

YEAR 12 *Trial Exam Paper*

2017

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

Question 1

Sample response

The register of the text is moderately informal. While it adheres to the Standard and is coherent and cohesive, the text contains many informal and non-standard syntactic features (such as the sentence fragment on L40, ‘The healthiest jerk on the market’) and morphological features (such as ‘gotta’ on L15). The purposes of the text are to promote the Canine Wellness Kitchen and to inform customers about their products. The register supports the promotional purpose by maintaining a playful tone that is appealing to dog owners and is therefore likely to make them interested in buying from the business. This playfulness can be seen in the puns on L6 (‘Beefed Up’) and on L33 (‘Achilles Heal’). The register supports the informative purpose through its use of listing, such as ‘Great for: Liver health, joints’ (L73), which ensures that key information is conveyed at a glance.

Other answers might also consider the text to have an entertainment function due to its highly playful use of language.

Mark allocation: 3 marks

Responses to this question should be marked holistically.

- 3 marks: The response demonstrates a detailed knowledge of the register and purposes, and is supported by relevant examples/evidence from the text. Metalanguage is used in connecting register to purpose.
- 2 marks: The response demonstrates a sound knowledge of the register and purpose but does not sufficiently explore the connections between them OR does not include examples. Some relevant metalanguage is used.
- 0 to 1 mark: The response demonstrates a limited knowledge of the register and purpose, and contains few or no examples from the text. The use of metalanguage is limited or absent.



Tips

- *Ensure that you identify at least two purposes, as per the question.*
- *The key to achieving full marks for this question is analysis of how the register allows the text to achieve its purposes, and so you must go beyond simply identifying register and purposes.*
- *You should integrate your evidence into your response.*

Question 2

Sample response

Assonance is present in the text with ‘Roo Chew’ (L39), where the elongated vowel sound ‘oo’ is repeated in consecutive words. It is also evident in ‘Woofin’ and Hoofin’ (L53), where the vowel sound ‘oo’ is repeated twice in three words.

Other answers might refer to:

- Onomatopoeia, used in ‘crunch’ (L85), where the word mimics the sound of the action it is referring to (in this case, a dog eating a bone).
- Alliteration, used in ‘Bailey’s Bone Broth’ (L69), where the phoneme ‘b’ is repeated at the start of the three words; and in ‘Freddie’s Froth’ (L74), where the consonant cluster ‘fr’ is repeated at the start of two words.

Mark allocation: 1 mark

- 1 mark for correctly identifying a phonological patterning technique and providing an example of the stated technique from the text

Question 3

Sample response

The use of idiomatic language – ‘Don’t be a stick in the mud’ on L66–7 – serves the promotional purpose of the text by encouraging the reader to buy the product by implying that they are dull if they do not.

Other answers might refer to:

- Figurative language – ‘it’s the works’ (L65) is used to describe the quality of ‘The Collar Unbuckler’ snack being described, which serves the promotional and informative purposes.
- Idiom – ‘make up their mind’ (L59) serves the promotional purpose by relating to dog owners whose dogs are fussy eaters, suggesting that the ‘Canine Crunch’ is ideal for all dogs.

Mark allocation: 2 marks

- 1 mark for correctly identifying semantic patterning with an example from the text
- 1 mark for explaining how this technique contributes to the text’s purpose

Question 4

Sample response

Coherence in this text is achieved firstly through formatting. This includes the use of subheadings to organise the menu into various sections, such as ‘Canine Munchies’ on L5 and ‘Pack Mentality’ on L80, as well as capitalisation of every letter and bolded text when listing each of the menu items (such as ‘Beefed Up’, L6, and ‘Roo Chew’, L39). Together, these techniques make the text easy to navigate, and therefore the information about which food items are available is easy to process. Furthermore, logical ordering makes the text coherent, as the names of the items on the menu such as ‘Trachea Chew’ (L48) appear before the description of the items (‘For all them classy canines ...’ L49–52). Again, this serves to make the menu logical and easy to follow for customers who want to select the right meal for their canine companion.

Other answers might refer to:

- Cohesion creating coherence – there is lexical cohesion with the use of synonyms for dog such as ‘pooch’ (L7 and L15), ‘Spot’ (L22), ‘pup’ (L36) and ‘canines’ (L72), and lexical repetition of ‘dog’ on L55, L23 and L82. The synonymy and repetition connects relevant ideas for consistency of information (in this case, that these food items are for dogs) and thus aids coherence.
- Inference – prior knowledge typical of dog owners is required for the text to be coherent when the menu refers to ‘Ol’ Spot’ (L22) and ‘Rover’ (L41), because these are common dog names. Contextual understanding is also required for popular culture references to ‘Game of Thrones’ (L55) and ‘pick & mix’ (L59–60), as well as to the brands ‘Ray Bans’ (L75) and ‘Pimms’ (L76). In these cases, inference is required in order for the humour to be understood and thus for the text to be coherent.

Mark allocation: 5 marks

Responses to this question should be marked holistically.

- 4 to 5 marks: The response demonstrates a detailed knowledge of two separate factors that create coherence, and is supported by relevant examples/evidence from the text. Metalanguage is used appropriately and effectively. Features of written discourse are consistently used.
- 2 to 3 marks: The response demonstrates a sound knowledge of factors that create coherence; however, there are insufficient examples or only one element of coherence is discussed. The metalanguage used is relevant. Features of written discourse are mostly evident.
- 0 to 1 mark: The response demonstrates a limited knowledge of coherence and contains few, if any, examples from the text. The use of metalanguage is limited or absent. Few features of written discourse are evident.

**Tips**

- *To achieve full marks for this question, you must give a cogent discussion of how coherence is achieved.*
- *You may also link the coherence of the text to contextual factors as well as the text's purposes.*
- *You should also remember that cohesion is part of coherence and, as such, discussion of cohesion is acceptable as one (but not both) of the factors that create coherence.*

Question 5

Sample response

Declarative sentences convey information about the products offered by Canine Wellness Kitchen, thus contributing to the informative purpose. The declarative ‘It’s fantastic for shiny coats, healthy bones, ligaments and a huge boost of collagen’ (L50–1) provides clear information about the health benefits of the product, which makes it appealing for dog owners and also serves the promotional purpose. In addition, imperative sentences fulfil the promotional purpose of the text by directing the reader to take action such as ‘Spoil your dog with The Collar Unbuckler ... and a Canine Munchies treat of choice’ (L82–3). This command leaves dog-owning readers in no doubt as to how they should act for their dog’s benefit; that is, they should purchase from the food truck.

Other answers might refer to:

- Interrogative sentences such as ‘Got yourself one of them crazy ... pooches?’ (L7) aim to create a sense of solidarity with dog owners by encouraging them to consider their own experiences with dogs. Therefore, such sentences serve the promotional purpose by encouraging dog owners to appreciate the food truck’s knowledge of dogs’ needs.

Mark allocation: 4 marks

Responses to this question should be marked holistically.

- 4 marks: The response demonstrates a detailed knowledge of the topic and is supported by relevant examples/evidence from the text. Metalanguage is used appropriately and effectively. Features of written discourse are consistently used.
- 2 to 3 marks: The response demonstrates a sound knowledge of the topic and is supported by some examples/evidence from the text. The metalanguage used is relevant. Features of written discourse are mostly evident.
- 0 to 1 mark: The response demonstrates a limited knowledge of the topic and contains few examples from the text. The use of metalanguage is limited or absent. Few features of written discourse are evident.



Tips

- *You require a thorough understanding of the syntax of sentence types to respond to this question in sufficient detail. You should avoid generic statements such as ‘declarative sentences give information to the reader’.*
- *Ensure that you are offering an explicit discussion of the purposes of this text and how they are achieved through the syntactic features.*

SECTION B – Analytical commentary

Question 6

Sample response

Daniel Andrews' 'Apology' is a prepared speech that, with an expressive function, aims to apologise on behalf of the Victorian Government to those people affected by Victoria's laws that convicted people for homosexual acts. The broader social purpose of the speech is to promote a culture of tolerance towards the LGBTI (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and/or intersex) community in Victoria. The speech was delivered to Victoria's Parliament but has a much wider audience, including those who were affected, either directly or indirectly, by Victoria's laws as well as the Victorian community at large. Given the sombre nature of the topic and the negative experiences suffered by those who were affected by these laws, as well as the location of its delivery – in Parliament House – this text contains many linguistic features and strategies that are highly formal.

The parliamentary setting of the speech, the social distance between the speaker and audience, and the sensitive nature of the subject matter all serve to increase the formality of this discourse. As Premier, Andrews uses a frozen formal style when addressing the 'Speaker' (L1) of the House through a formal vocative, which is appropriate for a speech in Parliament House, as well as official terminology when acknowledging the 'LGBTI' community (L17) and using the approved initialism throughout his speech. The use of this initialism attends to the negative face needs of those whom it describes by conforming to accepted practice, rather than using a pejorative term. Furthermore, Andrews uses some euphemisms that are appropriate given the setting when referring to the acts that men were arrested for, including the noun phrase 'the private mysteries of men' (L12), and repeatedly referring to the rights of people to be 'different' (L52) and to express their 'pride' (L45). Doing this also allows Andrews to address the victims of these laws, without going into detail that might breach taboo topics or possibly offend those in the community who disagree with Andrews' position on equal rights.

The text is highly coherent and cohesive, in keeping with its formal setting and the desire of Andrews to communicate clearly and thus achieve his social purpose. The coherence and cohesion also maintain the text's formal register. And there are several examples of this in the text. Lexical repetition of 'LGBTI' (L17, L32 and L69), 'prejudice' (L4–6), 'rights' (L47–9) and 'laws' (L4, L34, L35 and L93) allow for a consistency of both subject matter and message. In addition, anaphoric referencing aids cohesion where the repeated pronouns 'them', 'they' and 'themselves' (L13–5) refer to the 'men' in L12, which ensures that the text is not repetitive or laboured. Andrews uses the information flow technique of end focus in L4 when he states 'a powerful prejudice was written into law' after a series of adverbial phrases; this adds weight to the phrase regarding the prejudice that he is seeking to confront in the speech. In addition to these cohesive elements, the text includes other coherent features. Information has also been logically ordered, with Andrews first acknowledging the flaws in the outdated laws (L11: 'I can't possibly explain why we made these laws and clung to them and fought for them...'), then personally referring to those who have suffered under them (L22: 'Noel Tovey'), assuring the public that the current situation in Victoria is vastly

different, as ‘equality is not negotiable’ (L51), before finally ending with his actual apology (L99: ‘We are so sorry’). This accumulation of ideas and building up to his most important point, and indeed the crux of his speech, increases the coherence and impact of the discourse.

This text employs an expressive function, to convey remorse as well as hope for reconciliation, and features of spoken discourse aid in achieving this. Andrews uses a combination of emphatic stress and pauses at times in the discourse where he wishes to bring focus to a certain point or make his sincerity clear. This can be seen in L19–20 when he emphasises that former laws were ‘nothing less than a campaign of destruction’; in L51 when he stresses that ‘equality is not negotiable’; and in L93 when he notes the significance of this as a ‘full and formal apology’ to the LGBTI community. Andrews also slows down the pace of his speech and uses falling pitch at key moments in his speech, which, again, allow the audience to take note of what is being said and to emphasise its importance. This is most notably seen in the final line (L99) of the discourse, ‘We are (.) so sorry (.) humbly\ (.) deeply\ (.) sorry\.’ This use of falling intonation to conclude the speech leaves his audience in no doubt as to its sombre tone.

The syntactic and lexical features of this speech are also highly reflective of the speech’s purpose as an official apology. Andrews uses the syntactic patterning device of parallelism throughout the discourse, such as in L57–61 where the structure of preposition, article and verb is repeated (‘tomorrow a young bloke ... tomorrow a parent ... tomorrow a loving couple ...’) to highlight that there is still much inequality in Victorian society, despite the LGBTI community having the Government’s support. Andrews also uses imperative sentences when rallying the LGBTI community to be proud of who they are by ‘hold[ing] their [partner’s] hand’ on the tram (L77) and to do so with ‘pride and defiance’ (L78). These, coupled with his use of the second-person collective pronouns ‘you’ and ‘your’ (L71, L75 and L79) throughout, mean that he is directly and personally addressing those in the community who may have been impacted by these laws, or simply marginalised because of their sexuality, and offering them the Government’s support. It is in sections such as these, however, where Andrews’ register decreases somewhat in formality as he uses the first-person pronoun ‘me’ (L74) to further personalise his message and demonstrate his support. Doing this also allows for Andrews to set a clear division between himself (‘I’, L72, L80) and ‘the Government’ (L71, L88) responsible for these laws. Andrews shares his own feelings about the suffering of those under the laws through semantic patterning; he uses figurative language when stating that the Government ‘cast [the LGBTI community] into a nightmare’ (L18) and to describe the ‘dark and paralysing pall [that was cast] over everyone who ever felt they were different’ (L34). This adds to the emotion and thus the sincerity of the discourse, and Andrews seeks to express the deep regret felt by both himself and the current Government at what the LGBTI community has endured.

Overall, by employing a range of stylistic and discourse features in his speech, Andrews is able to clearly convey his official apology in a manner befitting the parliamentary setting.



Tips

- Remember to explore several aspects of situational context: mode, field, setting, audience/relationship between participants, and function. Where relevant to the text, you should also look to engage in a discussion of cultural context and/or the identity or identities constructed in the text.
- It is important that you address the text as a whole, rather than focusing on just one section such as the opening and closing lines.
- You must clearly link the features of language to the major contextual factors, the register and the purpose of the text.
- When discussing prosodic features, remember that your options are pitch, stress, volume, tempo and intonation. Pauses are not a prosodic feature. If you wish to discuss pauses, you must explain how they contribute to the tempo of the discourse.
- While you are not expected to include every transcription symbol in the examples you quote, you should include any symbol that is relevant to your analysis.
- While there is no specific structure for Section B, if you arrange your response according to subsystem you can occasionally limit your opportunities for discussion. However you structure your response, it should be well organised and in paragraphs. Subheadings may be appropriate to help organise some responses and you will not be penalised if you use them effectively.
- Your first paragraph should include an identification of the text, social purpose(s), register (including the degree of formality) and any relevant elements of situational and/or cultural context that you will be discussing. No conclusion paragraph is required, but you should nevertheless aim to give the piece a sense of completion.
- Aim to be aware of a range of possible organisational strategies before sitting the exam so that you can be flexible in your approach and respond in the most effective way to the exam text.

SECTION C – Essay

Question 7

This question requires a discussion of language in the public realm. It draws primarily on ideas from Unit 3 Outcome 1: Informal language and Outcome 2: Formal language. It is possible to agree or disagree with the topic; however, a nuanced approach is best, since there have been many examples of both discriminatory and politically correct language in recent times. You should avoid the temptation to assume that a handful of high-profile examples create a trend. It is also important to cover a range of views and values in relation to a range of factors: gender, sexuality, ethnicity, nationality, religion and level of education.

Discussions of everyday taboo topics are not relevant to this topic; nor is consideration of derogatory language used as a marker of in-group solidarity.

The stimulus material may point you towards a discussion of:

- *political language and the power it holds to marginalise groups*
- *language in the media and pop culture*
- *the responsibility of high-profile victims of discrimination to stand up for their principles versus their right to accept discrimination as part of their job*
- *the nature of innuendo and sexualised gender discrimination and its justification in use for humorous purposes*
- *the notion of political correctness and the connotations of political correctness, including how the term itself has come to be considered undesirable by some public figures*
- *the trend to fight political correctness in public contexts by calling it a breach of the principles of free speech*
- *ideas of politeness and how public language can threaten the face needs of individuals and groups.*

Sample response

While public discourse in contemporary society undoubtedly features a range of examples of discriminatory language, especially considering the political discussions of 2016 and the behaviour of prominent media figures, this is not reflective of Australian society's values as a whole. Indeed, Australia is demonstrably less discriminatory now than in recent decades, which is reflected by everyday language use in public contexts as well as by certain progressive public figures.

Some language in the media suggests that Australian society is failing to become more inclusive and instead is more accepting of discrimination. While some public figures demonstrate awareness of the principles of political correctness, certain individuals breach these principles in ways that threaten the face needs of marginalised groups and appear to reflect a discriminatory undercurrent in Australia. As Stimulus B outlines, *The Footy Show* co-host Sam Newman regularly makes sexually suggestive remarks such as 'come get on your knees' to his female colleague Rebecca Maddern and faces no consequences for this. Indeed, Maddern's acceptance of such remarks with the rationale 'Sam will always be Sam' gives Newman tacit permission to continue his behavior, which, ultimately, sets a public example of accepting discrimination against women. On the other hand, when cricketer Chris Gayle asked TV presenter Mel McLaughlin on a date during a Big Bash cricket broadcast in 2016 and threatened her negative face needs by using the vocative 'baby' in a highly public context, McLaughlin refused to play along. Afterwards, Gayle was broadly criticised for his behaviour on social and in mainstream media and faced sanctions from his employer, suggesting that the general public considered his language, which was ultimately demeaning towards women, as unacceptable. This reaction, and the fact that Gayle was punished for his words, suggests that despite some exceptions, broadly speaking, discriminatory language is less prevalent now than in the past.

Political language in the years 2016 and 2017 certainly suggests, on first inspection, that Australian society is becoming more divided and discriminatory with time. Before and after her successful campaign to return to the Senate, Pauline Hanson made a number of utterances that marginalised Australia's Muslim community. She stated that Australia is being 'swamped by Muslims'; Hanson's use of the verb 'swamped' carries very negative connotations, which she uses to discriminate against all Islamic migrants. Hanson herself sought to frame this sort of discriminatory language as a case of speaking honestly, as seen in Stimulus A, by asserting that hers 'is a name that carries with it independence, honesty, assurance, quality and reliability'. However, by then calling these qualities 'things the Chinese can never buy', Hanson suggests that Chinese people inherently lack such characteristics, which is typical of her public statements about non-Anglo Australians and is clearly discriminatory. While Hanson's public language, as well as that of United States President Donald Trump, might suggest that society is becoming more discriminatory with time, these two are exceptions rather than the rule. Indeed, the debate over Section 18C of the *Racial Discrimination Act* demonstrates that, while Australian MPs have a range of views, overall they wish to maintain social harmony, as the law has remained intact so that discriminatory language continues to be unlawful. As long as this is the case, Australian society will be demonstrably less discriminatory than it has been in the past.

Indeed, despite the language of particular politicians and media figures, overall Australian society has an awareness of the principles of political correctness. The social media outrage following Steve Price's sexist remarks towards Van Badham on *Q&A*, and a similar reaction to Eddie McGuire's threat to drown journalist Caroline Wilson, showed that sexist language is not acceptable in public language. Furthermore, the rejection of television personality Sonia Kruger for her prejudiced views on Muslim immigrants, and the 'joke' on the *Today* show that suggested host Lisa Wilkinson was 'too white' to win a Gold Logie, further support the idea that society as a whole does not accept derogatory public language. As well as this, many politicians, in contrast to Hanson and Trump, have embraced the notion of political correctness as a means of fighting discrimination. Victorian Premier Daniel Andrews exemplified this approach with his careful use of language in the public sphere. His formal apology to gay men who had been criminally convicted because of their sexuality in Victoria referred to 'LGBTI people', 'a trans woman' and 'a gay teenager' with clear positive connotations. Andrews' language is a more typical example of public language, which reflects that, in Australia, society is less discriminatory and more inclusive.

Overall, despite the individuals whose discriminatory public language make Australia appear to be more divided and exclusionary than it once was, the majority of Australians support ideas of acceptance and inclusiveness. This is reflected on public platforms such as Twitter and by many high-profile figures.

Question 8

This question requires a discussion of Australian English and draws primarily on material from Unit 4 Outcome 1, but students may also draw on elements from Unit 4 Outcome 2, as well as Unit 3 Outcome 1. This topic invites students to consider the role of Australian English in establishing and expressing Australian identity, as well as various attitudes held towards it, both locally and internationally. It would be difficult to disagree entirely with this topic, and you would be best to consider a more balanced approach whereby you include discussion of where and how Australian English does hold prestige, both overt and covert, as well as the manner with which language variation serves to enhance our language. A consideration of the history of the development of Australian English and how the accent has changed over time (as well as attitudes held towards these variations) could also add weight to your discussion. This could potentially be a point of differentiation in your response too. Contemporary examples of language change, including neologisms, as well as consideration of the different groups in society who are responsible for these changes, are also imperative.

The stimulus material may point you towards a discussion of:

- *various ethnolects that exist in Australia – where these have come about and the ways that these carry prestige in certain contexts*
- *the Australian accent and how this has changed, as well as how this is a marker of Australian identity*
- *various attitudes towards the Australian accent (particularly broad variants)*
- *the playful and inventive nature of Australian English and how this is connected to iconic aspects of our society, such as the naming of international sporting teams*
- *the Macquarie Dictionary incorporating informal neologisms into its publication as evidence of the willingness of Australians to embrace language change without necessarily compromising prestige*
- *a discussion of the connection between Australian English and our sociocultural identity.*

Sample response

According to Thomas Batchelor, Australian English is a ‘prestige variety of a language ... which has become, through social power or a multitude of other ways, a variety considered to be *the* correct variety of a language, and thus the superior way to speak’. One would be hard-pressed to argue that this is not true. Australian English is a language that embraces change and accepts a range of variations, including sociolects, idiolects and ethnolects, as well as regional varieties of both lexis and accent. While there are people who may find offence in the broadness of some speakers of Australian English, or the non-standard features of the varieties contained within it, it no longer carries the same ‘cultural cringe’. Most Australians take great pride in the way that Australian English reflects who we are as a nation – our history and our sociocultural identity – which affords it great prestige on both a local and global stage.

Australian English is renowned for being open to change, being inventive and playful, and accepting non-standard variation. This openness is strongly aligned with our identity of being a relaxed and fun-loving people. This can be notably observed in the way the *Macquarie Dictionary*, the arbiter of the Standard in Australian English, acknowledges its willingness to add ‘new, emerging and interesting words’ to its ranks. As the Australian ‘community at large accepts’ words, they become codified in print. Examples of this in 2016 include ‘Trump’, which means to ‘physically, mentally or socially create a barrier to block someone or something out’, and the notion of living in a ‘filter bubble’. Similarly, teenagers create and adopt their own idiolect as a marker of who they are and what they value. Lexical evidence of this includes blends such as ‘nosh’ (no shit), initialisms such as ‘smh’ (shaking my head) and semantic shifts such as ‘lit’ (which means that something is worthy of adolescent approval). While such language holds more covert prestige, it is no less significant to the linguistic identity of teenagers than Standard Australian English (SAE). Our inventiveness with regard to language can also be seen on a world stage, as our international sporting teams, such as the Volleyroos and the Socceroos, use blends to align their sports teams with iconic aspects of Australian identity. Again, the covert prestige these carry exemplify the ability of Australian English to maintain its integrity, despite being so open to innovation and change.

Australia also prides itself on being a multicultural nation, with a rich history of migrants from a range of different countries bringing with them their own ethnolects and linguistic variations. It is this national pride and strong sense of identity that affords Australian English a significant amount of prestige, both overt and covert. Santo Cilauro, when reflecting on his own experiences as the child of migrant parents, notes that in Australia, ‘language just sort of melds and melts and moulds into the one thing’, such is the inherent place of ethnolects in our society. Ethnolect speakers collectively represent Australia’s growing identity of multiculturalism and thus their language holds great prestige. Within Australia, the descendants of migrants commonly employ two different varieties of Australian English. They may use the Standard when communicating with the wider community, but an ethnolect when speaking to family and their local community. This can be seen in Lebanese-Australian English in lexemes such as ‘Shoo’ for ‘what’s up?’, ‘yallah’, which means ‘let’s go/goodbye’, and ‘habibi’, an Arabic vocative for ‘darling’ that is quite similar to ‘mate’. Non-standard features are often adopted and emphasised by the children of migrants as a source of pride and

identity. Furthermore, Clyne, Eisikovits and Tollfree (2000) studied the phonology of Greek speakers in Melbourne and found that the following sounds are present in their articulation of English: a rounded front /u/, voicing of voiceless stops and the aspiration of /k/ – all features that are reminiscent of their mother tongue, or the mother tongue of their parents. Similarly, in the language of Lebanese youth, there are typical phonological features present, such as reduction of diphthongs and reduced short/long vowel contrast, which are not native to Standard Australian English but instead reflective of the ‘power of the familial bond’ and the first language of their migrant parents. The variety of ethnolects within Australia illustrates individual identity and culture as well as Australia’s growing sense of multiculturalism.

However, a language as pluricentric as English means that SAE will always be open to judgement, particularly when it comes to social dialects and accent variation. Most Australians no longer condemn the general and broad accents. Where Australian English was once described as being ‘generally delivered in tones as tuneless as the bleat of a sheep, or the kark of a queuing crow [and] delivered through an almost closed mouth, with a slurring of consonants’, the *Oxford English Dictionary* now refers to Australian English and its accent as having become “‘naturalized” in its own country, [the] accent and vocabulary accepted as a national norm, and ... celebrated’. One only has to go as far as turning on the television to see Australians and their varied accents applauded. The Honey Badger (former Rugby player Nick Cummins) is renowned for his unique use of the English language. Phrases such as ‘sweatin’ like a gypsy with a mortgage’ are never far from his repertoire, and he has become so famous for these that in 2016 he launched his own app, which is designed to help people translate the ‘Aussie vernacular’. Cummins said of the impetus behind the app: ‘We’ve got this culture, this language, this vernacular that we need to share around and it’s really important to Australia.’ Cummins is also well known globally for his sporting prowess, particularly in Japan, and intrinsically linked with this is the way he conveys his identity as an Australian through both his lexis and the broadness of his accent. It is speakers such as the Honey Badger who add to the covert and overt prestige of Australian English. According to Horvath (1985), more cultivated pronunciations of the [a] as opposed to the [æ] vowel in words such as plant, dance and castle are no longer the norm. ‘The new dialect is ‘General’, which retains the national identity associated with Broad but which avoids the nonstandardisms in pronunciation, morphology and syntax associated with uneducated speech wherever English is spoken,’ and it is this that holds the greatest prestige.

While there is no doubt those who are sceptical and disapproving of Australian English’s openness to new norms and changes, it is these same changes that enrich and empower Australian English as the language of its people. Australian English holds great prestige and embodies our national identity.

Question 9

This topic requires a balanced consideration of the importance of register, mode and achievement of social purpose. While it is possible to argue for or against the topic, high-scoring responses will explore the importance of context in determining the relative significance of mode, register and social purpose. You should consider both public and private contexts and aim to include material from Unit 3 Outcomes 1 and 2 specific to contextual influences on language, and Unit 4 Outcomes 1 and 2 as language used to express and reflect identity would also be relevant.

The stimulus material may point you towards a discussion of:

- *highly formal corporate language, the purpose of which is unclear and, arguably, less important than its register*
- *the ability of formal language to depersonalise language, which can threaten face needs (but also the ability of informal language to threaten face needs)*
- *conventions in such domains as business and education where adherence to the Standard is essential*
- *other overt norms that dictate register in particular contexts*
- *style shifting by individuals in different contexts*
- *social expectations of style shifting.*

Sample response

Depending on context, both the register and mode of any discourse can be highly relevant regardless of whether or not its purpose is achieved. To ignore this fact is to cause the possibility of face-threatening acts. However, there are some contexts in which register and mode are not entirely relevant, and others in which register and mode themselves are pivotal for a discourse to achieve its social purpose. As is often the case, context is key in determining the impact of variables such as register and mode on language.

It is essential for speakers to use the appropriate language in scenarios that require sensitivity. The register of an expression of sympathy to someone who has suffered bereavement is very important. In fact, in the case of a platitude spoken at a funeral such as, 'I'm sorry for your loss,' the need to adhere to Standard English that signifies respect is arguably more important than the function of simply expressing emotion, even in a private context. In such a case, to express the emotion highly informally such as 'Soz about ya grandpa!' would constitute a face-threatening (and hurtful) act. In a public context, the use of the formal jargon phrase from Stimulus B, 'injuries that are totally incompatible with life', to describe the state of the victims of the Dreamworld disaster was highly inappropriate and impersonal, even though it clearly succeeded in achieving its purpose of informing the public about the situation. Indeed, the Queensland ambulance officer's utterance was seen as failing in its broader social purpose of comforting the public about the nature of the deaths even though the officer was adhering to official guidelines. The discourse was too formal in this public context. This demonstrates that consideration of context – whether private or public – is crucial in determining the most appropriate mode and register that should be used in a discourse.

It is in delicate and formal public situations such as press conferences that speakers tend to use their best language, 'much as [they] might trot out [their] best china and cutlery', as Kate Burridge says in Stimulus D. In other words, speakers attempt to speak as they write in particular contexts. Public figures such as sportspeople and politicians, in particular, do this, as they use language in some public contexts where mode is considered pivotal. In the case of a public figure apologising for poor behaviour, society expects the spoken mode, in the form of a press conference. Australian tennis player Nick Kyrgios, who was criticised and suspended for poor on-court behaviour in 2016, issued an apology via Twitter after seemingly losing a match on purpose, stating, 'Not good enough today... Sorry #StillAWorkInProgress'. This was poorly received by the public, who felt that the apology was not genuine as it had not been delivered in the spoken mode. Similarly, accepting awards or titles is expected in the spoken mode. In the case of United States President Donald Trump, he accepted the result of the American election in November 2016 by conforming to convention and giving a speech, despite his regularly demonstrated proclivity toward the written mode and, like Kyrgios, the social media platform Twitter specifically. Indeed, Trump's relatively gracious acknowledgement of his rival Hillary Clinton as 'Secretary Clinton' was reflective of the mode and the formal context, in contrast to the highly critical informal tweets he had posted during the campaign about 'Crooked Hillary'. Trump surprised many observers in the Australian media with his formal register and adherence to the Standard – specifically syntactically – which he had often breached during his campaign. Thus, selecting the appropriate mode and register is essential for public figures seeking acceptance by the public.

In the realm of advertising, register remains significant, while the mode is less important as long as the social purpose of a discourse is achieved. The KFC advertisement released on Twitter in 2016 that showed a woman appearing to reach into a man's lap and stated '#NSFW. Something hot and spicy is coming soon ...' was, due to the risqué pun, considered offensive and of a far lower register than such a large company should use in its public communications. Indeed, it was seen to demean women and breached most rules of appropriateness. However, observers noted that the ultimate aim of the text – to put the KFC brand into the public eye – was achieved and, therefore, no other factors were important. In this way, the adage that 'any publicity is good publicity' can be applied to the realm of advertising in such a way that register and mode are insignificant. Other corporate communications, such as the mission statements cited in Stimulus A, demonstrate that register can, in fact, prevent the function of a discourse being achieved at all due to its opaque nature, because they 'use language as a sham to mask an intellectual void; or worse, as a stalking horse for quite different ideas that they dare not acknowledge'. Therefore, even in the corporate world, context is pivotal in determining the relative importance of register and mode compared to function.

While there are numerous occasions, primarily in public language, where register and mode are just as significant as the achievement of a discourse's purpose, it is not always the case in private contexts. In the case of giving congratulations on a new job to a friend or relative, such a message could be written in a text or spoken via phone and would be equally acceptable. Similarly, adhering to the Standard, saying 'Congratulations on the job', would achieve the purpose equally as effectively and appropriately as a text message, stating 'Heard the news thats awesum!!!', if the interlocutors have close social distance. Therefore, in particular contexts, it is possible for the achievement of social purpose to be the only significant variable.

Overall, whether in public or private, situational and cultural expectations will determine the relevance of a discourse's register and mode. While there are some occasions where these two factors are not significant, usually they do have an impact on the audience's face needs and should, therefore, be carefully considered.



Tips

- *Your essay must have a clear contention, which is established in the introduction, as well as several main body paragraphs and a conclusion.*
- *Your main body should be structured around arguments or discussion points. Do not use the stimulus items to structure your main body (i.e. a different stimulus quote as the subject for each paragraph).*
- *In this section, you have an opportunity to draw from a wide range of linguistic concepts for discussion; however, it is important that you show both breadth and depth of knowledge of the course.*
- *Generalised discussion is not rewarded; you must support your ideas with specific metalanguage terms and relevant evidence.*
- *It is important that you focus on understanding the nuances of the topic and select appropriate linguistic evidence for your analysis. Avoid providing pre-prepared responses to broad areas of study (e.g. an 'identity' or a 'public language' essay). Instead, deal in detail with the wording and implications of the specific topic. Pre-prepared or generic responses are easily detected and not well rewarded.*
- *You are required to use at least one of the provided stimulus items to inform your response. It is important to remember that the stimulus must be interpreted with the topic in mind. Ask yourself: how can this information contribute to my understanding of the key topic ideas?*
- *While you are welcome to use more than one piece of stimulus, avoid using every stimulus quote. Doing so usually results in scattered and superficial responses that do not sufficiently demonstrate your knowledge and understanding. Try to engage with the underlying ideas presented by the stimulus, rather than simply quoting extracts from it. If you encounter stimuli that appear to overlap, consider how each item reinforces or challenges the ideas in the other. Synthesise the information and be selective.*
- *You should include recent and relevant examples of language use to support your discussion. Creativity and currency in examples is always preferable to using unoriginal or dated evidence.*
- *Including relevant evidence of wider academic reading can strengthen your response. This evidence might come in the form of quotes from experts or by referring to linguistic research.*

END OF SAMPLE RESPONSES