

VCE ENGLISH LANGUAGE

2016 Unit 3&4 Practice Paper 2

ANSWER GUIDE

Section A – Short Answer Questions

Text 1 (15 marks)

Question 1

Discuss the function of the pauses between lines 2-6.

The short pauses are used for dramatic effect. They allow the speaker to create expectation for listeners by delaying the next words in the two instances where the pause precedes an adjective – “inspirational” and “young”. The final examples come after the adjectives “humbled” and “honoured”, providing time for the words to have an impact on the audience.

Question 2

How does the use of emphatic stress used between lines 18 – 30 support the social purpose of the text? Provide two examples.

One of Lucas’s purposes in his speech is to communicate the facts about the scope and experience of homelessness in Australian society. To do this he emphasises words such as “safe”, “quiet” and “dry” (lines 18-20), to illustrate that these basic living conditions, taken for granted by most Australians, are unavailable to homeless people. Stressing the phrase “basic human right” (line 21), he attempts to ensure that people listening are in no doubt about the dire circumstances of the people who use Orange Sky Laundry. Lucas emphasises the numbers, e.g., “seventy thousand kilos” (line 27), “fifty thousand volunteer hours” (line 28) to make sure the audience understands how enormous the task has been, and then contrasts those figures with the statement that the service provides “so much more” (line 30) than simply doing the washing.

Question 3

How is the identity of the speakers reflected in the language they use? Provide two examples to illustrate your response.

The speakers’ young ages are reflected in their use of colloquial phrases such as “massive thanks” (line 14) and “It’s so crazy” (line 49). Nic uses a more standard description “incredibly excited” (line 54), perhaps influenced by the formality of the situation. Lucas uses the idiom “two regular blokes from Brisbane” (line 25), which suggests their Australian identity. Their commitment to their idealism is reflected in statements such as “to reach every one of those hundred and five thousand Australians homeless tonight” (lines 56-58) and “to help all Australians volunteer” (line 62). Their modesty is reflected in their references to “being humbled” (line 5,) and “humbling” (line 50).

Question 4

Comment on the ways in which Lucas observes the positive face needs of others between lines 3-14. Provide two examples.

Lucas describes the other finalists, who are present at the ceremony, as “inspirational” (line 3) and their achievements as “remarkable” (line 4), thereby showing them respect and admiration and observing their positive face needs. The other finalists potentially might be threatened by the fact that Lucas and Nic won, which Lucas attends to by complimenting them and their work.

Between lines 8-14 Lucas praises the other volunteers who have worked for Orange Sky Laundry, paying tribute to their “tireless dedication” (line 8) and to the “volunteering community and countless supporters around Australia” (lines 10-12) who have assisted with the project, adhering to their positive face needs. The volunteers and supporters’ face might be threatened because Nic and Lucas alone are being acknowledged for the work that they are also involved in, and Lucas attempts to mitigate this by acknowledging their contributions.

Question 5

Discuss how lexical repetition is used to create cohesion between the two sections, lines 1- 35 and lines 37-68. Provide three examples with line numbers.

Although the speech is in two parts, the lexical choices in each section are frequently identical or very similar. This makes the message being delivered focused and specific, and creates cohesion between the two sections. It emphasizes the speakers’ joint work and suggests a sense that they share the acceptance of the prize. The social purpose of the speech is to promote awareness of the plight of homeless people in Australia and to show how great an impact a “simple idea” (lines 24, 51) that involves “wash[ing] and dry[ing] clothes for free” (lines 26, 40) can have on the lives of others. Some other examples of lexical repetition are:

- “humbled” (line 5)/“humbling” (line 50)
- “basic human right” (lines 21, 65)
- “restore respect” (line 31)/ “restore” (line 65)
- “clean clothes and conversations” (lines 22-23, 66-67)
- “one hundred and five thousand Australians” (lines 16, 57)

Section B — Analytical Commentary**Text 2 (30 marks)**

Text 2 is a series of posts from an internet chat room that is accessible to people all over the world. The forum is used by those who travel, to get information about the places they intend to visit, or to hear of opportunities that they might not be aware of, as they plan their trip. It is also frequented by people who answer others’ questions and share information and opinions. In this way, it is a social opportunity in cyberspace where people, who are otherwise unknown to one another and will probably never meet face to face, participate in friendly conversation about things of mutual interest.

The format assists with coherence to some extent. Each entry has a title that indicates whether it is a new topic or a response to an existing topic, e.g., "Different towns" (line 1), "Re: Different towns" (lines 13, 23). The username used by the participants and the date and time of writing is also indicated at the beginning of the entry – e.g. "by thiswoman'sworld Jan 18, 2015 at 4.02am" (line 14). This is a way of distinguishing between the responses and allowing participants to keep track of the authors of the different entries while maintaining participants' anonymity. The time indicates the collaborative nature of the text as it unfolds chronologically.

Cohesion in the text is established through repetition of place names e.g. "Yarraville" (lines 9, 15, 27), "Mornington Peninsula" (lines 4, 18), "Geelong" (lines 9, 19, 25) "Hawthorn" (lines 4, 26). Cohesion is also created through the use of hyponyms associated with forms of transport e.g., "ferry" (lines 4, 25) "car" (line 25); verbs and nouns to do with sightseeing and holidaying pastimes e.g., "stayed there", "stay" (line 5 and 7, 26), "see" (line 10, 27), "see/do" (line 18), "trip" (line 6, 8, 28), "stop over" (line 20), "visit" (line 30), "stay the night" (line 29), "done" and "doing" (lines 8 and 11), "wandering around" (line 10), "shopping" (line 11), "sitting" (line 11), "watch the world go by" (line 11). Referencing further establishes cohesion, where Chums uses the first person personal pronouns "I" and "we" to refer to himself and his wife (lines 3, 4, 5, 6, 10). In their responses, both thiswoman'sworld and emohruo refer to Chums as "you" (e.g. lines 16, 18, 25, 26).

Chums elides personal pronouns frequently e.g., "Am an aussie" (line 7), "Have done ocean rd" (line 8). Both thiswoman'sworld and emohruo reflect this stylistic feature of Chum's discourse in their own responses, using ellipsis "[I am] Not really sure that Yarraville and Prahan..." (line 15) and "Healesville sanctuary [is] great for the Aussie animals" (lines 29-30). Their punctuation is more standard, usually capitalising place names and inserting full stops at the end of sentences – e.g. "...Queenscliff rather than Geelong would be my pick." (line 19) and "...maybe stay the night." (line 29). The occasional non-standard spelling and punctuation in these entries (e.g., "Prahan" (line 15), "Healesville sanctuary" (line 29), "Why not take a trip up the Dandenong Ranges." Lines 28-29) is common in online forums where speed and lack of attention to spelling conventions are usual.

Chums enhances the positive face of potential Australian respondents by suggesting his positive memories of life in Australia – e.g., "happy days and football ovals where we used to play." (line 7) – and his ongoing affection for Australia – e.g. "Am an aussie at heart." (lines 7-8) He is polite as he thanks in advance those who reply, e.g. "Thanks for any advise I get." (line 12). Similarly, thiswoman'sworld maintains politeness and protects Chums' negative face by hedging her lack of agreement with Chums' preferences e.g., "Not really sure..." (line 15). She cooperates with Chums by providing further information about Toorak and Brighton, (lines 15-17) which Chums has nominated as places he is interested in (lines 9-10), and by adding her own suggestions about Queenscliff (line 19), Yarra Valley and Dandenong Ranges (line 21). Emohruo is also polite and mindful of Chums' positive face needs, endorsing Chums' suggestion of Geelong (line 25) and, like thiswoman'sworld, giving more information about the places Chums has nominated. Emohruo makes other suggestions to enhance Chums' holiday (lines 28 -30), and closes with the polite comment "Hope this helps" (line 30). Thiswoman'sworld also follows politeness conventions by closing her response to Chums with "Enjoy Melbourne" (line 22).

Emohruo's register is closer to the informal end of the spectrum, with features similar to Chums, e.g., the lines 25-26 lack any punctuation although there are brackets in line 25 around the conversational aside "not sure if you have a car". Some ellipsis "[There is] Not much to see" (line 26), "if [you're] a wine buff" (line 29) creates a style similar to spoken language.

Thiswoman'sworld's register is more slightly more formal. She mainly uses standard spelling and punctuation – the place names are capitalised ("Yarraville", "Toorak" (line 15)). Thiswoman'sworld's syntax shows some features of spoken language – e.g., ellipsis "Not really sure" (line 15); however, in general, sentences are complete and grammatically standard, such as "Williamstown is interesting and is worth a stopover" (lines 19-20). The end focus "Toorak Village" (line 16) establishes information flow by fronting in the next sentence – e.g. "Of interest close by" (line 16). Lexical choices include low frequency words such as "spectacular" (line 17), which add to the relative formality of the register. Thiswoman'sworld capitalises "VERY" and "AND" (line 18) to emphasise the recommendation about the best places to visit, asserting authority and knowledge about the topic and agreeing with Chums' choices. This supports Chums' positive face as she endorses the places he has chosen to visit, after earlier contradicting his suggestions and thus threatening his positive face, e.g., "Not really sure that Yarraville and Prahan would be high on a visitors list" (line 15).

The register of Chums' discourse is relatively informal and friendly. Chums' punctuation is non-standard, some of which may be as a result of autocorrect and mistyping. Place names/ proper nouns are not capitalised, such as "geelong" (line 3), "hawthorn" (line 4), "williamstown" (line 11). The only capitalised place name is the one that appears after a full stop i.e., "Brighton" (line 9). The full stop is misplaced because it is in the middle of a simple sentence i.e., "Are yarraville toorak village. Brighton and pahran worth going to see" (lines 9-10), and there is a full stop rather than a question mark at the end of this interrogative sentence. Full stops are omitted after simple sentence structures, e.g., "have been on before we are going to be in melbourne..."(line 3) and "...watch the world go by will be doing ferry to williamstown on another day" (lines 11-12). Occasionally, Chums' spelling is incorrect, e.g., "pahran" (line 10) and "advise"(line 12). These features together give the impression of discourse that is spontaneous and written in haste.

Section C – Essay

(30 Marks)

Question 7

'The media should have greater respect for the Queen's English; some reporters need subtitles for ordinary Australians to be able to understand them.' Discuss.

This prescriptive view of Australian English is simplistic; students should be able to demonstrate their knowledge about prescriptive and descriptive approaches to language use, and to canvass ideas about what constitutes "Queen's English"; its relevance in contemporary Australia; the implied racism or xenophobia in the assertion that "subtitles" are needed for some presenters on TV and radio; that "ordinary Australians" are a homogenous, Anglo population.

Stimulus i expresses dismay about the pronunciation of some words by sports commentators, who would be considered 'ordinary Australians' and who can be easily understood by TV or radio audiences. It raises the question as to what an 'ordinary Australian' should sound like – that it is subjective.

Stimulus ii takes the opposite view, i.e., that Australia is a country of great linguistic diversity, and implies that the ABC plans to redress the imbalance by employing more speakers of other varieties of Australian English.

Stimulus iii shows an image of an indigenous Australian whose achievements are recognized and celebrated. He is also an "ordinary Australian" who has made important contributions to the community and who does not fit the stereotype of the Anglo-Australian, implied in the prompt.

Stimulus iv points out that there is no official language in Australia, and that despite the fact that over one third of Australian citizens are first or second generation Australians, the majority of speakers use a variety of English.

Some ideas that students could include in this essay are:

- There are many varieties of English spoken in Australia today. As stimulus i illustrates, defining the 'correct' form of Australian English is subjective, and many TV viewers would not perceive any problem with the pronunciation of "sarah-moaney" and "Austrayliya".
- The concept of the "Queen's English" is out-dated and generally not accepted by younger generations or public institutions, like the ABC or SBS. It has been noted that even the Queen no longer speaks "Queen's English", e.g., compare the change in her language and accent over time.
- Prescriptivist attitudes to language have long proved to be unhelpful and irrelevant in the face of language change, globalisation and the development of 'World Englishes'.
- 'Ordinary Australians' come from a diverse range of linguistic backgrounds, and they have made significant contributions to contemporary Australian English, e.g., ethnolects that distinguish and celebrate cultural diversity, and Indigenous Australians as in stimulus iii.
- Language users establish their identities through their linguistic practices; language is an important marker of individual, group and national identity.
- Tolerance of accents and linguistic differences is enshrined in law and in social practice in Australia, even if some people see this as 'political correctness'. Stimulus ii is an example of how this diversity is being recognised by public institutions such as the ABC.
- Intolerance of linguistic diversity is a form of covert racism.

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

Question 8

'Thanks to social media, public discussion and debate has been enriched and made more accessible.' Do you agree?

There are two parts to the discussion – whether public discourse has been enriched by social media, and whether the fact that widespread public discussion of issues is a positive development. Students may wish to agree or disagree with this proposition, and should be able to present evidence from their study and wider reading to support their point of view. Those who prefer to take a middle position, neither agreeing nor disagreeing, should have examples to illustrate both sides of the argument.

Stimulus i supports the proposition by acknowledging that politicians are now subject to greater accountability for their policies. It suggests that questioning and commentary by ordinary citizens are now far more possible than ever, and that this public scrutiny is a positive outcome of social media use.

Stimulus ii expands on this idea, providing examples of commentary by the public in the form of online posts in reaction to an official statement by a government department. The consequence of this public discussion was that the department involved was forced to clarify, explain and justify its statements, and to distance itself from an analogy that was deemed to be offensive and inappropriate.

Stimulus iii presents the idea that social media has made public discussion accessible to the population in the same way that the printing press opened up opportunities for people to learn about others' ideas.

Stimulus iv contests the proposition by stating that social media has a dark side – online abuse and trolling. Social media can have the opposite effect of preventing individuals from participating in public discourse because of the fear of harassment and vitriol from (often anonymous) others.

Some ideas that students could include in this essay are:

- Social media and the 24/7 news cycle have changed how the public accesses information, especially about political, world and social issues. The bar for standards of communication is much higher than ever, and some would say it is impossibly high.
- Media outlets are able to trawl back through an individual's online presence and find instances of opinions or language that can damage a reputation and sometimes a career, e.g., academic Roz Ward was dismissed by her employer La Trobe University in May 2016 for private comments on her Facebook page (she was later reinstated after a public protest).
- Some critics say that the constant reporting means that what is served up 'in the public interest' is mostly superficial rubbish.
- During the 2016 Australian election campaign, broadcasters set up 'Fact Check' sites in order to analyse and expose unfactual claims or downright lies told to the public, e.g., the ABC's Factcheck website reported that the claim that Australia's internet service ranks 60th in the world was true, and the claim that over a million people are in the country on 457 visas was exaggerated.

- Social media has brought about a range of behaviours that are described as ‘trolling’, abusive, racist, homophobic and sexist; critics say that anyone can post anonymous, ignorant and hateful comments and incite others to do the same.
- Throughout 2016 there have been a number of stories of sexist Facebook pages at universities which led to these accounts being taken offline by Facebook, often following a public outcry and online petitions distributed via social media, e.g., “The Hotties of Melbourne University”, “Hotties of RMIT” and “Hotties of Monash Malaysia” pages.
- There have been social movements online that have successfully harnessed the goodwill of individuals to challenge these behaviours, e.g., the ‘#illridewithyou’ campaign that emerged on Twitter following the 2014 Martin Place killings, where people offered to travel with Muslims on public transport as a sign of solidarity.
- Supporters of social media believe that it allows for greater participation in public issues because opinions and attitudes can be challenged and discussed openly.

Subsystems and other metalanguage that can be referred to using the above points include: lexicology, discourse, semantics, context, public language, social harmony, politeness, sexist-racist-homophobic language, attitudes.

Question 9

‘There’s no escaping it; you are what you speak.’ Do you agree?

This topic allows for a discussion about doublespeak, obfuscation, euphemism, politeness and face, covert and overt norms, stereotypes and attitudes, and the way in which one’s identity and membership of various social groups are constructed by and reflected in the language one uses. Students could consider to what extent language users say (or write) what they really mean or think; how public scrutiny, especially in online communication forums, inhibits or encourages opinions to be expressed, and the use of euphemism or dysphemism in these contexts, as in stimulus iii. There are many examples, such as in stimulus i, where public figures have made statements that they later retract or try to explain, claiming that their meaning has been misunderstood or misrepresented in the media. These individuals maintain that their choice of words does not accurately reflect their identities or attitudes. The stimulus also provides examples of how language use is influenced by one’s membership of social groups and suggests that it is possible for people to change their language use to manufacture a false identity so that they will gain access to a group that they would otherwise be excluded from. As people move in and out of different language communities, they may reflect different identities and the attitudes and values that they express though their language choices might be different or even in conflict.

Stimulus i illustrates how one speaker claims the exact opposite is true – that what he said did not in any way reflect his beliefs or individual personality or identity. His explanation relies on his misreading of the context in which he was speaking, which he says caused him to give offence where none was intended.

Stimulus ii is an example of a person consciously changing their language use, including their accent and the pitch of their voice, to create an entirely new identity for a particular purpose and pretend to be someone they are not.

Stimulus iii provides some research evidence to support the idea that one's gender does, to some extent, determine how individuals use language. In this example, the differences between how men and women use language is confined to an examination of Facebook communications.

Stimulus iv shows how jargon is used to establish an identity (in this case, a high level professional in the banking industry) and to project authority by using lexicon that is very specific to that context. The speaker would have many other social roles in which different registers would be more appropriately used.

Some other ideas that students could include in this essay are:

- People's language use reflects and constructs personal, group and national identity.
- Aspects of a person's identity such as age, ethnicity, gender, education, social class, type of employment influence the language they use (e.g., stimulus iii).
- Every individual has multiple social identities (e.g., stimulus iv) and adjusts their language according to the context and purpose.
- To gain acceptance within a social group an individual might express opinions that coincide with the predominant values and attitudes or worldviews of those within the group (e.g., Eddie McGuire's comments about sports journalist Caroline Wilson, which he later attempted to back away from).
- Attempts to maintain social harmony or efforts to conceal and deceive might result in politically correct language, euphemism or obfuscation.
- Attempts to promote a political or social view can have the opposite effect, e.g., Minister Peter Dutton's comments about "illiterate, innumerate refugees".
- Conversely, what is often described as 'hate speech' can be unleashed because of the accessibility of online communication that may provide anonymity, e.g., trolling of ABC presenter Leigh Sales and numerous other examples.

Subsystems and other metalanguage that can be referred to using the above points include: Lexicology, semantics, discourse, covert and overt racism/sexism/homophobia etc, individual and group identity, public discourse, jargon, politeness, obfuscation, doublespeak, euphemism, face.