that will influence your understanding of the audience. An open letter is a letter that is addressed to a particular person or group – in this case 'tech companies' – but is intended for publication in a newspaper, journal or magazine. This means that while tech companies are named as the audience in the background information, you also need to consider how the writers aim to appeal to a wider audience of national newspaper readers as well.*
- *While on the surface the text may appear not to be overtly biased, note the ways that the authors use language to position readers to agree that social media companies should not be policing content. The power of social media is presented as alarming and widespread; this is suggested through phrases such as 'dangerous stranglehold', 'chaos', and 'epidemic of misinformation'. Companies are presented as being run by 'billionaire owners' who oversee an 'invisible algorithm'. The language positions the wider readership to view the tech companies as motivated by their own nefarious desires, rather than altruistic intent.*

SECTION C – Argument and persuasive language**Scenario 9: Time to make time for cyber safety****Instructions for Section C**

Section C requires students to write an analysis of the ways in which argument and language are used to persuade others to share a point(s) of view.

Read the background information on this page and the material on pages 38 and 39, and write an analytical response to the task below.

For the purposes of this task, the term ‘language’ refers to written, spoken and visual language.

Your response will be assessed according to the assessment criteria set out on page 3 of this book.

Section C is worth one-third of the total marks for the examination.

Task

Write an analysis of the ways in which argument and written and visual language are used in the material on pages 38 and 39 to try to persuade others to share the points of view presented.

Background information

Chris Sparrow, a concerned parent who is part of the online Coralville High School Parent Group, has written a blog post on cyber safety. His post is followed by a comment from another member of the group.

Time to make time for cyber safety

by Chris Sparrow

There's no denying that the high school experience our kids face is unrecognisable in comparison to the one we went through.

There's no lugging about heavy books to the library – they do their studies on laptops and tablets. No more learning how to reference – there are apps for that – and even classrooms, as we learned last year, are becoming redundant. Students' work, their hobbies, their social lives, all revolve around screens. Everything is quick, convenient, and virtual.

And I don't envy them one bit.

Kids these days face a minefield of online hurdles that our generation never had to worry about. When I was in school, if someone was being aggressive or mean, there were opportunities for that behaviour to be corrected. There was nowhere to hide. Now, children are learning to hurt each other in secret – and we haven't adapted with the times in order to stop them before the damage is done.

The online world is full of anonymity, false information and permanency, which makes everything about being a student much more difficult to navigate. As a parent, I can't help but feel panicked every time my son logs in to his iPad to do his homework. I can't help but wonder ... is the article he's reading for his research project on world politics going to lead him to a violent conspiracy site? Are the silly videos that he makes with his friends going to haunt him as he grows older and starts to search for a job? And the chat window he has open ... is it a harmless chat, or is it full of unfounded rumours and cruelty that's chipping away at his mental health?

And the truth is, I have no way to monitor any of this without invading my son's privacy. And maybe not even then!

By now, many of you will have heard of the vicious case of bullying that rocked the school last month, ending in three expulsions and one transfer to another school. While our school community was horrified that this had been allowed to escalate as much as it did, should we really have been all that surprised?



But of course, it wasn't really the fault of any teachers, or even parents, at Coralville High. No one knew about the rumours, threats, and harassment except for the kids. And because it was all hidden on their phones, most of the kids themselves didn't even know where the bullying was coming from.

That's why I propose we lobby the school board to incorporate responsible internet usage into their junior years' Health curriculum. We need to teach our children how to protect themselves online and – just as importantly – how to conduct themselves and treat each other with as much respect as they do in real life.

Our kids are growing up in an increasingly digitised world and it's up to us to give them the tools they need to deal with it. We've all seen adults treat each other abhorrently in online spaces. That in itself should prove the necessity of teaching people vital online communication skills while they're young.

If you care about your child's cyber safety as much as I do, join me at 6p.m. on Monday night to discuss this further. We can, and will, make a difference.

Comment

Chris, I've always appreciated the work you do for the school community, and I definitely agree that something needs to change after that horrific cyberbullying case. However, I do think you've missed the mark on this one.

The problem isn't that kids don't know how to conduct themselves online. Those Year 9 students knew exactly what they were doing. Why else would they have so diligently covered their tracks? The problem is that there is hardly any enforceable regulation in place to stop them.

We do not forget how to be decent, respectful human beings once we set foot online. But chuck in a fake name, or an encrypted messaging system, and many seem to think they can act however they want, with little to no consequence. And that's because most of the time, they can!

I'm not just talking about teenagers here. You've said yourself that adults treat each other abhorrently online, and according to guardchild.com, almost 90% of teenagers have witnessed people being cruel or mean to each other on the internet. Though I understand why a subject on internet etiquette might seem valuable, the fact is that kids learn from adults. And if we tell them they need to be nice online, when they're constantly seeing grown-ups hurl abuse at each other in the comments of whichever platform you care to choose, I won't blame them when our words go in one ear and out the other.

If we really want to build a safe online community, we need to call for stronger legislation against online abuse. We need to call out abusive behaviour when we see it, and we need to teach our children that no matter where it happens, there will always be consequences to bullying.

Renee Tam



Tips for Scenario 9

- *The background information identifies a specific audience for these texts, 'the Coralville High School Parent Group'. Notice how Chris Sparrow targets parents throughout his piece, aiming to create fear by highlighting the difference between the current 'high school experience' and the one they had, positioning parents as unfamiliar with, and unprepared for, the challenges their children are facing. By creating a perception of helplessness, he positions his fellow parents to be open to his suggestion that someone else – in this case the school board – needs to take action to protect their children.*
- *Consider how the included photograph connects to Sparrow's argument that children need help to navigate the online environment. The solitary child in the image appears downhearted and unhappy, and she is surrounded by darkness. She is shown to be transfixed by the light of the laptop, the screen of which is hidden from view. Given that Sparrow is targeting parents as his audience, this aims to appeal to parents' fears of being unable to protect their children, and feeling 'in the dark' about what their children are accessing online.*
- *Renee Tam's response positions the issue in a wider context, as she suggests there is more need for a coordinated solution that includes teenagers, adults and the government. Consider how she shifts the responsibility away from the school, and targets the audience of parents by highlighting the role that they play in influencing their children's online behaviour. Note that she does, however, stop short of blaming parents outright, by ultimately suggesting that 'stronger legislation' is needed; thus she seeks to lessen the risk of alienating her target audience.*
- *Note that both writers agree that action is needed to combat current online behaviour and to increase cyber safety within the school community; however, Sparrow and Tam suggest employing markedly different methods to achieve this. The contrast between the two can be described as a 'carrot' approach versus a 'stick' approach. Sparrow favours a 'carrot', by teaching students the right things to do, and encouraging positive behaviour, whereas Tam suggests a more punitive style, with legislation and consequences for those who transgress accepted behaviours.*

SECTION C – Argument and persuasive language**Scenario 10: Three big reasons to colonise Mars – number three will shock you!****Instructions for Section C**

Section C requires students to write an analysis of the ways in which argument and language are used to persuade others to share a point(s) of view.

Read the background information on this page and the material on pages 42 and 43, and write an analytical response to the task below.

For the purposes of this task, the term ‘language’ refers to written, spoken and visual language.

Your response will be assessed according to the assessment criteria set out on page 3 of this book.

Section C is worth one-third of the total marks for the examination.

Task

Write an analysis of the ways in which argument and written and visual language are used in the material on pages 42 and 43 to try to persuade others to share the points of view presented.

Background information

The following article on why we should invest in establishing a colony on Mars was first published on *Science is Super* by Natasha O’Meara, a regular contributor.

Three big reasons to colonise Mars – number three will shock you!

by Natasha O'Meara



It's undeniable that Mars holds a special place in our collective psyche. Books, films and TV shows have all grappled with the idea of a sort of interstellar Manifest Destiny, a fundamental need to go beyond the confines of our current home for the sake of our species. The lure of Mars is undeniable. So why deny it?

Some of the greatest minds of their age, from Stephen Hawking to Carl Sagan, have expressed their support for colonising Mars. At a recent meeting in Houston, the centre of space research, sixty prominent scientists who are experts in their fields reached a similar conclusion: colonising Mars isn't just a flight of fancy or a project for the distant future; it's a necessity, a vital step for humanity to take.

Of course, it's understandable that there's a certain reluctance to commit to a project like this. For the average person, it's easy to look at some of the numbers floated: figures in the billions, trillions even, a scale of spending that's difficult to comprehend for most people. Why not spend this money on tangibly improving the lives of people now, instead of on some far-off goal that won't bear fruit for a long time, if it does at all?

But the magnitude of the importance that successful missions to Mars could have for our species cannot be understated. Furthermore, benefits won't just be confined to the distant future; efforts to colonise Mars will have practical benefits here and now, too.

Here are three reasons why humans should colonise Mars:

1. The future of our species could depend on it

Experts agree that relying solely on Earth to sustain and maintain our continued existence is a recipe for disaster. The reality is that humans have been on Earth for a fraction of its existence: the blink of an eye, in a cosmic sense. Even with our limited knowledge, history is littered with examples of species coming and going; the dinosaurs, for instance, were wiped out by an asteroid with nowhere else to go.

If we could escape the confines of our home planet, however, we would drastically increase our chances of survival. And this wouldn't just safeguard against external threats like asteroids. It would also prevent us from destroying the only planet we have ever called home.

And the best part is, we don't even need to go trawling through galaxies trillions of light years away, desperately searching for somewhere habitable; Mars is right next door. Many scientists agree that Mars would make a perfect place for sustained human life; it meets many of the criteria we could hope our future home to meet. By colonising it, we would guarantee that the human race will endure. And if we know all this, is there any reason not to devote our resources to doing so?

2. There could be alien life

Have you ever contemplated the existence of aliens? I think almost all of us, at one point or another, have wondered what it would be like to discover tangible proof of alien life. It would represent perhaps the most important scientific breakthrough of all time. And Mars has a very real chance of holding the key to this discovery.

Of course, to properly search for life on Mars, it's vital that we get people up there. While it can be tempting to assume that we're better off letting robots do our dirty work, in reality humans are far better suited to discovery than even the best spacecraft explorers. If we want to plumb Mars' depths for its secrets, we've got to start getting people there.

There's even conjecture that life on Earth originated on Mars. Scientists have suggested that life may have come here from there via interstellar debris, such as rocks. These rocks may have contained early life, and, jettisoned from their original home of Mars, come to Earth.

Unfortunately, there's been no concrete evidence found on our planet to support this theory. If anything, however, this just further intensifies the need to properly explore Mars. While we have yet to see signs of extraterrestrial life, there's every reason to think that we're simply looking in the wrong place – or planet.

3. It could materially benefit life on Earth now

Far from being a distraction from bettering life for everyone on Earth, efforts to colonise Mars would almost certainly provide substantial benefits to our day-to-day lives here and now. That's because extending the limits of our horizons and striding forth into space are likely to lead to discoveries that will improve life on Earth. Pouring resources into the colonisation of Mars needn't be thought of in terms of how it might one day help us; it can benefit us much more immediately. Scientific history is full of examples of such breakthroughs.

Take, for instance, the microwave. Originally called the Radarange, the microwave's invention stems from an accident. A radar technician experimenting with electromagnetic waves stumbled upon an incredible discovery – these electromagnetic waves could be used to heat food. A now indispensable household item was the result of advancements in a seemingly unrelated field.

It's an amazingly serendipitous story, and one of many life-changing discoveries that have come about as a result of humanity's drive to push itself to its limits. This story perfectly demonstrates the overlap between various fields; advancements in one area invariably benefit many others.

Moreover, not only will these myriad advancements likely prove beneficial to our health and wellbeing, they also provide us with fuel for our hopes and dreams. As demonstrated by the growing number of scientists investing time and effort into making the colonisation of Mars a reality, the prospect of being part of future space expeditions looms large in the minds of many. This could prompt future generations to take a similar interest, increasing the number of talented individuals dedicating their time to helping secure humanity's future.

The above reasons should illustrate why it's vital we commit now to going to Mars. The benefits are undeniable. So why wait?



Tips for Scenario 10

- *The background information indicates that this material is published online – this is suggested by reference to it being published ‘on’ Science is Super. Note how the writer uses a typical ‘clickbait’ strategy in the title of their piece, stating that ‘number three will shock you’. This is designed to encourage people to click on the article and read through to the end to discover the allegedly surprising ‘big reason’.*
- *The image centres on a human form on a different planet, illustrating the colonisation of Mars that Natasha O’Meara deems necessary. Consider the impact of using an image that only shows the back of the human, rather than the face. This enables the author to position the colonisation as a purely human endeavour, rather than one specific to a particular race or gender. Readers, regardless of their background, are thus able to envisage themselves as being in that spacesuit on Mars. In this case, the absence of specific identifying physical features in the photograph assists O’Meara in appealing to a wider audience.*
- *Consider the effect of O’Meara’s ordering of the reasons for colonising Mars, and how these reasons work to position readers. As noted above, her title suggests that the third reason is the most significant, and it is certainly the most tangible and relatable to readers. The first two reasons are more aspirational or future-focused – while the survival of the human race and the possibility of alien life may attract keen scientists, an actual present-day benefit to life has the potential to connect with a wider audience.*
- *The article is published on Science is Super, so consider the target audience. Given the specific focus of the website, it is likely that the majority of readers have an existing interest in, and knowledge of, science. However, it is not aimed at an intellectual or highly specific audience, as the language and content are still straightforward and accessible. Note how O’Meara includes references to two well-known scientists, Stephen Hawking and Carl Sagan.*

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Sample student response for Scenario 1

In response to recent discussions surrounding the inclusion of a Years 7–10 ‘life skills’ class, the student representative council at Olympus High School published, to accompany their petition, an open letter titled ‘The Olympus High Student Representative Council needs your help!’ The letter employs an urgent yet ultimately hopeful tone, contending that dedicated life skills classes would help students succeed in their professional and personal lives. The council appeals to their audience of fellow students with the aim of moving them to sign the petition, thus enabling the group to present it to the school board for approval.

From the outset, the council adopts an insistent, critical tone intended to motivate their audience to consider the outdated nature of the current school system. The piece begins with the repetition of the phrase ‘something is wrong’; paired with the use of the inclusive ‘our’, this positions the audience to see themselves as victims of a ‘wrong’ and potentially harmful school system. This attack is followed by the flippant remark that ‘something is wrong when students know Pythagoras’ theorem’ instead of how to lodge a tax return, suggesting that the curriculum is impractical and not useful. The SRC then supports this remark with a satirical meme depicting two shapes and makes a sarcastic comparison between learning basic geometry and how to do taxes – a humorous appeal to logic that seeks to reinforce the notion that the curriculum ‘should be focused on the skills we need to succeed’. In this way, the image and its caption work with the main text to appeal to the audience’s sense of reason, as they are encouraged to recognise the skills needed ‘in the professional world’ and pursue change to their curriculum accordingly. Additionally, the inclusion of the fact that ‘the government recognises the importance of developing ... resilience’, paired with the rhetorical ‘so why doesn’t Olympus High?’, aims to evoke guilt in the school community, and ultimately the school board, who are responsible for enforcing the ‘teaching and learning program’. By creating a dichotomy between the government and Olympus High, the SRC encourages students to view the Olympus High curriculum, with its omission of practical life skills, as outdated and potentially harmful to their ‘emotional, mental, spiritual and physical wellbeing’. This suggests that damage is being done to students, evoking anxiety in the reader and reinforcing the sense that urgent change is required.

The SRC expands on their criticism of Olympus High’s current curriculum, remarking that ‘the school seems to think ... group projects in Science classes [are] enough to ... develop our communication’, thus positioning their audience to question the school’s ability to integrate life skills into the curriculum. The phrase ‘seems to think’ casts doubt on the reliability and credibility of their classes, while the sharp, short, critical ‘but this is not enough’ positions students to become alarmed at the lack of action evidenced by the school’s failure to modernise lessons. This sense of fear, in turn, is intended to create a desire for change among students. After outlining the current flaws of Olympus High’s classes, the council proposes a solution to the lack of a practical ‘teaching and learning program’, declaring that ‘at least once per month a dedicated class [will] be held’ and following this with ‘and could be held at lunchtime’. In proposing a solution that works with the existing curriculum, the council positions their audience to see them as considered, mature and practical, developing a reasonable tone with which other students might empathise.

The letter then provides some supporting evidence, in the form of statistics from the Black Dog Institute, of the need for life skills classes. Drawing on external research lends the letter a sense of authority and reliability which, paired with the use of the inclusive ‘our’, invites the students to see themselves as part of the cohort requiring ‘practical strategies for dealing with stress’. To counter concerns the statistics will likely generate, the letter presents an image of one possible stress-management strategy. Together with the claim that such classes are ‘an investment in our long-term mental and emotional wellbeing’, the image of students meditating builds on an optimistic tone harnessed by the council, designed to evoke a sense of

hope that curriculum change may produce ‘long-term’ benefits. The students in the image seem calm and peaceful, their smiling faces and relaxed postures reinforcing the association between wellbeing and non-traditional classes. The brightness of the image evokes a sense of serenity, encouraging the audience to want to share in the benefits of practices such as meditation. The claim that ‘there is hope’ works with the image to portray life skills classes as a positive addition to the school program: one that would provide immediate psychological benefits to Olympus High students.

Expanding upon the proposed widespread benefits of life skills classes, the SRC cites a 2019 academic study in order to strengthen their claim that parents share the desire for a revised curriculum incorporating practical skills. In this way, the letter seeks to appeal to a secondary audience – the adult members of the school board – who are responsible for the approval and establishment of the life classes. In claiming ‘our school system has not kept up’ with ‘modern-day economic pressures’, the student council seeks to evoke a sense of guilt among school board members for failing to adapt to changing educational needs and demands, while encouraging an element of reflection and openness to change. Through this, the committee positions the school board to deeply consider the needs and views of not only students but also the parents who ultimately enrol their children at Olympus High, thus reinforcing the notion that life skills classes would be beneficial to the school community as a whole.

In closing, the student representative council addresses their audience directly in an attempt to solidify a personal connection and reinforce the idea of a shared need for life skills classes in the Olympus High curriculum. The council develops an enthusiastic and eager tone with their plea for students to receive ‘the best possible opportunity’ to succeed, reiterating the long-term benefits of the ‘practical’ classes. These positive adjectives evoke a sense of hope in the reader, positioning them to feel favourably towards the proposal. Additionally, through the direct appeal to ‘ask your parents to do so too’, the council pushes students to recognise that although they may be limited by the current curriculum, they also have the power to make a positive change. This call to action is then furthered through the letter’s final line of ‘let’s try to get at least 100 signatures’, with the phrase ‘at least’ carrying hopeful, motivational connotations, inspiring students to take action in order to ‘thrive in the adult world’.

Sample student response for Scenario 2

Appearing on the research-based news and analysis website *The Conversation*, the article ‘One cat, one year, 110 native animals ...’ brings together research from 66 different studies to support the argument that pet cats should be kept indoors at all times in order to protect native wildlife. While the article was written by a team of academics and professors, the use of accessible language throughout is intended to reach a broad readership, with the key target audience being cat owners, and particularly those who allow their pets to roam outdoors.

Unsurprisingly for an article with an academic context, the piece relies heavily on statistics, data and research findings. Sobering figures are introduced throughout, such as ‘each roaming pet cat kills 186 reptiles, birds and mammals per year, most of them native to Australia’. This underscores the reliability and specialist knowledge of the writers, encouraging readers to accept the writers’ opinions as well-informed and supported by other experts on the subject matter. While the heavy use of facts and figures helps to make their argument appear objective, the writers are certainly not dispassionate or detached. Their tone is firm and uncompromising throughout. Indeed, recognising that an onslaught of data can be dry, this information is frequently supplemented with evocative language to keep readers engaged. Use of emotive phrases such as ‘wreaking havoc’, ‘the results are staggering’, ‘extraordinary level of predation’, ‘the stakes are especially high’ and, in the article title, ‘killing machine’ underscores the scale and urgency of the problem, priming the reader to take action.

The structure of the piece conforms to appropriate conventions for a research-based article, using subheadings to guide the reader, and laying the argument out logically. The first paragraph, for example, broadly outlines the issue, with the first sentence relying on inclusive language and the assumed shared knowledge that feral cats have long been acknowledged as pests. While readers may be reluctant to view their own pets as ‘killing machines’, the writers here anticipate little resistance to the idea that cats in the wild pose a risk to wildlife. This uncontroversial opening therefore allows the writers to make a deft segue into their main argument – ‘pet cats are wreaking havoc too’ – without prompting defensiveness from the reader.

The following subheadings (‘Surely not my cat’ and ‘Urban cats’) then work to undermine any cognitive dissonance that would allow readers to accept feral cats as a risk to wildlife while refuting the same charge against domestic cats. ‘Urban cats’, for example, encourages readers to reassess their way of thinking by pointing out that different roaming areas and densities mean that ‘per square kilometre per year, pet cats kill 30–50 times more animals than feral cats in the bush’. Likewise, ‘Surely not my cat’ anticipates and contests the potential counterargument from cat owners that their pets do not hunt. These strategies are supported by the image accompanying the piece, showing a cat with its paw pressed against the lifeless form of a bird. The photo is positioned alongside the opening paragraph, which confronts readers with the image from their first glance. As the cat appears clean and well taken care of, we can assume this is a domestic cat. The light colour of the bird suggests that it may be rare or native, and its size underscores its vulnerability and evokes sympathy from the reader. This is supported by use of phrases such as ‘roam and hunt’ to undermine the perception of domestic cats as harmless, repositioning them as predators.

Having presented an array of data and statistics that align pet cats with their feral equivalents, and having pre-empted potential counterarguments from pet owners, the writers put forth the only logical solution for cat owners: ‘keep them inside’. By referring to those who do this already as ‘responsible pet owners’, the writers do not need to directly call out owners of the ‘2.7 million pet cats – 71% of all pet cats – [who] are able to roam and hunt’. The implicit meaning is clear: these owners are irresponsible. This jab works to create a sense of guilt for any readers who own cats and currently do not keep them contained. This is supported by the inclusive phrasing ‘most of us want to see native wildlife around towns and cities’, which

appeals to readers' sense of community. Likewise, a later appeal to patriotism – 'Compared to many other countries, the Australian public are more aware of how cats threaten native wildlife' – positions Australians as uniquely attuned to the dangers posed to our wildlife and suggests we are a population with an interest in environmental conservation. These appeals work together to create an image of Australians as united, both in a wider sociopolitical sense and on a more micro neighbourhood level. To disagree with the argument put forward would then place pet owners in opposition to the broader goals and interests of their community.

However, the writers appear to acknowledge that there is little point appealing to pet owners' sense of guilt without offering a solution. The section under the subheading 'What can pet owners do?' reiterates the writers' contention that 24-hour containment is the only available option to cat owners, and again the writers anticipate and rebut potential counterarguments. While feeding a cat more or placing a bell on its collar may reduce its urge to hunt or its effectiveness as a hunter, the only way to prevent hunting completely is to keep it inside. The evidence presented thus far may be enough to convince non-pet-owning readers. But to ensure they are reaching those cat owners who may feel uncomfortable keeping their pets indoors, the writers include a final appeal focusing on the benefits of containment for cats themselves: it protects them from injury and unwanted breeding; it prevents them from fighting with other cats; and it prevents the spread of disease. As the primary target audience of this article and potentially the hardest to reach, the writers end their piece with a strong appeal to the interests of cat owners resistant to indoor lifestyles for their pets. The article concludes with an acknowledgement that to keep one's pets indoors may be challenging, but again that not doing so is irresponsible and dangerous.

Emphasising their reliability as experts in the field, the writers compile a vast array of evidence to support their contention that cats must be kept inside to protect local ecosystems. These figures and statistical evidence are supplemented with powerful, evocative phrases and various emotional appeals which seek to reposition domestic cats in the minds of readers as predators rather than just pets. Combining these approaches, the article appeals directly to pet owners who do not currently keep their cats contained – the key demographic who can make a difference to this issue.

Sample student response for Scenario 3

Concerned about ‘consumerism gone mad’, Athena, a young professional woman, has decided to take a different approach to choosing Christmas gifts. She gives an informal speech to her family when they gather for their Christmas meal, handing out personalised cards to each person while she speaks. Each card includes a flyer for one of Athena’s ‘favourite charity organisations’, which advocates making a donation as a form of gift giving. Athena explains in a humorous and passionate tone why she has decided she won’t be ‘buying stuff for presents anymore’, and earnestly seeks to convince her family to agree that her approach to gifts is both more meaningful and less wasteful than traditional presents.

Athena begins by addressing her audience directly and in some cases individually. She acknowledges how much she loves Christmas and refers to her family’s Christmas traditions, including her father’s custard and ‘the traditional Lee family lawn bowls tournament’. This establishes a warm and affectionate connection with her audience and clarifies that her break from the tradition of buying gifts is not a rejection of Christmas or all its traditions. Instead, she presents it as entirely in keeping with the ‘time of giving’, a familiar expression that all her family will know and relate to, and as part of her search to find ‘better ways to show ... love’. In this way she aims to reassure her family and overcome any initial resistance to her ideas or potential disappointment they may feel.

As she continues, Athena emphasises the positive aspects of the gifts she has chosen, encouraging her audience to see these as no less caring or beneficial than conventional presents. She outlines the various alternative gifts she has chosen, focusing on the care and thought that she put into each one. Her ‘experience gifts’ and ‘IOU vouchers’ are tailored to each recipient, and she demonstrates this by highlighting some of her choices – a ‘high tea’ for her grandmother, ‘weeding the garden’ for her mother and sewing for the twins. Moreover, Athena explains the ways in which these gifts offer various sources of pleasure and enjoyment, just as conventional presents do, again forestalling any reservations in her audience. Athena’s gifts that take the form of ‘contributions ... to a bunch of different charities’ are less obviously sources of pleasure for their recipients, so she describes these using positive expressions such as ‘you will love knowing’ to suggest these too will bring happiness to her family members, as well as to those who will benefit more directly from the donation.

Having reassured her audience that she has still provided meaningful gifts for each person, Athena goes on to reinforce the advantages of these gifts – particularly the donations – through an ethical argument, using words such as ‘responsibility’ and ‘duty’ just as she had used words such as ‘fun stuff’ and ‘happy’ in the first part of her speech. She asks her family to recognise that they ‘have a responsibility to understand our privilege’ and share their ‘financial and social wealth’, appealing to their sense of community and obligations, as well as their power to do good. In this way she combines the happiness attached to gift giving and receiving with a sense of ethical or moral duty. She repeats the inclusive ‘we’ – ‘we have plenty of food, we have jobs, we have homes’ – creating a sense of shared privilege, encouraging all her family members to feel that they too should consider presents within a wider social context, and making Athena’s actions seem less extreme or peculiar.

The wider benefits of making a donation as a gift are also conveyed by the flyer for Level Up. The text within the flyer suggests that a donation ‘really matters’ and will help build ‘a better world for all of us’, reinforcing the ethical appeals in Athena’s speech. The visual language adds to the positive messaging, through images of hearts, hands being raised, and the repetition of ‘help’ in large capitals. The flourishing tree full of hands and gently rolling hills create a peaceful feeling, building on the idea of ‘helping hands’ solving problems; some of these problems are identified in much smaller text, suggesting that these issues, though serious, can be overcome through positive action. The varied colours of the hands also convey

the idea of an inclusive, diverse community that can be fostered through ethical gift giving. The overall impression is that a calmer and more caring world ‘for all of us’ can be created.

In the central part of her argument Athena moves on from her positive messages about community and helping others to strongly question the morality of consumerism as well as the waste associated with having ‘THINGS’ and ‘STUFF’; the capital letters reinforce the sense of excess and even greed she attaches to material possessions. She passionately asks her audience to consider the bigger social issues of ‘environmental costs’, ‘ethical sustainability’ and the ‘treatment of workers’. She addresses her family’s potential rejoinder that they are ‘supporting local small business’ by reminding them that this too has a cost in terms of both money and time. She then reiterates her central point that she is ‘not buying stuff for presents anymore’. This negative representation of gift buying – characterised by ‘wasting’, ‘panicking’ and ‘ridiculously high fees’ – positions her audience to think critically about their own actions and to question behaviour that might have seemed normal or even virtuous, making them more receptive to Athena’s own approach.

Once Athena establishes the reasons for her decision she explains to her family how they can also benefit. She points out that they do not need to ‘pretend’ to appreciate her gifts, and gives examples of situations where gifts can sometimes miss the mark. This return to a humorous tone diffuses the defensive tension that her audience may be feeling, demonstrating her understanding that her attack on consumerism could be taken as a criticism of her family’s decision to buy Christmas gifts.

Athena’s tone is scathing when she discusses consumer culture in the central part of her speech, but she frames this with a happy, confident and often humorous tone at the start and at the end, recognising that her family might find it difficult to accept her ‘choice for this year’. She concludes by inviting her audience to ‘get that tournament going!’, effectively bringing the focus back to the ‘traditional’ aspects of the day, with which she also began her speech, reassuring her family that she does not wish to do away with Christmas traditions altogether. By reminding her family of the important aspects of the Christmas celebration she provides some perspective, positioning them to acknowledge their privilege and recognise the value of finding new and more meaningful ways to share their good fortune.

Sources: metamorworks/Shutterstock.com (p.7)

‘One cat, one year, 110 native animals: lock up your pet, it’s a killing machine’ by Jaana Dielenberg, Brett Murphy, Chris Dickman, John Woinarski, Leigh-Ann Woolley, Mike Calver and Sarah Legge, originally published in *The Conversation* (pp.10–11)

forestpath/Shutterstock.com (p.10)

Cienpies Design/Shutterstock.com (p.15), adapted from

“‘Good luck fella, stay safe’: a snake catcher explains why our fear of brown snakes is misplaced’ by Gavin JD Smith, originally published in *The Conversation* (pp.18–19)

Duplass/Shutterstock.com (p.19)

‘Should we be raising our kids on fairy tales?’ by Baz Macdonald, originally published on *The Spinoff* (pp.22–23)

Pushkin/Shutterstock.com (p.22)

‘Well, our panel of teachers failed your essay – but remember, it’s the viewers’ votes that count ...’ cartoon by Ian Baker (p.26)

metamorworks/Shutterstock.com (p.30)

Trifonenkolvan/Shutterstock.com (p.34)

Sam Wordley/Shutterstock.com (p.38)

Supamotion/Shutterstock (p.42)