



VICTORIAN ASSOCIATION FOR THE TEACHING OF ENGLISH

2021 VATE VCE UNITS 3-4 ENGLISH SAMPLE EXAM

Section C – Supplementary material prepared by Karen Graham

VCE® is a registered trademark of the VCAA. The VCAA does not endorse the content of this supplementary material. These notes cannot be reproduced whole or part thereof without the permission of the Victorian Association for the Teaching of English.

NB: This analysis of the argument and language used in Section C is intended to provide some suggestions for a student response. It represents **one** interpretation of the material and identifies some possible analytical approaches. There is no intention to provide a comprehensive analysis of the material. Students are not expected to identify and analyse everything, merely to show their understanding of the argument and how it is deliberately couched in language for an intended impact on the reader. It is an attempt to show how argument and language complement each other. Student responses will need to be appropriately structured and will be much shorter given the time constraints of the examination.

Section C will be assessed against the following criteria:

Criteria	Meaning
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• understanding of the argument(s) presented and point(s) of view expressed	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• identify the main contention• identify some of the supporting arguments• track the development of the argument• identify any major shifts in the argument
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• analysis of ways in which language and visual features are used to present an argument and to persuade	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• show how argument and language complement each other• explain how language is used to present the argument• identify the tone and tone shifts that signal a change in the argument• explain how language is used to persuade and position the audience
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• control and effectiveness of language use, as appropriate to the task	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• use of appropriate vocabulary• accurate use of analytical language and metalanguage• appropriate sentence and paragraph structure

Students need to show their understanding of the arguments presented, and then analyse how authors use language to support their arguments in order to persuade readers to agree with them. Analysis of both argument and language will answer the following questions:

- **What** is being argued? (contention and supporting arguments)
- **How** is it being argued? (language and persuasive techniques)
- **Why** is it being argued in this particular way? (intended impact on audience)
- What **tones** are apparent in the speaker's voice and how do they shift with particular **language choices**?
- What role do the **visual elements** play in relation to the point of view?

Context

The Jacksonville Football and Netball Club has suffered significant financial pressures due to the COVID-19 outbreak and is confronting an uncertain future. The Club Committee, headed by President Michael Ansari, is considering a merger with neighbouring Meadowhaven Sports Club. A Zoom meeting is arranged to inform Club members of the considerations surrounding the proposed merger.

In arguing for the proposed merger, it is not totally clear whether Michael Ansari is seeking Club community discussion and input into a decision yet to be made, or whether he is presenting the members with a *fait accompli* (i.e. justifying a decision that has already been made).

Audience

The speech is directed to all interested members of the Jacksonville Football and Netball Club, both players and supporters.

Contention

Ansari contends that the survival of the Jacksonville Football and Netball Club depends on its successful merger with the Meadowhaven Sports Club.

Supporting arguments

There are a number of supporting arguments including:

1. Ansari opens his opinion piece in a strong, personal voice that is warm and sentimental as he makes an assertive appeal to the community's collective traditions and calls on the shared spirit of the Club.
2. He critically examines the costs of the COVID pandemic on both physical and human resources, particularly emphasising the financial difficulties that threaten the continued existence of the Club.
3. Ansari argues, in detail, the advantages of merging with the neighbouring Meadowhaven Sports Club, identifying the positive impacts that it will have on Jacksonville members.
4. He concludes by acknowledging the difficulties and obstacles posed by the merger, and presenting a strategy for moving forwards into a more positive future.

Tone

Ansari opens his piece in a highly personal, colloquial voice as he recalls with barely contained emotion the familiarity and warmth associated with being a member of the Jacksonville Club; however, this evolves into a disappointed and concerned tone as he confronts the threats posed by the pandemic. His comments take on the more assured and controlled voice of leadership as he outlines the potential advantages of merging with Meadowhaven. He detours into a brief, nostalgic and sentimental mood as he recalls the history of the Club, but completes his article in a reassuring, personal voice that calls for members' input – and clearly outlines the road ahead.

What is consistent throughout Ansari's speech is the use of the informality of colloquial language that connects him closely to the membership of the Jacksonville Club.

Purpose

His purpose is to highlight the physical, human and financial problems of the Club to its members in such a way as to give them no other choice but to consider a merger with Meadowhaven.

Some points of analysis

- The speech opens in a warm, inviting manner 'Welcome everyone. It's great so many of you can join us'. The strong, personal voice of Michael Ansari connects to his audience as he shares his frustrations with the limitations of online meetings – 'I know these virtual catchups aren't the real deal' – and then identifies his shared love of the Club – 'they remind us that the Jacksonville spirit is still alive'. The easy movement from 'I' to the inclusive 'us' calls on the shared local loyalties, pride and vested interests that the members have experienced at their local club.

This emotional connection is sustained with the emphasis '... because I treasure our club so much' and '... because we all treasure it so much', and the hint that Ansari's voice breaks as he repeats this idea of valuing the Club appeals to the members who are invited to share his broken-hearted response to its potential loss.

- In sharp juxtaposition to the warmth of 'treasure', Ansari's mood changes abruptly with the phrase 'cold, hard facts'. There is a sense of foreboding in the short sentence that is borne out in the following list of financial setbacks that the club has experienced – 'no rego fees, no bar takings, nothing from the canteen' – the negative repetition is ongoing and the audience is led through a litany of spiralling costs and ever-increasing debts that build to a critical crisis 'We are in deep financial trouble'. This confrontation with disaster positions the membership to face the worst, and Ansari cleverly uses the inclusive 'we' and 'us' – 'we are', 'if we're going to survive', 'we have no choice' – to ensure that they take their share of responsibility for the decisions to be made about the future of the club.
- Significant is the single sentence paragraph that changes the mood and tone of Ansari's presentation – 'I want to reassure you that your Committee and I have been working together to resolve these problems ... and we believe we now have a solution.' – its deliberate placement after the establishment of a crisis of 'difficult decisions' and 'drastic action' (with the use of the hard, repetitive d-sound to emphasise drama at play) heightens the change in voice. Having confronted the members with fears of bankruptcy and collapse, Ansari is now seeking to reassure his audience in a controlled, measured tone that there is a solution to the calamity, and that he is a part of it.

- The language of crisis gives way to the hope associated with an answer. He declares adamantly that ‘there is really only one realistic solution’. This takes away choice from the members and leaves them with no alternative but a merger. However, Ansari presents the issue in a more acceptable manner than an inevitability. He looks for audience sympathy for Meadowhaven as they have experienced the same pain as Jacksonville by being ‘hit hard by COVID’. Then he seeks to relieve their feelings of failure by claiming ‘they reached out with an offer to collaborate’. Meadowhaven is characterised as acting first, seeking Jacksonville’s help, which relieves some of the humiliating feelings of submission that members of the Club may be experiencing. He uses the language of ‘rivalry’, ‘ally’, ‘opposition’ that is almost warlike in tone, and finishes deliberately with a proposal that promises ‘survival’ with all its connotations of being rescued from probable death.
- Having identified the difficulties of the proposed merger i.e. alliance with a traditional enemy, giving in to a more powerful neighbour, issues of rivalry, Ansari now logically lists the benefits. Using the clear signposts of ‘Firstly ... Secondly ... Finally...’, he positions his members to acknowledge the benefits of joining with Meadowhaven i.e. increased children’s participation (appealing to families), a girls’ football team (appealing to gender equality), increase in supporter numbers resulting in ‘more money’ (appealing to the hip pocket nerve) and the opportunity to ‘grow our talent pool’ and be winners (appeal to desire for success). Ansari makes the ultimate promise ‘Premierships will follow. Trust me’ and places his reputation on the line as a challenge to the members.
- The President finally confronts the most challenging issues of all – the hard-to-categorise, emotional connections that the Jacksonville members have developed to their Club over many years. He uses the phrase ‘our sense of identity’, one that is hard to articulate, but is shared by the President, Committee members, players and supporters. It is encapsulated in the words of their song and logo – ‘Stronger Together’. This is a strong, emotional argument tinged with the nostalgia for the past – ‘history’, ‘past premierships’, ‘honour board’. Ansari brings his audience to a moment of shared unity – and then confronts them with the harsh words of present reality – ‘our future’, ‘lifeline’ ‘survive’.
- The language Ansari uses in his last two paragraphs indicates (although never states outright) that the decision to merge has been made. For example, he looks for ‘your support’; he wonders about a new club name, team colours, a new logo. An invitation is offered to all to participate in ‘the decision-making’ and this is an inclusive request that encourages the members to feel valued and be part of the process.

He comes full circle and closes on the notes of community, spirit and inclusivity that he opened with. Calling on the Jacksonville ethos, Ansari’s final words are ‘together and stronger’ which call on the loyalty and tradition of the audience to do what is best for the Jacksonville Football and Netball Club.

- It is important to recognise that while President Michael Ansari delivers a carefully constructed speech to the Jacksonville Club members, he consistently uses a colloquial form of language that is easily understood by his audience. Yes, his tone deliberately changes a number of times from harshly confrontational to warmly nostalgic, but his vocabulary choices are very down-to-earth and often informal. Just a few examples from across the presentation – ‘these virtual catchups aren’t the real deal’, some of the facts are ‘pretty hard to swallow’, a chance ‘to get back on our feet’, ‘jumping up and down with excitement’, ‘forget about patching things up’, ‘we’ll thrash

these out in our discussions’. Consider how this language makes him more accessible to his fellow Club members, and helps to make his unpopular position more palatable.

The graphic

The speech is accompanied by a PowerPoint slide that has been deliberately constructed to confront the audience with the potential merger between Jacksonville Football and Netball Club and Meadowhaven Sports Club.

The human figures are drawn energetically playing their respective sports of football and netball, both women and men stretching upwards to achieve their best. The premiership cup that appears in the centre of the slide reinforces this hungry desire to be successful, and visually represents the President’s promise that if the merger occurs ‘Premierships will follow. Trust me.’

The merger of the two clubs is presented as two intersecting circles that are rotating towards the unity and harmony that premiership success can bring.

The enlarged words in the heading – TOGETHER = STRONGER – are the same words from Jacksonville Club’s logo and club song. However, this time they have been reversed and reshaped into a formula that promises improvement, the strength of greater numbers, the quality that comes with unity, and, of course, the promise of premierships. Jacksonville’s mantra ‘Stronger Together’ has been reshaped into a call for unity – and not only unity between clubs, but there is also a call for unity between men and women as football and netball teams cross gender lines more easily than in times past. Again, there is a sense that this is the announcement of a new club that will do new things, and be successful at it.

The screenshot of Michael Ansari reveals a persona that is very relatable to his audience. There is none of the suit-and-tie attire that might be expected of a President of a sporting club, but rather a very open, friendly, smiling face, wearing headphones, that connects very smoothly to his colloquialisms of ‘the real deal’, we’ve been ‘doing it tough’, and ‘we’ll thrash these out in our discussions’.

Finally, the email address of the President connected to ‘HAVE YOUR SAY’ is a visual invitation to the audience to participate and respond to what they’ve heard. While there is no indication that membership response will have any bearing on the merger decision, the Committee’s openness to feedback is very reassuring to the audience and characterises them as transparent and willing to listen.