

VCE ENGLISH LANGUAGE

2014 Units 3 & 4 Practice Exam 1

ANSWER GUIDE

Section A – Short Answer Questions

Text 1 (15 marks)

Question 1

What are the social purposes of this text?

The social purposes of the speech are to publicly celebrate Australia Day and to encourage all Victorians to regard it as an opportunity to show appreciation to others in the community who make a significant contribution to the well-being of others. He aims to include everyone in his speech by referring constantly to 'us' and 'we'.

Question 2

Discuss the ways the syntactical patterning in the first sentence (lines 3-6) supports the purposes of the text.

The syntactical patterning, or parallelism, in the first sentence lets the Premier list the purposes of Australia day, for citizens 'to come together to reflect... to congratulate... and to celebrate...". This enables him to emphasise the ways in which the sense of community, which he seeks to promote, can be achieved, and it does this by packing the ideas efficiently and comprehensively.

Question 3

How does the phonological patterning in lines 7 – 11 support the purposes of the text?

The phonological patterning, 'from Casterton to Corryong, from Ouyen to Orbost...' arranges the names of Victorian towns alliteratively, to suggest the geographical area of Victoria in a way that is inclusive and crafted. The second instance of phonological patterning also relies on alliteration-family breakfast, barbeques, or backyard and beach cricket' and the repeated 'b' sound links the references to common activities enjoyed by Australian families.

Question 4**How does the speaker establish a sense of Australian identity and inclusivity between lines 15 – 23?**

The text celebrates Australia and Australian identity, with a focus on Victoria as the 'best State in Australia' - as this is a statement made by the Victorian Premier it is expected that he will foreground his own state. The speaker uses parallel constructions ('we thank' – 15, 'we thank'- 16, 'we welcome' – 20, 'we acknowledge' – 22) to emphasise that Victorians are united in their appreciation of the contributions everyone makes to the community, and that he speaks as the representative of all Victorian citizens. Repeated use of 'we', 'I', and 'us' achieves a sense of inclusivity, and personalises the speech whilst retaining its formal register. He mentions the contributions that immigrants have made to the society and at the same time acknowledges the traditional owners of the land, with the ritual words 'we acknowledge the traditional owners of our land and their elders, past and present'. This acknowledgement to country is more typically made at the start of a speech, rather than at the end. The text establishes a strong sense of the Australian way of life that many would see as 'stereotypical', e.g., through listing the activities of volunteer surf lifesavers, members of the SES and CFA and community health workers.

Question 5**How are lexis, semantic patterning and reference used to achieve cohesion in the text?**

The speech contains the words 'congratulate, celebrate, achievements', which all have positive connotations that support the purpose of the text, i.e., the celebration of Australia Day, and create a positive tone that is maintained throughout the text. The semantic field of 'community' is evident in words such as 'local' lines 7 and 9, 'collective' line 4, 'family' line 11, 'society' line 21, and frequent repetition of 'community' – lines 5, 8, 12, 13, 14, 16, 19, 20 creates a lexical pattern that binds the text together. Each paragraph of the speech builds on the last, e.g., lines 7-9 picks up the idea of 'community' that is the focus of lines 3-6; and lines 10-14 concentrates on the idea of 'local' that is mentioned in the previous lines by talking about 'family'. The speech opens with 'Australia Day' (line 1) and closes with reference to the holiday, and it is repeated on lines 8, 12 and 20. Furthermore, the call to 'celebrate' is reiterated, from its first mention in line 3, repeated in lines 9 and 10, to the final closing mention in line 24, thus creating cohesion and emphasising that the topic and the sentiments expressed by the speaker are important and very focused.

Section B – Analytical Commentary**Text 2 (30 marks)****Question 6**

Write an analytical commentary about Text 2.

In your response you should comment on the:

- **contextual factors affecting/surrounding the text**
- **social purpose and register of the text**
- **stylistic and discourse features of the text**

This conversation takes place in a public domain (on the train) where there are many potential listeners. The participants in this conversation do not appear to be constrained by an idea that informal discourse in such a context should take account of the negative face needs of other traveller by taking care not to offend them with vulgar language or invade their private space with their voices. However, M and F are slightly shy and self-conscious about their interaction, as shown by the extended silences (between lines 18 and 19, and between lines 32 and 33) where they search for a topic. The language used by the two speakers is standard Australian English, with colloquialisms and slang (line 15, 'gonna have to drop another four bucks', line 31 'piece of shit', line 31) appropriate to their age group, if not always to the public context.

The social purposes of the conversation are for F and M to connect with each other in an entertaining way, and to pass the time taken by the train journey. M and F flirt with each other (lines 41-47) and discuss light-weight topics that are of mutual interest but do not require much risk taking or depth of discussion. Their interaction is playful (lines 15 – 18).

Between lines 1 and 33 the topic management is equally shared. F introduces the topic of canvas shoes (line 1) but it is M who picks up the topic, reciting a story about his own shoes. F's support for him is shown in her echoing words and laughter (line 9 'stroll around @@@'). M introduces the topic of Nike shoes in line 19 and attempts to express an opinion about them. F disrupts the conventional observation of face needs by contradicting M's views (line 25), but M's critical comments about Matt's purchase (lines 31-32) allow him to reassert his negative face. In doing this, he shifts the topic to safer ground that focuses on a mutual friend (line 28) thus avoiding uncomfortable disagreement with F. At line 33, however, F introduces a new topic (security cards), and she threatens M's positive face needs with her ambiguous comment 'I feel like that's quite personal' (line 40). M again recover his face by making it into a joke, albeit slightly hesitant 'I use it, I use it to get girls'. F restores his face by picking up the theme and echoing his statements (lines 43 and 46). M and F observe turn taking conventions (e.g., lines 33 – 36) making statements or asking questions and responding appropriately, e.g., with laughter or minimal responses (e.g. line 54 'yeah' and 'mmm' line 98) . The overlaps at lines 8 and 9 as well as at 45 and 46 indicate the speakers are supportive of each other.

M and F adhere to the discourse conventions of their generation by talking in a snappy, smart fashion and employing many discourse particles, including quotative 'like' (lines 30, 44, 72, 75, 80), emphatic 'like' (line 12) and 'like' as a hedge (line 3). This reflects their age and the expected discourse structure amongst young people. Their language is highly colloquial, such as 'completely shredded' (l 12), 'drop' (line 15), 'sick'

(l. 19), 'sweet as' (line 58). They expect one another to understand the inferences in their comments about shoes, including attributes of brand names 'Nike' and 'New Balances' and in jargon associated with shoes such as 'low top' (l.22), 'high top' (l.25) and 'denims' (line 27)). The jargon of F's workplace is present in her narrative about working during the Melbourne Cup, such as 'rostered on... shift' (lines 52-53), 'recode' (line 80) and "escort' (line 86) and she assumes that M shares knowledge of this jargon.

These language items indicate in-group identification appropriate to their generation. Their language choices aim to present them as witty, ironic individuals who can 'talk the talk' of the group to which they belong, e.g., M - lines 14 – 15, F - lines 9, 16. In the exchange between lines 38 – 47 they take this further to jointly construct a jokey, make-believe scenario playing with language ('I'm actually a secret agent' line 38) to amuse themselves and finally express their solidarity with mutual laughter (line 47). Similarly, F's lexical choices 'banging', 'smash', 'frantic thumping' (lines 91- 95) dramatise actions of the door bangers in the narrative and prepare for the story's ironic punchline, line 97.

During F's long narrative (lines 48 – 84) M politely listens and back channels with 'yeah' (line 54), laughter (lines 77, 87), 'mmm' (line 98). F's high rising terminals indicate her wish to hold the floor (lines 49-67) and are also typical of her generation and gender. Her excited voice (lines 33 and 70) suggests that she is invested in the topic of conversation at these points and wants to express her enthusiasm. Her syntax is highly coordinated ('and' - lines 52, 60, 61, 63, 66, 67, 69, 75, 76, 78, 84, 'but' line 55, 'or' line 86 signalling her wish to hold the floor in order to progress the narrative without interruption from M. The few subordinate clauses she uses begin with the abbreviated 'cos' (lines 56, 79, 83) when F adds information to the main clauses to give the claims in them more credibility, and 'in case... unless' (lines 93-94), where she provides more detail in the adverbial clause to explain why 'you have to smash on the door' (line 92).

Section C – Essay (30 marks)

Question 7

How does language unite and divide communities

Students could consider the following points:

- ethnolects; non-standard varieties, covert norms construct users social and cultural identities: can include and reduce social distance; solidarity; can exclude and increase social distance – slang, jargon, semantic value of lexis
- gendered language can exclude; misogyny, sexism,
- standard English establishes national identity, language for commemoration and celebration
- SAE used in public discourse and lawmaking: can promote social harmony- Racial Vilification Act designed to promote social harmony and protect minority groups; public debate about proposed amendments to this Act
- Language as a social disadvantage > discrimination and prejudice

Question 8

The diversity of our culture means that all varieties of Australian English have a place. Discuss.

Students could consider the following points:

- diversity in terms of social and cultural backgrounds; gender; generation;
- All varieties have a place as expressions of identity: accents; idioms; non-standard syntax
- BUT ability to accommodate and be flexible in terms of choice of register necessary for solidarity
- Standard Australian English as variety with prestige and social capital has a place in expressing our national identity through legislation, discourse of celebration and commemoration;
- ways of reflecting a range of identities in contemporary texts

Question 9

'Technology is changing Australian English in surprising ways.' Do you agree?

Students should recognize that language change is inevitable and a reflection of social and cultural changes. Language change in itself is unsurprising. The question invites a discussion of whether or not technology is changing Australian English, and whether these changes are surprising. Students should seek to create a persuasive discussion of language change in Australia as a result of technology, and avoid merely presenting a compendium of features of language in the social media.

Students could consider the following points:

- Unpredictability of technological development (as explored for instance by Crystal in his discussions- since the early 2000s- of digitally mediated language), especially in relation to the affordances of the social media platforms such as chat rooms and their impact on turn-taking, cooperation and sequencing
- Changes to lexicology/ syntax/ semantics/ discourse forms in social media
 - morphology and orthography: abbreviations; short forms such as tweets; emoticons and emojis;

- Predictable rather than surprising change as in slang: ephemeral, as ever- adopted and discarded
- Does technology provide increased opportunities for innovation, playfulness,
- Global influences: media; popular culture; contact through internet with those who use English as a second or foreign language: the influence of these varieties on individuals' language and on notions of standard English