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YEAR 12 *Trial Exam Paper*

2014

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Written examination

Sample responses

This book presents:

- high-level sample responses
- mark allocations
- tips for achieving top results

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SECTION A – Short-answer questions

Text 1

Question 1

Sample response

In this section of the text, both declarative ('In spots it was good' L3) and interrogative ('Wait Stephen Fry or just the audio book' L11) sentence types occur. Both of these sentence types are valuable to the social purpose of the text, which is for the participants to share information and opinions about the book they have read. The interrogative on L11 seeks to clarify a statement made by J. In addition, there is a phatic function to this text, in which participants can show an interest in one another by asking and responding to questions.

Mark allocation: 2 marks

- 1 mark for correct identification of both sentence types with accurate examples.
- 1 mark for appropriate connection to social purpose.

Question 2

Sample response

The pause on L13 ('Umm (..) what was it') occurs because J is word searching and the function of the pause is to provide the speaker with more time. In contrast, the pauses on L19 ('Just (.) don't (.) >>do it') create a dramatic effect and allow J to emphasise her point in a humorous way.

Mark allocation: 1 + 1 = 2 marks

- 1 mark for each correct explanation of function.

Question 3

Sample response

J relies on inference in L5 when she names the reader of her audio book, 'It was Stephen Fry too'. This requires J's listeners to have prior knowledge of the British actor Stephen Fry and the vocal qualities he would bring to a book reading.

Other answers might include:

- Prior knowledge of the books previously discussed and the way book club members felt about them ('Looking for Alaska' L13 and 'Fahrenheit 451' L18).
- Cultural understanding of Macintosh products and branding ('iTunes' L33, 'Apple' L53 and 'iPad' L66).

Mark allocation: 1 mark

- 1 mark for correct identification, example and explanation of inference in the text.

Question 4

Sample response

On L52, J slows the pace of her speech while simultaneously increasing her volume ('<I(..)TU:::NES>'). In this instance, she is mimicking the prosodic features that speakers use when explaining something to a person who does not understand them. This functions to make fun of T, who did not initially understand how J was accessing audio books. On L54, R uses an upward intonation as well as an elongation of sound ('Wha::t') to indicate that she is surprised by the utterance by T.

Other answers might include:

- L51 upward intonation ('Oh God/') to convey emotion of mock dismay.
- L55 stress/emphasis ('Ben') to draw attention to the person responsible for the decision.
- L59 and L60 upward intonation ('stuff/') to indicate continuing intonation unit and downward intonation ('thing\') to indicate final intonation.
- L61 upward intonation ('him/') to indicate interrogative sentence type.
- L61 stress/emphasis ('wrong') for dramatic effect and to signal the strength of the speaker's disagreement.

Mark allocation: 1 + 1 = 2 marks

- 1 mark for each correct prosodic feature supported by evidence and explanation.

Question 5

Sample response

On L62, B uses front focus ('As an Apple user for many years'). This serves to draw attention to B's expertise or experience in the field of Macintosh products and therefore adds further weight to the opinion she offers to the other participants.

Mark allocation: 2 marks

- 1 mark for correct identification of front focus.
- 1 mark for correct explanation of its function.

Question 6

Sample response

It is evident from the transcript that the speakers share a relationship characterised by close social distance (intimacy). For example, on L55 T refers to 'Ben' but does not see the need to pre-modify this name with a phrase such as 'my husband' or 'my partner'. This suggests that the participants are already familiar with or have met Ben. In addition, J makes reference to past books discussed by the group: 'Looking for Alaska' L13 and 'Fahrenheit 451' L18. This indicates that the interlocutors have been participating in the book club for some time. This is further supported by the collaborative way information about the second book is provided and T's initial reliance on deixis ('T: What about that fire one/' L17; 'J: Yeah Fahrenheit 451' L18). This further indicates shared knowledge between participants.

In addition, a high degree of solidarity is evident in the relationships. It is clear that the participants share attitudes about the books they read through the provision of encouragement when opinions are given. For example, on L5 J expresses her opinion that Stephen Fry was 'great' and this is supported by the overlapping minimal response of R 'That'd be great' L7 and T 'yeah' L8. Further solidarity is established through the discussion of 'Fahrenheit 451' in which R uses the plural personal pronoun 'we' L21 to summarise the group's shared opinion. She received encouragement in the form of laughter from both T and J '@@@' L24 and L25, as well as the minimal response from T 'yeah' L22. Solidarity is further established through the use of interrogative sentence types such as 'Did the speaker just get to you/' L16, which indicates the shared goal of participants to discuss their reading experiences.

The presence of verbal sparring between participants suggests that there is an equal relationship between them. Rapport is established by making fun of one another, such as on L38 when R asks T 'How old are you/'. Rather than taking offence, T responds by pretending to be unfamiliar with technology such as iTunes and the web (L39–43). Laughter from all four participants during this exchange indicates that the participants are comfortable with the equal distribution of power in the group.

Mark allocation: 6 marks

This question should be marked holistically, using the guide below.

- 6 to 5 marks: The response demonstrates a detailed knowledge of the topic and is supported by relevant examples and evidence from the text. Metalanguage is used appropriately and effectively. Features of written discourse are consistently used.
- 4 to 3 marks: The response demonstrates a sound knowledge of the topic and is supported by some examples and evidence from the text. The metalanguage used is relevant. Features of written discourse are mostly evident.
- 2 to 0 marks: The response demonstrates a limited knowledge of the topic and contains few examples and evidence from the text. The use of metalanguage is limited or absent. Few features of written discourse are evident.

**Tips**

- *Students may wish to draw on their response to earlier questions in this answer (for example, in the sample answer the writer includes reference to information elicited from Question 1).*
- *This question requires students to demonstrate a breadth of knowledge about the elements that make up relationships. Students should refer to at least two relationship elements (intimacy/social distance, equality/hierarchy, or solidarity) to demonstrate knowledge of the topic.*
- *To succeed in responding to this type of extended response question, it is also essential that students are able to make connections between the features that appear in the discourse and the various elements of relationships.*
- *It is important in broad questions such as these that students are able to introduce a range of ideas and provide explicit examples. Dealing with just one metalanguage term or concept is not sufficient.*

SECTION B – Analytical commentary

Text 2 and Text 3

Question 7

Sample response

The extracts from the ‘Australian Social Customs’ section of the Immigration Department’s website serve a referential function for potential or new migrants to Australia. The purpose of the texts is to provide information about Australian colloquialisms and celebrations, while also promoting Australian cultural values. The location of the texts within a government department website increases the degree of formality, and this is particularly evident through the features of coherence and cohesion and the presence of Standard Australian English. However, the domain of ‘colloquial language’ and the need to create a sense of solidarity with the intended audience results in some informal language features within the texts.

The degree of coherence and cohesion achieved in Text 2 and Text 3 establishes formality, as it is evident that care has been taken with the planning and logical ordering of the texts. The headings (L1 ‘What is some common Australian word usage’ and L31 ‘Why do we have days of celebrations and holiday?’) provide a clear indication of the content to follow, thus reinforcing the consistency of topic, logical connections, and sequencing of information within the texts. Coherence is further achieved through the use of hyperlinks (L30 ‘Australian slang’ and L33–37 ‘Australia Day ... Other important occasions’), which provide a way to navigate to relevant sections of the website for additional information. Lexical repetition reinforces the connections in the texts, ensuring that they are cohesive. For example, in Text 2 each Australian slang term is given as a heading (L12 ‘Arvo’) but then repeated in an illustrative sentence (L12 ‘drop by this arvo’). Lexical repetition also occurs in Text 3, where the name of the holiday is given first in a subheading (L52 ‘Melbourne Cup Day’) and then as a noun phrase at the beginning of the next sentence (L53 ‘Melbourne Cup Day happens on the first Tuesday ...’). In this example, the flow of given information followed by new also creates cohesion, and is particularly important in guiding readers with limited knowledge of Australian holidays through the text.

The syntactic choices within the text are consistent with its referential function. Each section heading is an interrogative sentence (L1 ‘What is some common Australian word usage?’) to invite the reader into the topic. However, the discourse then shifts to declarative sentence types (L2–3 ‘Slang words start from many different sources’) in order to fulfil the role of providing information. The referential function is further reflected in the syntax through the use of listing (L9 ‘If you do not drink alcohol, it is acceptable to bring juice, soft drink or soda, or water’). Complex sentences that provide additional information are frequent (L4–5 ‘If you are unsure what an expression means, it is all right to ask the person who said it to explain’). The hypothetical scenarios introduced by the subordinating conjunction ‘if’ connect to the audience by communicating possible situations in which they might find themselves. Further attention to the audience is provided through the frequency of simple sentences throughout, making the information easier to navigate (L12 ‘This is short for afternoon’ and L50 ‘The day is a public holiday’).

The lexical choices in Text 2 reduce the formality of the text and create a sense of solidarity between the writer and the audience. The use of Australian colloquialisms (L6 ‘bring a plate’, L13 ‘barbie’, L16 ‘cuppa’ and L23 ‘shout’) gives a sense that Australian interactions are generally informal. The prevalence of terms from the semantic field of socialising reinforces the sense that immigrants will be welcomed in Australian society. The impression of shared values and social practices is further reinforced by the use of the second person through the repetition of the personal pronoun ‘you’ (L6,

L9, L18, L27) when describing social interactions. This gives the audience a sense that they are involved in the situations being described. Finally, the non-Standard spelling of ‘ow-ya-goin’ (L29) to mimic the broad pronunciation reduces the formality of the text by connecting it to spoken phatic communication.

In contrast, the lexical choices in Text 3 are more formal and create a sense of solemnity when discussing important cultural celebrations. The frequent use of proper nouns (L44 ‘Australia Day’, L47 ‘Anzac Day’) gives the information that follows greater prestige, as it is clear that these celebrations have been officially recognised. In addition, acronyms, which are common in formal language, are present in the text (L48 ‘Anzac’ and L58 ‘NAIDOC’). The repeated use of the plural personal pronoun ‘we’ (L38, L45, L50) creates the impression that Australians share particular values and attitudes about these days. However, the inclusion of lexemes such as ‘Chinese New Year’ (L65) also indicates that inclusiveness is part of Australia’s cultural context.

In the Australian Social Customs extracts from the Immigration Department websites, discourse, syntactic and lexical features all contribute to a formal and planned document that, nonetheless, creates a sense of solidarity with the audience through the use of some informal features. While the text creates a sense of shared cultural context between the writer and the audience, it is the referential function of the texts that is most influential in determining which language features occur.

Mark allocation: 30 marks

- This question should be marked holistically.



Tips for Section B

- *In this section, students are expected to produce a detailed discourse analysis. However, it is important to avoid a simple labelling exercise where features are identified using metalanguage. Students must aim to connect the identified features with the social purpose, context and register of the text. It’s important that students address the text(s) as a whole, rather than focusing on just one section. It is also important that students respond thoughtfully to the text(s) in front of them, rather than reading with a checklist of features to discuss. For example, in some texts a discussion of how the writer or speaker achieves coherence and cohesion will be relevant. In other texts there will be other features that should take precedence over such material.*
- *While there is no specific structure for Section B, students who choose to organise their response according to subsystem can occasionally limit their opportunities for discussion. Nevertheless, the response should be well organised and students should use paragraphing. Subheadings may be appropriate to help organise some responses and will not be penalised if used appropriately. A conclusion is optional.*

SECTION C – Essay

Question 8

Sample response

This topic requires students to explore the reasons for and reactions to linguistic change. Students should demonstrate an understanding of how and why languages change, as well as consider how debate about language reflects what we value as individuals and as a society. Discussion of Standard and non-Standard Englishes is also expected. High-scoring responses will not restrict themselves to features of one register of language, but will move between discussion of both formal and informal language.

The stimulus material may point students towards an exploration of:

- the dominance of technology in modern communication and its impact on language.
- the increasing informality that exists in interpersonal communication and the decreasing prominence of formal negative politeness strategies.
- the role that those with social prominence (political and religious leaders, celebrities etc.) have in making some language forms popular, acceptable or prestigious.
- the globalisation of the English language and the way words used in one country now spread quickly and are absorbed by other countries or cultures.
- social attitudes towards Standard and non-Standard English and individual, institutional and social willingness to accept change.
- the process of codification and the tension between rules of usage and actual usage (e.g. with words such as ‘literally’ or ‘misogyny’).

Question 9

Sample response

This topic requires students to explore the features of formal language as well as the situational and cultural context in which formal language occurs. Students could generate ideas by considering the social functions of formal language: reinforcing social distance and authority; establishing expertise; promoting social harmony and negotiating social taboos; and clarifying, manipulating and obfuscating.

Students should acknowledge the tendency of formal language to be less ambiguous, more cohesive and more likely to take measured account of aspects of situational and cultural context than informal language. Students could consider the process of constructing formal discourses, including planning and editing as well as the settings in which formal language occurs or is considered appropriate.

The use of the word ‘how’ is asking students to not only identify connections between formal language and careful communication, but to establish a cause and effect relationship between these two elements. Making these connections explicit is essential to achieving a high-scoring response. Therefore, this essay requires much more from students than a simple description of formal language features.

The stimulus material may point students towards a discussion of:

- the legal register and the importance that language is precise. There are significant consequences for seemingly minor differences (such as tense in the given example).
- the potential for formal language to drift into meaninglessness or doublespeak when used thoughtlessly (such as in empty jargon/buzzwords/cliché). Overuse can reduce the effectiveness of language in formal settings.
- political correctness and the principles of non-discriminatory language use. The power of institutions and organisations in initiating language change to avoid discriminatory language practices.
- the way that the register of scientific discourse can create a hierarchy of difference.
- the influence of negative connotations or loaded language on influencing language choices.
- the importance of careful language choices in order to clearly communicating meaning.

Question 10

Sample response

This topic requires students to explore the functions of language as they relate to the establishment and management of relationships. Embedded in this discussion should be an exploration of negative and positive politeness strategies as well as overt and covert norms. High-scoring responses will refer to both formal and informal language as well as their various relationship functions: encouraging intimacy, solidarity and equality, maintaining positive face needs, supporting in-group membership, reinforcing social distance and authority, establishing expertise, promoting social harmony and negotiating social taboos.

The stimulus material may point students towards a discussion of:

- positive politeness strategies and their role in building rapport, creating group membership and establishing intimacy, solidarity and equality.
- the role of covert norms in establishing in-group membership.
- negative politeness strategies and their role in reinforcing social distance and authority.
- the role of overt norms in showing respect and adopting a prestigious identity.
- the need to make language choices that are appropriate to the situational context.
- the way language can manipulate an audience by constructing a specific identity for the speaker or writer. This can then lead them to believe that solidarity exists.
- variation in the way particular language features are interpreted and the impact on relationships of these interpretations.
- the need to navigate through linguistic minefields to avoid giving offence.

Mark allocation: 30 marks

Examination responses will be assessed on the extent to which they demonstrate the ability to:

- use metalanguage tools to describe and analyse structures, features and functions of language in a range of contexts.
- explain and analyse linguistic features of written and spoken English in a range of registers.
- understand and analyse relationships between language and identities in society.
- identify and analyse differing attitudes to varieties of Australian English.
- draw on contemporary discussions and debate about language.
- write clearly organised responses with controlled and effective use of language appropriate to the task.

**Tips for Section C**

- *In this section, students have an opportunity to draw from a wide range of linguistic concepts for discussion; however, it is important that students show both a breadth and depth of knowledge of the course.*
- *Generalised discussion is not rewarded. Students should look to support their ideas with specific metalanguage terms and relevant evidence.*
- *It is important that students focus on understanding the nuances of the topic and select and use appropriate linguistic evidence in their analysis.*
- *Students are required to use at least one of the provided stimulus quotes to inform their response.*
- *As always, students should look to include recent and relevant examples of language use. While some examples are given in the stimulus quotes, students should also be prepared to use their own original examples to support the discussion.*
- *Creativity in examples is always preferable over reusing unoriginal choices.*
- *Students who demonstrate evidence of wider academic reading, and use this knowledge to formulate an appropriate response to the topic, should be rewarded.*

END OF SAMPLE RESPONSES