insight
▶innovative ▶engaging ▶evolving

YEAR 12 *Trial Exam Paper*

2018

ENGLISH

Written examination

Sample responses to Section C
with assessor comments

This book contains:

- three graded sample responses for Section C

- annotated assessor comments for each response including mark range, understanding of argument and point of view, analysis of language and visual features, and control and effectiveness of language use

SECTION C – Argument and persuasive language

Write an analysis of the ways in which argument and written and visual language are used in the material on pages 14 to 15 of the task book to try to persuade others to share the points of view presented.

SAMPLE RESPONSES

High-range response (Mark range: 8–10)

The questions of whether facial recognition technology should be more tightly regulated, and whether it offers more benefits than dangers, will only become more widely argued in the years ahead. **(1)** In a thoughtful consideration of the wider issues, science writer Eva Collis presents a cautionary view of the technology for online magazine *SocialTech Futures*. In a tone that is mainly moderate, but becomes increasingly emotive as she seeks to alert the reader to the technology's dangers, Collis acknowledges the benefits while ultimately emphasising its dangers. **(2)** The article is accompanied by a futuristic image of an expressionless face seemingly devoid of human personality, overlaid by dots and lines to suggest computer data, which reinforces the more sceptical points of Collis' article. In contrast, the comment by K Loung dismisses such concerns in a confident tone, asserting that facial recognition technology will ultimately have a positive impact on humanity. **(3)**

In keeping with her role as a science journalist, Collis uses mainly measured language with a neutral tone. Throughout the first half of her article she focuses on the facts, using specialised terms such as 'biometrics' and 'data points' to present an objective view of the issue. However, Collis begins with a reflective overview of the significance of the human face, signalling to the reader that, in the end, she will place more importance on conventional human qualities than on technological innovation. This is appropriate for the magazine's target audience, which would be expected to be interested in 'social changes' as much as the scientific details of 'new technologies'. **(4)** Nevertheless, Collis' repeated use of the term 'essential' suggests she places a high value on an innate, intangible aspect of humanity, and that she connects this with the appearance of a person's face. In addition, the use of inclusive language ('we think … our faces') positions readers to feel part of a human community, and to share the writer's ideas on the centrality of the human face to identity and selfhood. **(5)**

With phrases such as 'suddenly challenged' and 'however', Collis signals a shift in the argument's direction and tone. From the initial focus on the humanity of faces, she examines facial recognition technology, setting up an opposition between human faces on the one hand, and technology on the other. **(6)** Although her language continues to be measured and fairly objective, in subtle ways she positions the reader to see the technology as posing a form of threat to humanity. The figurative language of 'set in stone from birth' seems opposed to common understandings of our appearances – and those outlined in Collis' opening paragraph – but it also connects implicitly with the article's image, which is dominated by a stone-like face and a network of lines and dots. **(7)** The phrase 'set of data points', repeated in the image caption, also links with these lines and dots in the image, evoking the mathematical idea of a graph or formula, rather than the idea of a human face. The face itself lacks expression; the blank eyes and the mouth set in a straight line hide any underlying emotion. The blurred figures in the background walk through a bland city mall, suggesting – in combination with the face in the foreground – a society in which all people and all places are much the same, lacking personality or individuality. **(8)** On the whole, the image reinforces the idea of facial recognition technology as something that is opposed to humanity, and is even fundamentally <u>in</u>human. The image caption suggests that this

technology might 'reduce our sense of self', with the verb 'reduce' signalling that something would be lost from our humanity if this technology were to become mainstream.

Collis continues to use a fairly neutral tone and the language of logic and reason ('furthermore', 'as a result') even as she builds a picture of a world that is increasingly unpredictable and alarming. Phrases such as 'constant stream' and 'larger and more comprehensive' appear matter-of-fact, but they have the emotive effect of encouraging the reader to feel overwhelmed by the scale of technological change. **(9)** In addition, Collis conveys a sense of being out of control, heightening the reader's concern and anxiety. In the opening paragraph, she suggests that being able to 'shape and control' our appearance is something we see as an important part of our identity. **(10)** As Collis discusses facial recognition technology more thoroughly, though, she creates the impression that the technology will mean we lose this control. Phrases such as 'we don't really know' and 'we don't know where that photograph is going to end up' place the reader in a position of lacking knowledge of who possesses images of their face and what they might do with these images.

This feeling of a loss of control is heightened and turned into an appeal to fear with the word 'sinister', leading the reader to feel that the misuse of facial images is inevitable. Collis' tone becomes more emphatic and urgent in such phrases as 'there <u>are</u> serious concerns', with the use of italics for 'are' adding further emphasis to the reasons to worry. The possible negative consequences of the technology are listed in an order that progressively escalates the level of threat, building up to the idea that an innocent person might be accused of 'a horrific crime' – an appeal which is presented as a rhetorical 'what if', so that each reader is invited to imagine this nightmarish scenario applying to them. **(11)**

In contrast to this steadily increasing sense of uncertainty and fear, the comment from K Loung provides a relatively unconcerned and accepting view of facial recognition technology. **(12)** Loung uses more informal language and a relaxed tone in phrases such as 'there's little new' and 'there's nothing special' to counteract Collis' sense of urgency and caution, leading the reader to feel Collis' warning is unnecessary and her fears an overreaction. Similarly, 'it's just … data' undercuts the sinister associations that Collis creates with the technology, seeking to remove emotion from the debate and separate the data from the idea of a human face. **(13)** Finishing on a lighter note (partly created by alliteration), Loung asserts that 'a face … is more personal than a PIN', suggesting that in fact facial recognition technology could even help us to feel more human. Loung's confidence and assertiveness ('I for one', 'after all') help to reassure the reader that there is nothing to worry about.

Collis constructs a complex argument involving both factual detail and emotional appeals to convince the reader that current changes in the way facial recognition is used could in fact pose major threats to human freedom and privacy. She imparts information clearly and logically, while gradually building an argument to concern and even alarm the reader. In contrast, K Loung seeks to downplay the threat posed by this technology and its latest manifestations; whereas for Collis it is potentially dehumanising, for Loung it is 'just … data'. For both writers, though, facial recognition technology is clearly here to stay and will be a part of human society, for better or worse, for a long time to come. **(14)**

Annotations

(1) Begins by briefly contextualising the issue, so the viewpoints of the two writers can be placed within a broader debate.

(2) Identifies the writer, publishing context and overall approach of the main text; indicates that a shift in tone is central to how the writer presents the argument.

(3) Briefly discusses the image and the reader comment, indicating how they relate to the main piece.

(4) The discussion of tone and style is linked to the intended audience (making use of the supplied background information).

(5) Closely considers specific language choices and explains how these position the reader to respond not only to the opening section of the article but to the argument as a whole.

(6) Identifies an opposition – between human faces and facial recognition technology – as being central to the writer's argument. This enables language features, and the image, to be analysed in terms of how they create this sense of opposition.

(7) Makes connections between the image and language use in the text, discussing how written and visual language work together.

(8) Analyses the image thoroughly, using terms such as 'evoking' and 'suggesting' to identify possible effects on the reader.

(9) Examines the use of language to present information in a way that is largely factual, but also has an emotive effect.

(10) Analyses the way in which the article increasingly positions the reader to feel that facial recognition technology will bring about a loss of control; this analysis considers the combined effects of the article's structure and its use of language.

(11) Continues to consider structure in combination with tone and language choices; uses relevant metalanguage ('appeal to fear', 'rhetorical') to make the analysis more precise.

(12) Makes a smooth transition to the discussion of the comment by K Loung, using 'in contrast' to establish their opposing arguments as well as their different tones.

(13) Continues to analyse Loung's language using a compare/contrast approach; while direct comparison is not a requirement of the task, here it enables the student to demonstrate a stronger understanding of how each writer attempts to persuade their audience.

(14) The short conclusion sums up each writer's argument and the main features of their language use; the final sentence finds a connection between the two pieces and also places them in the wider context identified at the start of the analysis.

Understanding of the argument(s) presented and point(s) of view expressed

This response shows a strong understanding of the arguments and ideas presented in both texts. It considers how, in the first text, structure and shifts in tone work in combination with language and persuasive techniques to position the reader to view facial recognition technology with a degree of concern. The analysis of the reader comment explains how it engages with and works in opposition to the main text, aiming to reassure the reader.

Analysis of ways in which language and visual features are used to present an argument and to persuade

The analysis of language is thorough and precise; specific word choices are carefully considered and discussed in terms of their effects on the reader and their contribution to the writer's overall argument. The main image is analysed in some detail and clear connections are made with the written text so that the ways in which image and text work together can be discussed. An element of visual language that could have been considered is the banner across the top of each page; the student could have discussed the scientific associations of this banner as reinforcing those of the main image, or possibly as contrasting with the text's emphasis on human identity rather than technological progress.

The student refers to the use of tone throughout, and explains the effects of the shift to a more emotive tone in the second half of the article. The discussion of tone always explains how tone works with specific persuasive techniques (such as an appeal to fear) to present the argument. The contrast in tone between the main text and the reader comment is also well observed.

Control and effectiveness of language use, as appropriate to the task

The wide and sophisticated vocabulary employed in this response helps the analysis to be precise and effective. Adjectives such as 'expressionless', 'sceptical', 'intangible' and 'dehumanising' show understanding of the point of view being presented as well as of the way it is being presented. Metalanguage is used occasionally to identify a persuasive device (e.g. 'figurative language', 'rhetorical'), but the focus remains on the effects of the writer's language. Expressions such as 'signalling to the reader' and 'each reader is invited to imagine' are used regularly throughout the analysis so that the persuasive effects of written and visual language are always considered.

The comment is analysed largely through a comparison with the main text, as signalled by the phrase 'in contrast'; terms such as 'counteract' and 'undercuts' show how the comment works in opposition to Collis' article. The student thus demonstrates an understanding that the two pieces share the same context and intended audience, with their language choices and persuasive strategies suiting their different purposes.

Mid-range response (Mark range: 5–7)

Eva Collis' opinion piece, 'Facing the future', explores the impact of advances in facial recognition technology on individuals' ownership of their identities, as well as on the social issues of privacy and safety. It is published in *SocialTech*, an online magazine dedicated to discussion of social changes resulting from new technologies. 'Facing the future' is intended to raise awareness about the possible implications of the use of facial recognition in everyday life. **(1)** In a measured tone, Collis presents her arguments logically and forthrightly. While she avoids emotional arguments about the topic, her careful use of evidence is intended to elicit fear in readers, making them think about the negative effects of changes in technology advances. **(2)**

Collis attempts to engage readers from the very beginning, by discussing the essential role that the human face plays in identity. Her use of inclusive language ('we think of ourselves', 'we also feel', 'we hope' etc.) in the opening paragraph draws the reader in and inclines them to consider their own self-interests in relation to the topic. Collis refers to everyday things that readers will be able to understand and imagine, such as photographs used for IDs and social media, and then introduces the idea of facial recognition technology later. This is intended to make readers feel they understand the issue and make them more inclined to accept the writer's following arguments. **(3)**

The discussion about how individuals can 'shape and control' the ways that others perceive them by altering their face links with the opening line of the second paragraph, which presents one of the main arguments. Here, Collis is quick to portray the growing use of facial recognition technology as a sudden challenge to people's ability to 'own and control' their appearance. She depicts the growing use of such technology as a binary opposition between 'highly regulated environments, such as airports' and normal, everyday life. This implies that the technology will not be controllable in everyday settings. **(4)**

The accompanying image of a robotic face covered in a web of data points reiterates to readers that they would not be in control of their identities in an age of technological disruption. The featureless face, with its empty, lifeless eyes and lack of personality, inclines readers to feel uneasy about this assault on the concept of individuality. **(5)** The blurred figures in the background of the image also remind readers that, at any point, they could be the next ones to have their facial features reduced to 'a set of data points'.

Collis increases the stakes, as well as the pace, through her use of immediate language. This includes saying things such as 'widely circulated', 'constant stream' and 'photographed often'. She culminates the paragraph with words such as 'larger' and 'more', which has the intended effect of making the issue seem more important in the eyes of the reader. **(6)**

The use of repeated references to social media – in this case, Facebook and Instagram – are aimed at, again, making the issue of facial recognition technology more accessible to readers. Collis latches onto the concept that 'we don't really know where our images are stored', and beats readers over the head with this idea **(7)** through repetition of the phrase 'without your knowing'. This has the intended effect **(8)** of appealing to a reader's sense of anxiety, as they imagine the consequences of 'a private image' being released into the public sphere.

While Collis' opinion piece focuses primarily on the effect of facial recognition technology on social issues, it also broadens to examine issues of national security and identity theft. Collis acknowledges the benefits of the technology to society, showing readers that she is level-headed and open to the possibilities that it presents, as long as the 'serious concerns around privacy and personal freedoms' are considered 'before facial recognition becomes irreversibly integrated with

our everyday lives'. Such an approach invites readers to regard Collis as well-informed and cautious, and compels them to regard the issue in the same way. **(9)**

Collis questions how accurate the facial recognition software is. She gives a hypothetical scenario where the reader is identified as a murderer. This real-world situation – particularly something as significant as murder – really touches home for readers and convinces them to think twice about accepting facial recognition. **(10)**

The online comment by K Loung uses a dismissive tone to depict Collis' arguments as over-anxious. Loung regards the benefits of facial recognition in combatting terrorism as enough of a reason to accept its widespread use: 'the human eye can't scan hundreds or thousands of faces in a few milliseconds and identify wanted criminals or would-be terrorists'. **(11)** Loung's comment is an attempt to convince readers to consider their own self-interests ahead of the society's interests. This is a stark opposition to the arguments presented by Collis in her opinion piece. **(12)**

Annotations

(1) The opening sentences clearly introduce the article and outline the issue and the contention. The material provided in the background information is merely repeated here, and could have been reworded to show greater understanding of the piece's intended audience.

(2) Identifies the tone used by the writer throughout the piece and briefly indicates how this tone might affect readers. The introduction should also refer, if only briefly, to the main image and any additional text (in this case, the comment by K Loung).

(3) This point shows some appreciation of how the writer has structured the article. However, it shows a lack of understanding of the target audience, who would likely already be well aware of facial recognition technology, given that they are on a website devoted to new technologies.

(4) Identifies a main argument put forth by the writer, but fails to support the description of argument with an analysis of how it might affect readers.

(5) Provides a clear and strong analysis of the image and outlines its potential impact on readers. The discussion could be strengthened by clearer links between the image and the arguments within the text.

(6) This paragraph is awkwardly phrased and, while including some relevant textual evidence, does not provide any analysis of the language.

(7) Although the repetition of an idea or phrase is worth discussing, you should avoid colloquialisms such as this in formal pieces of writing.

(8) Repeating the phrase 'this has the intended effect' (or similar) reduces the readability and fluency of the response. Sentence structures and vocabulary should be varied to produce a coherent and fluent piece of writing.

(9) Uses evidence from the text to show how Collis presents herself as balanced and even-handed, and discusses how this influences the reader's view on the issue.

(10) This analysis could be developed in more detail, and again lapses into colloquial expression ('touches home').

(11) The use of long quotes detracts from the point being made. It is more beneficial to choose short quotes that can be integrated into the paragraph, so that they support your argument rather than becoming the primary focus. Writing out long quotes also wastes valuable time in the exam.

(12) The final sentence refers to both the opinion piece and the comment, outlining differences between the two, but is somewhat tacked on to the end of this paragraph. A short concluding paragraph summarising both pieces would have been a more effective ending to the response.

Understanding of the argument(s) presented and point(s) of view expressed

The response shows a clear understanding of the arguments presented. The comment is treated too briefly, perhaps because it was left to the very end of the response. Addressing any secondary pieces in the introduction is one way of ensuring they receive adequate attention. The more extensive analysis of Collis' piece demonstrates an understanding of her point of view, although the assertion that 'she avoids emotional arguments' is not entirely accurate and is contradicted by statements later in the analysis such as 'appealing to a reader's sense of anxiety'.

Analysis of ways in which language and visual features are used to present an argument and to persuade

Language and visual features are analysed with moments of insight, though the effects of language on the reader are often expressed in terms that are too simple or general. The phrase 'convinces them to think twice' goes part of the way to analysing how the writer is attempting to persuade the reader to agree, but is too vague to be really effective, and neglects to explain how this effect links with the writer's argument (i.e. that we should be cautious about implementing this technology too quickly and without necessary safeguards).

The discussion of the image is fairly detailed and makes some good points; the analysis of the image would be strengthened if it were integrated more with the analysis of the written text.

Control and effectiveness of language use, as appropriate to the task

Overall this is a clearly written response with occasional lapses in expression. At times the vocabulary is effective (e.g. 'robotic face … with its empty, lifeless eyes') in conveying the ways in which written and visual language express a point of view; at other times the expression is less precise, and colloquial expressions should always be avoided in an analytical essay. While the writing generally flows well, it could be improved by varying sentence lengths and structures to a greater extent.

The response tends to leap from point to point without many strong links between paragraphs. Although this doesn't necessarily detract from an analysis, a response scoring in the high range will usually be more coherent and fluent, moving logically from one point to the next and making connections between the different parts of the task material.

Low-range response (Mark range: 2–4)

Eva Collis' article 'Facing the future' talks about how our faces are more unique than our fingerprints, and that our faces are used for identity recognition by the government and sometimes even companies like Apple. **(1)** Her article was published on a website about social changes resulting from new technologies, with an intended audience of readers interested in technology. **(2)**

In the article the writer asks many rhetorical questions, which shows that she doesn't know the answers. **(3)** One example of this is when Eva **(4)** writes 'when identity theft includes the image of a person's face, what protections are in place?' Another question Eva asks the reader is 'how easily can databases of faces and other personal information be hacked into?', but she does not give an answer. These questions make the reader feel scared about the bad ways the technology could be used.

Another persuasive technique Eva uses a lot in the article is inclusive language. **(5)** The reader is included from the beginning of the article, like when Eva says 'we think of ourselves as unique, and of our faces as reflecting this uniqueness'. This is an important point because the uniqueness of faces means that companies can use technology to recognise each customer. There are many other cases of inclusive language like 'we post them (photos) on social media to convey something essential about ourselves', and 'our idea of identity'. These assume the reader already has photos on social media. These readers share the same idea of identity, which Eva uses to get the reader onside about the harm and uncertainty of facial recognition technology. **(6)** This is stressed when she says 'we don't know where that photograph is going to end up'. This inclusive language makes the reader anxious about the use of photographs of their face.

In the article Eva uses strong words like 'terrorism', 'violent crime', 'surveillance' and 'theft'. These are scary words that make the reader feel scared about facial recognition technology. **(7)** The words make the reader feel like the government and other companies are watching them and this is out of our control. This is echoed when Eva suggests that with 97% accuracy, the technology could fail and think you are someone else, like a murderer. **(8)**

The image in the article is like the facial recognition is happening now, and it is mapping the unique face. The image suggests that we are going to lose our sense of self because we are being turned into data. This is why there is one person-like figure in the front of the image, while everyone else is in the background, walking away from the camera. **(9)**

Commenter K Loung disagrees with Eva, stating that police and governments storing data about citizens is normal and has gone on long before facial recognition technology. **(10)** Loung argues that the technology is an improvement, because 'the human eye can't scan hundreds or thousands of faces in a few seconds'. **(11)**

The article tells the reader that facial recognition technology is bad because we don't know how our faces are going to be used, and that it might make mistakes like identifying you as a murderer. But if the technology is 97% accurate, that doesn't seem likely, which means we don't need to be scared. Eva presents a lot of uncertainty about the dangers of facial recognition technology, but the consequences are still in the future. Facial recognition technology could be good for society, particularly because governments can keep track of citizens and security. **(12)**

Annotations

(1) The introduction oversimplifies the contention of 'Facing the future'. The student has focused on some minor points made in the article, such as the uniqueness of the face, instead of stating the main contention.

(2) Although this introduction includes some relevant context, it is mainly copied directly from the background information box. It should also make some reference to the main image and to the reader comment.

(3) The student correctly states that rhetorical questions are used in the article, but does not analyse *how* they persuade the reader. Instead, the student criticises the writer, which is not part of the task, and shows a lack of understanding of the purpose of a rhetorical question.

(4) The student often refers to the writer by their first name, which is not appropriate in an analytical piece of writing. In general, refer to a writer by their last name only.

(5) This paragraph begins as though the task is to list persuasive techniques. You do not always need to name a persuasive technique; your focus should be on how the language works to persuade. Inclusive language can be important, but there is more language in the article to analyse than just uses of 'we' and 'our'.

(6) Although the expression could be improved here, the student has analysed how the language persuades the reader.

(7) There is an attempt at analysis here; however, it is weakened by the lack of engagement with how the language is used to present an argument. The statement 'scary words that make the reader feel scared' is tautological.

(8) The student makes connections between a number of the writer's points of argument. This is a good step, but the discussion could be improved with stronger analysis rather than summary.

(9) The discussion here merely describes the image, rather than analysing its persuasive effects. The discussion could be improved by relating the image to the article, including some quotes from the article and linking them to elements of the image.

(10) The student notes that Collis and the commenter Loung have different opinions. However, this is a short summary of the commenter's argument, not analysis. This paragraph would be improved by analysing how Loung's language persuades the reader, and how the arguments rebut Collis.

(11) This is a well-chosen quote, but its contribution to the writer's argument and effect on the reader should be explained.

(12) The concluding paragraph states the student's point of view on the issue, which must be avoided in this task. Instead, the conclusion should summarise the writers' overall approaches and use of language.

Understanding of the argument(s) presented and point(s) of view expressed

This response displays a limited understanding of argument, simplifying each writer's position on facial recognition technology. There is no real recognition of the complex point of view presented by Collis, who acknowledges benefits of the technology as well as its dangers, nor of the ways in which Loung's comment seeks to counter Collis' argument.

The student concludes by stating their own view on the issue. Although this does, in a small way, convey some understanding of the task material, it is not part of an effective analysis and does not fulfil the task requirement which is to analyse 'the ways in which argument and written and visual language are used … to try to persuade others'.

Analysis of ways in which language and visual features are used to present an argument and to persuade

Although there are some potentially useful observations about language, the response rarely attempts to explain how language is working to position and influence the reader. The discussion of rhetorical questions fails to show an understanding of their purpose and their place within the argument; likewise, inclusive language is identified but not effectively analysed. The phrase 'get the reader onside', although too informal, does at least lead to a useful observation about the idea of the shared experience of social media bringing readers together; more discussion like this would have improved the analysis significantly.

The use of visual language in the image is neglected; the comment 'we are being turned into data' could have been developed with some specific references to the diagram superimposed on the face, for instance. Some detailed discussion of the main image is required for a response to score in the mid-range or above; while there is some discussion of the image in this response, it is too simplistic.

Control and effectiveness of language use, as appropriate to the task

Control of language is weak in this response. Although sentences are, for the most part, correctly structured, there are regular lapses in grammar and a tendency to use informal and vague expressions. A more varied vocabulary would make the response more fluent and prevent the meaningless repetition of words such as 'scary'/'scared'.

Repeated sentence beginnings ('The image …', 'This is …') create a stilted style and lead the response to repeat similar points and to be overly descriptive. For instance, the sentence beginning 'One example of this is …' is followed by the sentence 'Another question Eva asks the reader is …' The result is a list of examples without any analysis. The use of varied sentence openers, such as 'The likely effect on the reader is to …', 'This positions the reader to think/feel …' or 'This creates the impression of …', would help the student to move from an example into an analysis of how that example is working to persuade.