

VCE ENGLISH LANGUAGE

2016 Unit 3&4 Practice Paper 1

ANSWER GUIDE

Section A – Short Answer Questions

Text 1 (15 marks)

Question 1

Comment on the function of the main sentence type used in Text 1, providing 2 examples with line numbers.

The media release consists entirely of declarative sentences (which use many different syntactic structures) to make statements about the Coalition Government and its proposals for changes to workplace laws. Any example is possible from lines 1-40. The function of these declaratives is to provide information to voters in a decisive way.

Question 2

Discuss the use of proper (capitalised) nouns in Text 1. Provide 2 examples.

Proper nouns such as "Turnbull Government" (lines 1, 7), "Coalition" (lines 3, 22, 39), "Fair Work Ombudsman" (lines 15-16, 17, 27), "Migrant Worker's Taskforce" (lines 20, 28), "7-Eleven" (lines 26, 29, 30), "Prof Alan Fels AO" (line 26), "Dr David Cousins" (line 27) specifically identify individual organisations and people. In addition to "7 Eleven", which is one of the businesses that is under investigation for worker exploitation, these proper nouns refer to powerful organizations and people. This helps to convey the seriousness of the matter and the determination of the Coalition to stop worker exploitation.

Question 3

How is lexical patterning used to achieve cohesion in Text 1? Provide 3 examples.

Repetitions such as "penalties" (line 9), "penalty" (line 10), "employers" (lines 9, 11, 12, 18, 21), "Fair Work Ombudsman" (lines 15-16, 17, 20), "workers" (lines 8, 9, 11, 18, 21), "exploitation" (lines 14, 23) and "exploit" (line 18) and synonyms such as "Ripped off" (line 11) for exploitation and "Turnbull Government" (line 7) for "the Coalition" (line 22), add cohesion to the text, linking the ideas from one section to another.

Question 4

Comment on the clause components of the sentence "The Coalition's management of this issue has been strong and methodical, unlike that of Labor" (line 32).

"The Coalition's management of this issue" (subject) "has been" (verb) "strong and methodical," (complement) "unlike that of Labor" (adverbial). This simple sentence foregrounds "the Coalition". The adjectives that make up the subject's complement "strong and methodical" have positive connotations which have the function of praising the subject. The adverbial phrase "unlike that of Labor" presents the

Australian Labor Party as the antithesis of this idea and denigrates the opponent, implying that their "management of the issue" has been weak and haphazard.

Question 5

Analyse the use of the passive voice in Text 1. Provide 3 examples.

There are many clauses using the passive voice in this text. Use of the passive voice is associated with authority and objectivity, lending the statements gravity and signalling that these are most serious matters.

For instance, in the sentence lines 3-6 there are two clauses using the passive voice. The first one, "The coalition's focus on jobs and growth will be complemented by increased safeguards" is followed by a relative clause that gives more information about workers "who have been let down in recent times...by employers..." (lines 4-5). This sentence is complicated and packs in a lot of information but the relationship between the ideas is maintained by the syntax.

Lines 7 - 21 use the passive structure to achieve parallelism in the list of dot points. That part of the sentence on lines 7-8 functions as a stem and the dot points follow, all beginning with a present participle to complete the adverbial phrase begun with "by" in line 8.

In lines 26-28 the agentless passive allows the focus to be on the names of the important men engaged to work with the Taskforce.

Section B — Analytical Commentary

Text 2 (30 marks)

The context of this transcript is a social situation where two acquaintances have met. Their social purpose is to establish rapport through conversation about matters of local interest, beginning with the topic of the caravan park occupancy (line 6). The speakers are known to each other but do not appear to share close social distance. Their topic of conversation and their language are not personal or intimate, yet their shared knowledge about the locale allows them to speak about the caravan park without needing to provide detailed background information. Mention of "the newsletter" (line 34) does not require elaboration, since both interlocutors are aware of what this refers to. Speaker T speculates about why the area is relatively quiet this year, which allows Speaker K to inform her about the new rules that have been implemented, especially in preparation for New Year's Eve.

Speaker K's lexicon includes many slang words, such as "chockers" (line 8), "jeez" (line 20), "trashed the place" (line 20), "destroyed the joint" (line 25), "a cop" (line 69) and "cop the blame" (line 63). These reflect the fact that this is an informal conversation. He also uses swear words – "pricks" (lines 42, 44) and "bloody" (line 90) – which, together with some of the slang, suggest the speaker's Australian identity. Speaker T, in contrast, uses a very mild term "crumbs" (lines 46, 75), which may be an indicator of her reluctance to swear, and may allow her to maintain social distance by not using more vulgar terms heard from Speaker K. Speaker K refers frequently to the authorities who control the caravan park as *they*, not identifying these people specifically and attributing to them considerable power e.g., "they've put rules in this time" (line 13), "well they said they're gonna do it, they'll have to make sure" (lines 54-55), distancing himself from them but implying his approval of their actions

As a spontaneous conversation, the text includes discourse particles such as “you know” (lines 56, 78, 89, 90) and “like” (line 59), which function to keep the conversation flowing. There are a few overlaps between the speakers. When they do occur, they reflect Speaker T’s shock about the situation, which she expresses through interjections, e.g., “Did they?” (line 21) and “My god” (line 67). Both speakers frequently emphasise words, mainly to show their surprise – “You’re joking, how dreadful” (lines 26-27) – or to highlight aspects of the incident being recounted – e.g., “demolished fences, smashed bottles” (lines 23-24). This listing of the behaviour that Speaker K believes to be outrageous is thus given dramatic impact. Lengthened sound “Yeah=” (line 17) is used by Speaker K to indicate he is not in complete agreement with what Speaker T just said, while Speaker T says “Oh my god=” in line 88 to emphasise her shock at the events her interlocutor is recounting. There are a number of non-standard pronunciations, or reductions, that are commonly heard in connected speech – “gonna” (lines 54, 63), “cos” (line 18), “sorta” (line 56), “s’pose” (line 50).

The conversation is dominated by Speaker K, who holds the floor for more of the interaction than Speaker T. He introduces the topic of the reduced number of holidaymakers in the caravan park (line 1), which then allows him to tell the story about the debacle there the previous year (lines 13-33). At line 36, Speaker K shifts the focus to the fairness of the new rules, and Speaker T raises the question of the logistics of enforcing the new rules (line 47). Speaker K returns to the details about last year’s fight on line 69 and continues the description until line 91. Speaker T’s turns are either interrogatives that elicit more information by showing that she is listening closely and wants him to continue (lines 21, 28) or interjections (lines 26-27) express her surprise, which she is unable to suppress. Speaker T is supportive and attentive (e.g., lines 51, 61), asking for Speaker K’s opinion and thereby respecting his positive face needs. Speaker K aims to be polite by excusing his use of the word “prick” (line 42) before he says it (“sorry to say it” (line 40)), showing regard for Speaker T’s positive face by acknowledging that the word may offend Speaker T, and protecting his own positive face by implying that this is a term he does not use ordinarily. In lines 77 and 80, Speaker K responds to T’s question about the concert, although he has to interrupt his story to do so. Speaker T reacts with appropriate surprise to his story, which is meant to shock her, with exclamations “You’re joking! How dreadful!” (lines 26-27). The speakers cooperate with each other and pay attention to the conventions of politeness and to each other’s face needs. There are only a few instances of overlapping, and these function as back-channelling which helps to keep the conversation flowing by expressing support for the other speaker, e.g., lines 20-21 “[jeez] [Did they?]” and lines 83-84 “climbed the [fence]. [Yeah?]”.

The register of the discourse is highly informal, with features that include slang and swearing, such as “a cop” (line 69), and other idiomatic expressions “destroyed the joint” (line 25). Some non-standard grammatical features are present, such as “a cop come down, try and disperse them” (lines 69-70). Occasional elevated items of vocabulary, such as “demolished” (line 23) “tarnished” (line 39) and “disperse” (line 70), are appropriate in the context and do not alter the overall informal register of the conversation.

Section C – Essay (30 Marks)

Question 7

'Rude, abusive, distasteful or disrespectful language is everywhere these days and it shouldn't be allowed.' Do you agree?

The proposition invites discussion about whether it is true to say that rude and disrespectful language is everywhere; and the extent to which language can be supervised, monitored and punished.

Stimulus i supports the proposition and provides an example of how offensive some language can be to some people, particularly marginalised groups in society.

Stimulus ii strongly defends the right to free speech, using the argument that it is the individual's right to express their views in whatever way they want.

Stimulus iii provides an example of one woman's reaction to swearing and "foul language" used by women on TV, and the implication that it encourages violence against women. It challenges TV shows to exercise leadership and to model appropriate language.

Stimulus iv disagrees with the proposition; the image shows an individual being unable to voice his views because of the constraints put upon him by those who wish to prevent 'rude, abusive, distasteful or disrespectful language'.

Some ideas that students could include in this essay are:

- It is very difficult to legislate against 'bad language', or to monitor its use. Some states of Australia have tried but it has not been very practical to enforce, e.g., in NSW there is a fine \$500 for using four letter words in public.
- The definition of offensive language is rather subjective and to some extent depends on the interlocutors and the context.
- Parliamentarians can use offensive language under privilege, even though it is 'public', but it is expunged from the Hansard record, e.g., Bill Heffernan February 2016 said "F** this sh**" in Parliament and avoided prosecution.
- Employees can be sacked for swearing at work, under certain circumstances.
- There are core standards accepted generally by Australian society, but on a regular basis controversy arises where an individual's comments are condemned by some and applauded or defended by others. Examples include: Eddie McGuire's comments about journalist Caroline Wilson; Chris Gayle's behaviour in an interview with reporter Mel McLaughlin; Café in Fitzroy that posted a sign saying "No poofter drinks". In these cases, the offenders were forced to apologise in response to the outcry against their words.

- Some observe that social media and the internet in general encourages abusive and offensive language because it can be anonymous and untraceable. It is also said that people who comment on social media often do so impetuously, and would not say the same things in a face to face situation.
- Abusive language that is threatening can be punishable under the law, e.g., examples of individuals being vilified on public transport and the perpetrators ending up in court and punished with fines and/or community service.
- Proponents of free speech believe that censorship is counter-productive and that education and debate is the way to deal with racist, sexist or homophobic attitudes and language.
- Political correctness is often sneered at as forcing individuals to mask their true feelings about various issues; others see political correctness as a way of protecting the vulnerable who might otherwise be wounded by abusive or disrespectful language, e.g., Adam Goodes treatment by football fans and sports commentators who booed him and called him “ape” and “King Kong”; Duncan Storrar’s question on Q&A about how tax increases would hurt the poor, like him, and the subsequent storm of abuse of Storrar and the defence of him by various commentators and the general public.

Subsystems and other metalanguage that can be referred to using the above points include: lexicon, discourse, semantics, politeness, face, political correctness, context, social purpose.

Question 8

Can everyday communication withstand the onslaught of the internet’s linguistic innovations?

Implied in this question is the idea that everyday communication between individuals is under threat because face-to-face contact is threatened by the pervasiveness of the internet. The latest innovations, such as artificial intelligence (chat bots), voice recognition technology, automated responses, online help via chat rather than via phone call, it is implied, are taking over traditional communication.

Stimulus i raises the idea that younger generations are able to adapt to the challenges of internet communication and that they are developing multiple skills for communicating in a range of ways.

Stimulus ii provides examples of the creativity and adaptability of language in the face of linguistic challenges posed by the internet, not only lexical but also syntactic.

Stimulus iii illustrates a particular situation in which the internet, and e-communication, can be of benefit in health care, e.g., for the treatment of mental illness using artificial intelligence or “chat bots”.

Stimulus iv satirises the pervasive nature of the internet and suggests that handwritten notes are a dying form of communication. The second speaker is almost entirely reliant on the electronic medium for interacting with others, and has missed out on a party because the invitation was not conveyed via social media or email.

Some ideas that students could include in this essay are:

- People still communicate with each other in face-to-face situations, particularly in personal and private contexts.
- It is true that some functions that were once performed by people are now automated, e.g., paying bills via phone using the keypad rather than going to the bank or business to pay in person, thus removing social contact and interaction between people.
- The use of emoji to represent an individual's feelings or attitudes is a creative way of communicating and has expanded enormously because language users find it a relevant and helpful system, e.g., Facebook's expansion of "like" to include other symbols that allow people greater choice, e.g., "love," "haha," "wow," "sad," and "angry".
- Language changes according to new paradigms and new technology. It has done so for centuries and language uses adapt accordingly.
- To remain 'in the game' individuals need to embrace innovations in communication, but at the same time interpersonal human interaction is unlikely to become obsolete.
- Social media, such as Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, in many ways facilitates greater communication between individuals and groups because of its immediacy and accessibility.
- Issues of etiquette and politeness are evolving, and new issues associated with online communication have arisen, such as anonymous online abuse, or trolling, and these discourse matters are the subject of much discussion and debate.

Subsystems and other metalanguage that can be referred to using the above points include: discourse, semantics, politeness, face, political correctness, context, social purpose.

Question 9

'As long as we continue to speak with an Aussie accent there will be no threat to Australian identity.'
Discuss.

Students should avoid simply agreeing or disagreeing with this statement. The topic invites a discussion about what is Australian English, acknowledging that there are many variations on this in this multi-cultural society. Furthermore, while the link between Australian identity and accent is recognised historically, it is a stereotype that is only meaningful in certain contexts.

Stimulus i lists some of the common reasons given for the supposed decline in Australian English. These opinions are more commonly expressed by older Australians who perceive that there has been significant change, whereas younger people, who are considered to be the engines of linguistic change, are not concerned or do not agree that Australian English is in decline.

Stimulus ii suggests that the Australian accent is so distinctive that it is a strong marker of Australian identity.

Stimulus iii is a reaction to the controversy about not using the word “guys” to refer to women, especially in the workplace. In this comment, the objection is that the word is an American import, as well as being an insult to women, especially older women. The notions of context and expectations about the appropriate use of language underpin this attitude.

Stimulus iv puts the view that the Australian accent can only be used by Australians, and that it is unable to be convincingly replicated by non-Australians. In this respect it is supportive of the proposition, while at the same time subscribing to the idea that there is a stereotypical Australian accent.

Some ideas that students could include in this essay are:

- Australian English – the stereotype – is generally portrayed as a Broad accent, with lots of slang (e.g., ‘ripper’) and quirky features such as diminutive endings on words (e.g., Aussie).
- This portrayal is used, most often for humour, in movies, advertising, funny videos on the internet and in comedy shows and live performances. Examples include: ‘Kath and Kim’, ‘They’re a Weird Mob’, Adam Hills’ comedy routine, the failed advertising campaign “Where the bloody hell are you?”.
- An item in the media in October 2015 asserted that the Australian accent is a result of the drunken speech of the first settlers. Although widely ridiculed as being based on some sort of mythical ‘ideal’ of what an accent should be, this view was given a great deal of attention and support in the media.
- In reality, not many Australians speak like this on a day-to-day basis. The majority of Australians these days speak with a General accent. The actors in the movie ‘The Dressmaker’ received voice training to help them ‘nail’ the Australian accent, but it was a General rather than a Broad version.
- There is far greater variety of ‘Australian English’ within contemporary Australian society than just this stereotype. Australian English is diverse and difficult to pin down with a few well-worn illustrations.
- Ethnolects are commonplace; groups of Australians from linguistically diverse backgrounds have incorporated features from their first language into English. This includes lexical items as well as grammatical and semantic features. Examples include Lebspeak, Chinese-English, Greek-English, African-English.
- Australian English is also slowly adopting more diverse language items from Aboriginal English than simply place names and flora and fauna. Examples include ‘secret men’s business’, ‘deadly’, ‘mob’.
- Identity is closely linked to language, and many – some would say the majority – of Australians identify with two or more cultural or ethnic groups. Depending in the context, an individual may identify as Australian and as an African Australian, and use the most appropriate language variety from his or her repertoire accordingly.

Subsystems and other metalanguage that can be referred to using the above points include: phonology, lexicology, syntax, discourse, semantics, context, individual and group identity, ethnolects, varieties.