



# ***INSIGHT***

## **YEAR 12 *Exam Practice***

# **2013**

## **English**

### **Section C Exam Practice**

### ***Analysis of Language Use***

#### **This book contains:**

- 10 practice scenarios for Section C of the English exam
- High-level sample student responses for 3 scenarios
- Tips and guidelines for the exam

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## Exam guidelines

Section C of your end-of-year exam will focus on analysing persuasive language. **This section is worth one-third of your total mark for the exam.** You will be required to write an extended piece of prose that analyses the use of written language and visual features in an unseen text or texts.

Allow one hour for this task – 5 minutes for planning, 50 minutes for writing and 5 minutes for proofreading.

## Exam criteria

### Exam criteria for Section C – Analysis of Language Use

#### What you have to do

Understanding of the ideas  
and points of view presented

- Show a clear understanding of the point of view by identifying the **main contention** and the **main points** or arguments that are used to support it.

Analysis of ways in which  
language and visual features  
are used to present a point of  
view and to persuade readers

- Demonstrate an understanding of some of the persuasive strategies used to present a point of view and position readers to agree.
- Show **how** the writer's language is designed to have an impact on the audience through particular **word choices** and/or **visual features**.
- Look for explicit or implicit appeals to the **values** that this audience might be expected to endorse to show a **perceptive** understanding of how language and visual features are used.

Controlled and effective use  
of language appropriate to  
the task

- Your language should be **clear and precise**, with accurate spelling and correct grammar.
- Make effective use of **appropriate vocabulary** to discuss the ways in which language is used to persuade.

## How can you improve your score for Section C?

Past exam assessment reports suggest that high-, medium- and low-level answers have the following characteristics. To achieve a top mark for Section C, aim to have your analysis resemble the description in the left column of the table below.

A high-level response ...	A medium-level response ...	A low-level response ...
shows that the student has read the 'Background information' (if provided) carefully and demonstrates their understanding of the <b>context</b> of the piece	shows some evidence that the student has read the 'Background information' and some understanding of the context of the piece	shows little or no awareness of the context of the piece
maintains an appropriate balance between summarising the piece and <b>analysing the language</b>	demonstrates some analysis of persuasive language	shows little analysis of persuasive language
focuses on analysing <b>how language is used to persuade</b> rather than on identifying techniques, and demonstrates an <b>understanding of the holistic effects</b> of persuasive language	focuses too much on identifying techniques rather than on analysing language, and demonstrates limited awareness of the holistic effects of language	only identifies techniques, showing little or no awareness of the holistic effects of language
analyses the <b>tone</b> of the piece and notes where and why it changes, if it does	makes limited note of the tone of the piece and any changes in tone	demonstrates little understanding of the tone of the piece and any changes in tone
<b>incorporates analysis of visual material smoothly</b> , noting how it supports or contradicts the point of view presented in the text	includes analysis of visual material but does not necessarily incorporate it smoothly into the response	excludes analysis of visual material or the analysis is very basic

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## SECTION C – Analysis of language use

### Scenario 1: Sports sponsorship and fast-food companies

#### Instructions for Section C

Section C requires students to analyse the ways in which language and visual features are used to present a point of view.

Section C is worth one-third of the total assessment for the examination.

Read the opinion piece ‘Sports sponsorship and kids’ health: who are the real winners?’ and the accompanying comments and then complete the task below.

Write your analysis as a coherently structured piece of prose.

#### TASK

How is written and visual language used to attempt to persuade the audience to share the points of view of the opinion piece and the accompanying comments?

#### Background information

- The opinion piece on pages 8–10 appeared on *The Conversation* website, which claims to provide ‘independent analysis and commentary from academics and researchers’.
- Also included are two comments from readers posted in response to the article.

2 October 2012, 4.48pm AEST

## **Sports sponsorship and kids' health: who are the real winners?**

By Rona Macniven, Researcher in physical activity at University of Sydney, and Bridget Kelly, Lecturer, Nutrition and Metabolism, School of Molecular Bioscience at University of Sydney



*Research shows sports sponsorship works to improve brand recall and positive attitudes among children and adolescents.*

Over the weekend, Australian children and their parents witnessed some of the country's finest sportsmen display feats of strength, skill and endurance in the Australian Football League (AFL) and National Rugby League (NRL) grand finals. I'm sure many young people would have been inspired to emulate the actions and successes of their heroes.

What spectators and viewers would also have seen was the paradoxical promotion of Carlton breweries and McDonald's in commercial advertisements during the games. The websites of the NRL and the AFL reveal a similar picture of sponsorship and marketing by unhealthy food and drink companies such as Coca-Cola and Red Bull.

We've also recently seen television adverts for Coles and Cadbury, where Adam Goodes, the captain of the winning Sydney Swans, and player Dale Thomas promote products that are hardly the fuel of champions.

**SCENARIO 1** – continued



It's understood, and even expected, that adults might enjoy a few beers and perhaps some pub food during these annual events (and, no doubt, at player post-match celebrations). But the impact of ever-present junk food and alcohol advertising on those of a more impressionable age is of concern.

## **Advertising's effect on children**

Children's exposure to high levels of junk-food advertising affects the food and drink they like, ask for, buy and consume. As for alcohol, the World Health Organization (WHO) has been warning that children should be protected from the harms of alcohol promotion for many years.

Current statistics also tell us almost one in four Australian children is currently overweight or obese. And few eat enough of the right foods or do enough physical activity for healthy development.

We also know that sport sponsorship (financial or in-kind assistance given in return for promotional opportunities) works. Research by the University of Sydney and the Cancer Council NSW has shown that children aged ten to 14 are influenced by food and beverage sponsorship in sport, with strong brand recall and positive attitudes to sponsors. Almost half of participants could recall sponsors of their favourite elite sports team.

This research has also revealed objections from parents and children, sports-club officials and sport governing bodies, and elite athletes themselves around sport sponsorship involving unhealthy food and beverage companies.

Of course, it's not just elite sport that is promoting unhealthy food and alcohol. Children are also exposed to this type of marketing at their own clubs, where many spend up to 2.5 hours per week. A study of 108 junior community sports clubs in NSW and the ACT found that 17% of the 347 sponsors were food or beverage companies, 50% of which were deemed unhealthy.

## **Time for change**

Despite levels of physical activity among Australian children falling short of recommended guidelines, community-level sports clubs remain a key setting for participation, with 63% of five- to 14-year-old children involved in organised sport.

Change is clearly needed to shift the focus away from visual presence of unhealthy sponsorship, while ensuring sports clubs remain commercially viable. Many clubs perceive this sponsorship as essential to their operations. But this funding actually represents a relatively small proportion of their income, even though it gives companies major promotion opportunities.

Over the past decade, Victoria and Western Australia have successfully implemented alternative arrangements to fund community sport through the government-funded health-promotion foundations. These foundations provide funding to community sports clubs on the basis that concurrent funding from unhealthy sources will not be allowed. National rollout of these state successes would be an optimal solution.

Another alternative is to establish a public–private collaboration, funded through philanthropic and corporate support. Organisations could contribute funds to a centralised, independent body, which then hands responsibility for distributing funds to sports clubs on the basis of need and other agreed principles.

A holistic approach could not only tackle unhealthy food and drink but also promote increased and inclusive participation in physical activity. A focus on other health and social behaviours relevant to sport (such as sun safety, injury prevention, social inclusion and smoke-free environments) is also important.

National policy action around reducing alcohol sponsorship in sport was recently announced by the Australian National Preventative Health Agency (ANPHA). The new Community Sponsorship Fund partners government with national sporting organisations to address binge drinking and the influence of alcohol promotion on young Australians. However, unlike the state-based initiatives, this approach is limited to alcohol and doesn't include either rugby codes or AFL.

Gone are the days of tobacco prominence in sport. And alcohol presence is also following suit through initiatives like that of ANPHA. We now need consistency and progress through similar political will at the national level to tackle problems in sport arising from unhealthy food and soft drinks.

## Comments

### 1. Eli

I don't think the occasional hamburger is a big deal if kids are out playing sport and eating well the rest of the time.

I think it is unfair to say that food companies are the only questionable sponsors for sport – what about gambling advertisers? The fast-food chains are copping a bashing, but really all of these sponsors should be looked at more closely.

The bottom line is that it's the parents who hold the purse strings. They are the ones ultimately in control of what their kids eat, so if we have an obesity epidemic, they're the ones whose behaviour and attitudes need to change.

2 October 2012, 5:30pm AEST

## **2. Nutritionist**

It concerns me greatly that sporting events normalise the consumption of junk food. Studies show that what kids are eating after sport often contains more kilojoules than they burn playing the sport.

Sponsorship of sport also means that teachers and parents don't like to criticise the hand that feeds them, a dangerous state of affairs. With obesity rates at an all-time high, it's time to stop sending such contradictory and confusing messages to kids. Playing sport is healthy. Junk food is not. The two should not be promoted together.

2 October 2012, 6:10pm AEST

**END OF SCENARIO 1  
TURN OVER**

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**SECTION C – Analysis of language use****Scenario 2: Coal seam gas****Instructions for Section C**

Section C requires students to analyse the ways in which language and visual features are used to present a point of view.

Section C is worth one-third of the total assessment for the examination.

Read the email on coal seam gas and the accompanying diagrams and then complete the task below.

Write your analysis as a coherently structured piece of prose.

**TASK**

How is written and visual language used to attempt to persuade the audience to share the point of view of the email and the accompanying diagrams?

**Background information**

- Coal seam gas is a natural gas extracted from underground coal beds. ‘Fracking’ is one process often used to extract coal seam gas. It involves the high-pressure pumping of water and chemicals into the coal seam to create cracks through which gas and water can be released.
- The following email was sent by GetUp!, an organisation that describes itself as ‘an independent, grass-roots community advocacy organisation which aims to build a more progressive Australia by giving everyday Australians the opportunity to get involved and hold politicians accountable on important issues’.
- The email was sent to those who subscribe to GetUp!’s mailing list.

**From:** GetUp! [info@getup.org.au]  
**Sent:** Friday, 16 November 2012 12:32 PM  
**To:** Morgan Greenfield  
**Subject:** The research that could shut down CSG in Australia

Dear Morgan,

This is not supposed to be happening.

“Vast amounts of methane appear to be leaking undetected from Australia’s biggest coal seam gas field, according to world-first research that undercuts claims by the gas industry.”<sup>1</sup>

That’s how *The Sydney Morning Herald* described research getting nationwide media attention – after two Australian researchers uncovered methane, carbon dioxide and other gases leaking up from the ground in a CSG field in southeast Queensland.

Scientists found methane levels were more than three times higher inside the gas field than expected. It’s some of the highest concentrations of methane in the air found anywhere, scientists told ABC’s *7:30 Report*. **Methane is a much more serious gas than carbon dioxide: 21 times more powerful for warming the planet. It thoroughly debunks the gas industry’s claims that CSG produces 70% less emissions than coal!**

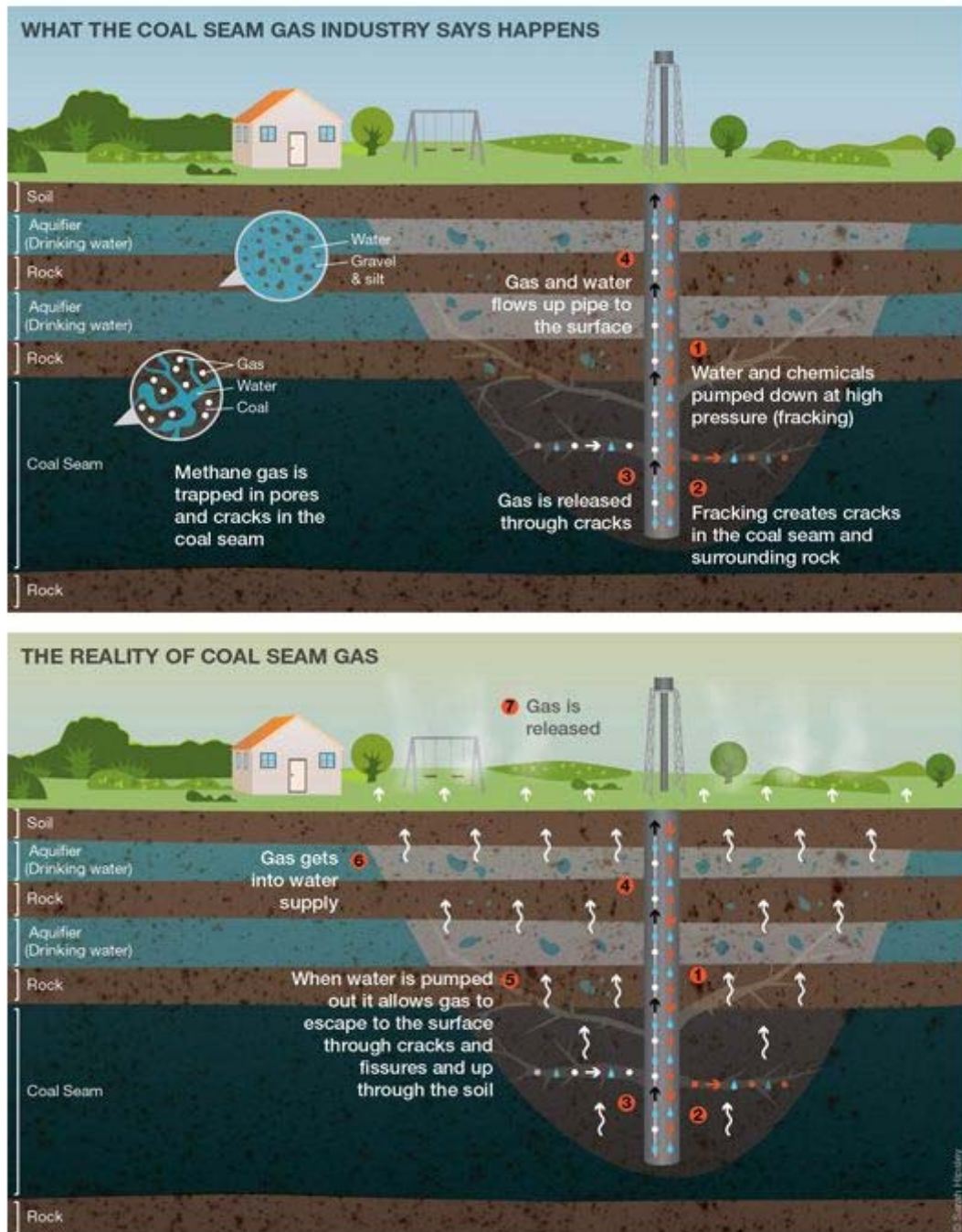
This research makes it really clear: CSG is far more dangerous than governments have reckoned on. Currently, the gas industry is getting away with pollution that isn’t even accounted for. Let’s call on Federal Climate Change Minister Greg Combet to commission urgent research into the climate impacts of coal seam gas, and to make sure that CSG companies start accounting, and paying, for their pollution. [Please write to him today.](#)

Right now our government isn’t independently measuring these so-called “fugitive emissions”, or making the industry properly pay for them under the carbon price. If they did, it would change everything.

University of Melbourne’s Professor Peter Rayner estimates that leaking methane from just one area in this one gas field could incur a liability of \$10 million a year or more. Multiply that by even a fraction of the tens of thousands of gas wells expanding across QLD and into NSW, and **you’ve got a climate bill worth billions. Suddenly coal seam gas is looking less like a vital “transition fuel” – and more like a dirty fossil fuel we can’t afford to keep.**

## DIRTIER THAN COAL?

Researchers at Southern Cross University have used a specialised measuring device and recorded elevated levels of methane in the air above the Tara gasfield in Queensland. Below is a graphic which shows what the coal seam gas mining industry claims is happening and what is actually happening.



This research couldn't be more important, or timely. A recent energy white paper has forecast **a massive expansion of Australian coal seam gas drilling, and called for environmental objections to be removed to make large-scale gas extraction easier.**<sup>2</sup>

We've seen the CSG industry shrug off bad news stories before, but this scandal threatens its very existence. It's time the federal government did its due diligence on an industry that's still expanding at a breakneck pace – posing a threat to our agriculture, our health and our climate. Send a vital message to Minister Combet today:

<http://www.getup.org.au/campaigns/coal-seam-gas/leaks/dirtier-than-coal>

Keep up the good work,  
the GetUp team

PS: For years the CSG industry has been telling us that so-called “fugitive emissions” from fracking are negligible. The tagline of a recent pro-CSG ad in Queensland reads, “It's cleaner. It's safer. It's jobs. It's the future.” Now the question is, will coal seam gas even make sense if we factor in the cost of its real emissions? It's time to find out:

<http://www.getup.org.au/campaigns/coal-seam-gas/leaks/dirtier-than-coal>

[1] “Methane leaking from coal seam gas field, testing shows,” *The Sydney Morning Herald*, Nov 14, 2012.

[2] *ibid.*

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GetUp is an independent, not-for-profit community campaigning group. We use new technology to empower Australians to have their say on important national issues. We receive no political party or government funding, and every campaign we run is entirely supported by voluntary donations. If you'd like to contribute to help fund GetUp's work, please [donate now!](#) If you have trouble with any links in this email, please go directly to [www.getup.org.au](http://www.getup.org.au). To unsubscribe from GetUp, please click [here](#). Authorised by Sam Mclean, Level 2, 104 Commonwealth Street, Surry Hills NSW 2010.



**SECTION C – Analysis of language use****Scenario 3: Solarium ban****Instructions for Section C**

Section C requires students to analyse the ways in which language and visual features are used to present a point of view.

Section C is worth one-third of the total assessment for the examination.

Read the editorial ‘Solarium ban a victory for good sense’ and then complete the task below.

Write your analysis as a coherently structured piece of prose.

**TASK**

How is written and visual language used to attempt to persuade the audience to share the point of view of the editorial?

**Background information**

- In 2012, Victorian Premier Ted Baillieu announced his intention to ban solariums from 31 December 2014. New South Wales and South Australia have already made the decision to ban solariums from the same year.
- The editorial on pages 18 and 19 appeared in both the print and online versions of a local newspaper.

## Solarium ban a victory for good sense

Ted Baillieu's announcement that Victoria will join New South Wales and South Australia in phasing out solariums from 2014 is welcome news. The evidence that solariums emit dangerous levels of UV radiation and contribute to cancer is incontrovertible. Recent research indicates that the rate of melanoma is 87% higher in people who use a solarium before the age of 35 than in those who have never used a solarium.

Strong public campaigns run over the last few decades have been very successful in raising the awareness of the Australian public of the risks of excessive sun exposure. We are all aware now of the importance of sunscreen, of covering up in the sun and of avoiding it altogether in the hottest part of the day. But many people remain unaware that tanning in a solarium can have equally fatal consequences.

The tragic 2007 death of 26-year-old Clare Oliver due to solarium-induced melanoma went some way towards highlighting the dangers of solariums. Prior to her death, Clare worked tirelessly to raise awareness among members of the public about the link between solarium use and skin cancer. The government's decision to ban solariums is a fitting tribute to this work and to Clare's memory.

While health-industry professionals and the vast majority of the public join *The Bugle* in supporting the ban, there are some who object to it. Salon owners and employees are understandably concerned about the impact of the ban on their employment. They join many solarium users in arguing that a ban would infringe their right to freedom of choice. Not all solarium users are ignorant of the dangers that sunbeds pose; there are many who are aware yet prioritise tanning over their physical health, and argue vociferously for their right to do so.

It is simplistic, however, to assume that such a choice is purely an individual matter. With the consequences for public health so starkly apparent in the research, it would be naive in the extreme of proponents of sunbeds to argue that their choice affects no one but themselves. Were they to develop cancer, the costs to the community, in the form of increased public health expenditure, would be considerable. It has been estimated that melanoma due to solarium use costs the Australian health system around \$3 million a year. This is not to mention the less tangible but no less serious emotional costs to family and friends of solarium victims. Most of us would agree that this is far too high a price to pay for vanity.

In any case, the list of health consequences from solarium use makes grim reading, especially if appearance is a priority. Solarium users would do well to consider the fact that in addition to astronomically increasing their risk of skin cancer, they also accelerate photo-ageing changes in the skin. The skin not only becomes browner; it also becomes thinner and more prone to wrinkling. Those chasing a youthful, healthy look would do far better to avoid UV rays, both from the sun and solariums.

It seems all the more absurd to subject oneself to such abuse when a far cheaper and safer alternative exists. It's called spray tan. More radically, individuals could simply learn to embrace the skin tone they were born with, recognising that in this day and age the unnatural leathery brown (or worse, orange) look is well and truly passé. As for solarium and salon owners, while they are to be pitied for the loss of their livelihood, such pity in no way equals the pity we ought to feel towards victims of solariums – people such as Clare Oliver, who paid the ultimate price for the pursuit of superficial beauty. Indeed, if solarium owners continue to pursue profit at the expense of the public's health, now that the evidence is well and truly in as to the damage they are causing, they are to be condemned for their callousness.

The only regret that should be felt about a ban on solariums is that it wasn't done sooner, that we might not have lost so much precious potential in the form of vibrant, tragic individuals such as Clare Oliver. The fact that such needless deaths will soon be a thing of the past is a matter to be celebrated, and the government is to be commended on their decision, which is a true victory for compassion and good sense.



*A tan to die for?*

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**SECTION C – Analysis of language use****Scenario 4: Video games****Instructions for Section C**

Section C requires students to analyse the ways in which language and visual features are used to present a point of view.

Section C is worth one-third of the total assessment for the examination.

Read the presentation ‘Pulling the plug on video games’ and the accompanying slides and then complete the task below.

Write your analysis as a coherently structured piece of prose.

**TASK**

How is written and visual language used to attempt to persuade the audience to share the point of view of the presentation and the accompanying slides?

**Background information**

- The following presentation was given by Dr Thomasina Singh, a counsellor at a secondary school, to a group of parents and students at an information night on student wellbeing held at the school.
- The transcript of her speech and two slides from her PowerPoint presentation are included on pages 22–24.

## Pulling the plug on video games

Good evening parents, teachers and students, and thank you for joining us here tonight. Obviously student wellbeing is as important to you all as it is to me, and for that reason I'd like to focus tonight on an issue that has recently emerged as, I believe, one of the most serious matters affecting young people today: that of the negative physical and psychological effects of video games.

I see a few parents nodding in agreement – and a few students shifting in their seats! No doubt many, if not most, of you have experienced this problem firsthand. Hands up, who here plays video games?

*[many students raise their hands]*

Right, almost all the students. All right, hands up all parents who worry about their child's excessive use of video games.

*[many parents raise their hands]*

Again, that's an overwhelming majority. Clearly the problem is widespread.

And parents, you're right to be concerned. Evidence suggests that young people who use video games excessively are more likely to suffer health problems and do poorly at school. A state university found that playing more than 10 hours a week increases a young person's chance of developing depression by 10 per cent. Other findings are indicated on this slide.

### *Slide 1*

A state university study revealed:

- just under **90 per cent** of survey respondents reported playing video games
- **more than 8 per cent** of gamers between the ages of 8 and 18 exhibit symptoms of video-game addiction
- boys spend an average of **16.4 hours a week** playing video games
- girls spend over **9 hours a week** playing video games
- addicted gamers play **24 hours a week**
- **one-quarter** of gamers turn to video games to escape problems
- **20 per cent** of young gamers said that their schoolwork had suffered because of the time they spent playing the games.

*PsychToday* notes that young people addicted to video games are more likely to:

- get **poor school marks**
- be **depressed**
- have **health problems**
- **resort to stealing** to finance their video-game habit
- have **fewer friends**.

Pretty frightening results, aren't they? The most insidious thing about video games is their propensity to lead to addiction. Particularly with the advent of online games such as *World of Warcraft*, which rely on users paying ongoing subscription fees, it's in the developers' interests to keep players hooked. Game developers knowingly design their games to maximise the time players spend on them. They do this by using very basic behavioural-modification techniques in increasingly sneaky ways. In-game rewards such as coins, weapons, health points and so on give players a satisfying 'rush' and a feeling of achievement that is highly appealing. The human hunter-gatherer instinct creates a powerful compulsion to keep playing until all the coins or weapons have been acquired. Levelling up provides another incentive to keep playing as much as possible. This is the reward side of the addiction equation.

The punishment side is evident in the fact that many games contain built-in disincentives to *stop* playing. If you neglect the game for too long, you may lose some of the treasure you've spent so much time acquiring, or your virtual garden might become covered over with weeds (as, for example, in *Animal Crossing*).

Like drugs, this pattern of reward and punishment actually alters the user's brain chemistry over time, and is extremely effective at creating compulsive, addictive behaviour. So effective, in fact, that there have been cases of people playing video games literally to the point of death. The young Korean man who passed away last week was so in thrall to the game he was playing that he went 50 hours without food, drink or sleep, until eventually his body just shut down.

Of course, this is an extreme example. Many people manage to enjoy games occasionally without becoming addicted. But it highlights the need to set some boundaries around game-playing before it's too late. Parents, the number-one thing you can do is to keep an eye on your children's gaming. Be aware both of *what* they're playing and how long they're playing for, and don't be afraid to set limits. Look out for the warning signs of addiction, such as withdrawal from friends and family, lack of interest in anything besides video games, symptoms of depression and/or anger, and declining school marks. If you suspect your child is spending too much time on games, pull the plug. Encourage them to read a book, or get outside and play some sport. Physical activity will not only go a long way to ensuring your child is not another statistic in the obesity epidemic; it will also elevate their mood, safeguarding against depression. Students, if you suspect a friend's game-playing has reached unhealthy levels, persuade them to put down the controller and pick up a racquet instead.

Unlike the message on the slide here, we really do only get one life. Ask yourselves how you'd rather that life was spent – plugged into a false reality and slave to the machinations of game developers? Or connected to the real world and to the lasting and genuine rewards of family and friends, learning and growing? Put like that, I'm sure we can all agree, the choice is obvious.

## Slide 2

**Tips for Scenario 4**

- *Discuss both PowerPoint slides. Take into account that each is quite different in purpose, content and tone.*
- *Consider the fact that the text is a transcript of a speech. You might mention the way in which this allows the speaker to address the audience directly, and even involve them in the presentation (as when Dr Singh asks members of the audience to raise their hands).*
- *Remember that the two segments of the audience – parents and students – may have different responses to the presentation. Don't assume that particular persuasive techniques or strategies will evoke the same response from each group.*

**END OF SCENARIO 4**



**SECTION C – Analysis of language use****Scenario 5: CCTV cameras****Instructions for Section C**

Section C requires students to analyse the ways in which language and visual features are used to present a point of view.

Section C is worth one-third of the total assessment for the examination.

Read the opinion piece ‘Fear must not blind us to fact’ and then complete the task below.

Write your analysis as a coherently structured piece of prose.

**TASK**

How is written and visual language used to attempt to persuade the audience to share the point of view of the opinion piece?

**Background information**

- The following opinion piece appeared in a major Victorian newspaper.
- It responded to a number of letters to the editor and online comments on the newspaper’s website that expressed a desire for the state government to fund an expansion of the CCTV system in Melbourne, following an attack on a young woman.

## Fear must not blind us to fact

The recent attack on a Melbourne woman whose assailant was caught on surveillance camera has reignited public debate about the expansion of CCTV cameras in the city. The crime touched the hearts of many, and it is understandable that the overwhelming communal grief and fear has led to calls for the state government to fund more cameras in the interests of public safety. But tempting as it might be to respond emotionally to a distressing situation, the government has an obligation to carefully weigh the facts before investing time and taxpayer dollars in a venture that evidence suggests actually makes no appreciable difference to public safety.



The obvious place to look first for evidence is the UK, which has the highest concentration of CCTV cameras in the world. Despite billions of dollars being spent on this form of security over the last couple of decades, crime rates have remained higher than in most of the rest of Europe. Numerous studies have shown that the installation of cameras has, at best, a marginal impact on crime; most indicate that it has no effect at all. This is particularly the case for precisely the sort of crime that provoked the recent calls for more cameras in Melbourne. No study has been able to show that CCTV reduces random violent attacks

in any way. Melbourne already has over 50 security cameras operating in the CBD. There is no evidence to suggest that they've made the streets any safer, as attested to by the tragic fate of the young victim of the recent attack.

Some argue that even if CCTV doesn't prevent crime, it can play a useful role in detecting offenders. This sounds plausible in theory; in practice, though, police say that the hours and manpower required to trawl through camera footage, not to mention its generally poor quality, makes it an impractical investigative tool. A miniscule percentage of crimes have actually been solved as a result of CCTV monitoring. The fact is, the vast majority of crimes against the person are committed by someone known to the victim. CCTV is of little use in either preventing or detecting the perpetrators of these sorts of crimes.

But if CCTV is not terribly effective, it might be argued that it can't do any harm, and at least it makes the public feel slightly more secure. But in fact this sense of false security

could lead to people taking risks that put them in harm's way, the very reverse of the result proponents of cameras desire. Not to mention the fact that security cameras are incredibly expensive both to install and to monitor. Given that the burden of funding the cameras would rest on us, the taxpayers, it's in the best interests of all of us that we get our money's worth in terms of public safety expenditure.

Then of course there is the civil-libertarian argument that we all have a right to go about our daily business without our every move being tracked by Big Brother. The counterargument, that as long as you're not breaking the law you have nothing to fear, has been used by countless totalitarian states to justify all sorts of intrusions into citizens' private spheres, and it's one we should all be wary of. One can have a legitimate objection to being treated as a potential criminal suspect without having a guilty conscience. It's not a great leap from being watched day and night to having dossiers compiled on each of us – records of our activities, our associates, even our political views, à la the former communist East Germany, all justified in the name of the public good. For most of us, the prospect of such an extreme level of governmental monitoring and control over our lives is far more frightening than the statistically unlikely possibility of being the victim of a random violent crime.

So if CCTV is not the answer, what is? Unfortunately, like most social problems, there is no single simple solution. Human beings and human societies are just too complex for that. We can and must, however, begin with a commitment to basing all such important decisions on facts and evidence. Let's look at what has worked to reduce crime figures in other parts of the world. Let's learn from initiatives, such as CCTV, that have failed. And let's not let kneejerk emotional reactions cloud our judgement and prevent us from continuing to work, for as long as it takes, towards shaping the kind of society in which a crime like the recent tragedy need never happen again.

*Cameron Bright is Professor of Criminology at Southwestern University.*

**Tips for Scenario 5**

- *Be alert to the subtleties of the writer's argument: his contention is not simply that the number of CCTV cameras should not be increased, but that any such decisions should be based on evidence rather than emotion.*
- *Note the way in which each main point is linked back to the larger argument that facts need to guide decisions regarding social problems. There is an ongoing focus on results when it comes to evaluating the pros and cons of CCTV cameras.*
- *Comment on the social and political context in which this piece appeared – in response to public discussion of a recent crime – and how this might have influenced the writer's approach and the intended audience's responses.*

**SECTION C – Analysis of language use****Scenario 6: Online privacy****Instructions for Section C**

Section C requires students to analyse the ways in which language and visual features are used to present a point of view.

Section C is worth one-third of the total assessment for the examination.

Read the pages from *private i* magazine and then complete the task below.

Write your analysis as a coherently structured piece of prose.

**TASK**

How is written and visual language used to attempt to persuade the audience to share the points of view in the magazine's pages?

**Background information**

- The following document is an extract from *private i*, an Australian government publication aimed at educating young people about privacy matters.
- It is produced by the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner, which handles privacy issues involving personal information. 'Personal information' includes information on an individual's location, health and communications with others.

## What makes you you?

It's a deep philosophical question, you may say, and you'd be right. But that's not all it is – it also has practical ramifications, and sometimes very worrying ones.

Think about it. With just a handful of details, others could pretend to be you.

Of course, sometimes it's nice to think that others want to be like you, copying your sense of fashion, envying your taste in music, or admiring your sporting achievements. But it's not so nice, to put it mildly, when those wanting to be like you are out to steal your identity.

It's become one of the world's pervasive crimes of the 21st century, and Australia is no exception. A 2007 survey by the Australian Bureau of Statistics found that nearly one billion dollars had been lost as a result of personal fraud.

Frank Abagnale, the inspiration behind the Spielberg movie, *Catch Me If You Can*, became infamous as America's most gifted con man. Abagnale spent his late teens and early 20s ripping off everyone he could until, following time served in jails in France, Sweden and the US, he switched sides and has spent the past three decades speaking out about identity theft.

One of his observations is particularly worrying, 'What I did 30 years ago is 200 times easier to do today than it was then, and five years from now will be 700 times easier than it is today'.

Technology has made life much easier for ID thieves. Not only is the personal information of so many people available for the taking online, but creating forged documents or fraudulently applying for credit can also be done electronically with comparative ease.

Sometimes all it takes are some basic facts about you for your identity to be stolen, such as your name, address, date of birth, bank account and credit card numbers, or passwords. Knowing even a few of these things could be all that's needed for someone else to open up a line of credit in your name and spend like there's no tomorrow.

"About six months ago I received a letter saying that I had totally maxed out the \$4,000 limit on my credit card. This simply wasn't possible.

"The credit card company said they had a record of my calling them saying I had supposedly lost my card. The caller was able to provide my date of birth, mother's maiden name, phone number and address. They must have guessed that I had a certain type of credit card, called up the company, said they were me and had lost the card. They probably said they couldn't remember the card number, but were able to 'prove' they were legit because they had all these other details.

"Anyway, the person got sent a 'replacement' card in my name, and then they maxed it out pretty rapidly.

"Thankfully the card company covered the fraud, but I had an awful time proving that the replacement card was sent to someone else, not me, and that I was the victim of ID theft.

"I suppose the person got my details from the web. Anyone who goes looking could probably find out the basics about me.

"Anyway, dealing with all of this is not something I'd ever want to go through again, that's for sure."

- Mark C.



# ID theft prevention



- If an organisation or person wants to collect personal information from you, ask why the information is required, what they will do with it and who will it be disclosed to. Only give out as much personal information as you need to.
- Think twice before posting any personal information about yourself online.
- Instal anti-virus software on your computer, as well as firewalls.
- Regularly check your credit card and bank statements for suspicious transactions.
- Minimise the amount of personal information you carry around, especially at places where it is likely to get lost or stolen, such as at the beach, club, etc.
- Shred all documents you no longer need that contain personal information. (A 2007 survey found that 75% of Australians throw out enough personal information in their rubbish and recycling to put them at risk of identity theft.)
- Use the privacy settings on social networking sites.
- Watch out for scams!
- Monitor your credit report – see [www.mycreditfile.com.au](http://www.mycreditfile.com.au)  
[www.dnb.com.au](http://www.dnb.com.au)  
[www.tascol.com.au](http://www.tascol.com.au)

More information  
[www.scamwatch.gov.au](http://www.scamwatch.gov.au)  
[www.staysmartonline.gov.au](http://www.staysmartonline.gov.au)

[www.privacy.gov.au](http://www.privacy.gov.au)



## ID Scanning

Having people glance at our ID is something we are all used to. It happens all the time – when you enter a club, buy alcohol or join a video store. Most of us don't really have an issue with that. Someone checks that it is you, looks at your date of birth, and assuming all is above board, off you go for a good night out.

However, there's another step to this process that's becoming more and more routine – ID scanning.

ID scanning is when a business uses equipment to take an electronic copy of your ID. Pub and club owners do this primarily so they know who is in their club on a certain night, therefore making it easier for them to pinpoint people who may have caused trouble.

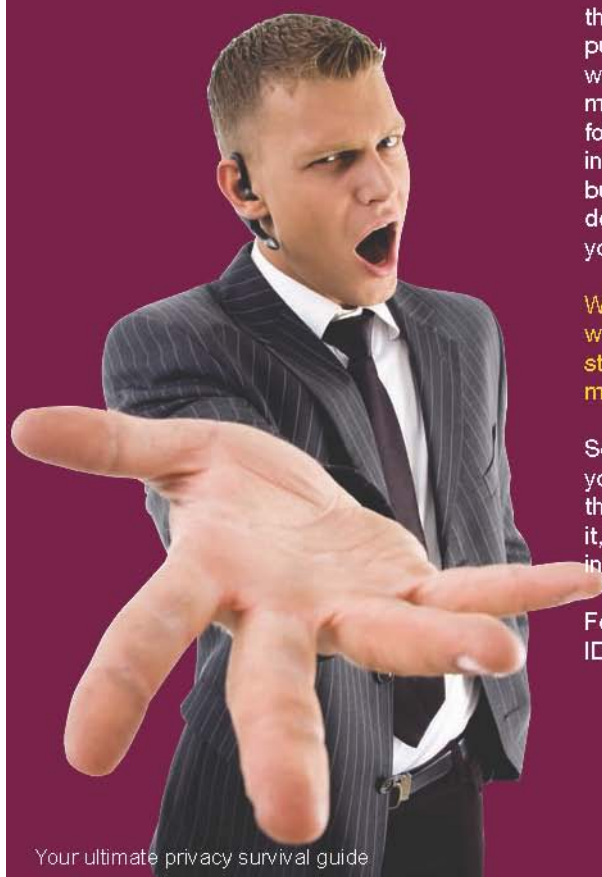
So, I guess we all think - what's the problem with that?

Once your ID has been scanned, your personal information contained on the ID is digitised and stored by the business. Depending on the privacy practises of that business, your information could then be used or disclosed for many other purposes than simply identifying who was in the club that night. The business may use or pass on your information for direct marketing, or match it with information about you held by other businesses. This could create a very detailed picture of how you go about your daily activities.

**With the prevalence of identity crime, what information businesses and their staff have about you is something you may want to think about.**

So, next time a business asks to scan your ID, ask them why they are collecting that information, how they plan to use it, who has access, and how long the information will be kept.

For more information about privacy and ID scanning, visit: [www.privacy.gov.au](http://www.privacy.gov.au)



Your ultimate privacy survival guide



**Tips for Scenario 6**

- *The images used are eye-catching and dramatic. Comment on the associations they evoke – with horror movies, for example.*
- *Consider the likely effect of Mark C's personal story, which makes the consequences of neglecting online privacy seem more real and identifiable, on the reader.*
- *Consider the possible effects of directly addressing the reader ('you') throughout.*

**END OF SCENARIO 6**  
**TURN OVER**

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**SECTION C – Analysis of language use****Scenario 7: Drugs in sport****Instructions for Section C**

Section C requires students to analyse the ways in which language and visual features are used to present a point of view.

Section C is worth one-third of the total assessment for the examination.

Read the blog entry ‘A thought on removing drugs from sports’ and then complete the task below.

Write your analysis as a coherently structured piece of prose.

**TASK**

How is written and visual language used to attempt to persuade the audience to share the point of view of the blog entry?

**Background information**

- In 2012, seven-time Tour de France winner Lance Armstrong was found guilty of using performance-enhancing drugs by USADA (the United States Anti-Doping Agency) and stripped of his titles.
- The following blog post appeared on the website *New APPS*, which publishes blog posts from multiple contributors and describes itself as ‘a group blog with people from all over -the map’.
- The entry was written by American Mark Lance, whose profile describes him as a ‘professor, anarchist, activist’.

## A thought on removing drugs from sports

When it comes to law enforcement responses to organized crime, we hear constantly that the goal is to get the “kingpins” rather than the “little guys”. I wonder why the opposite is the approach to drug enforcement in sports?

I’m of course motivated to write by the incessant news coverage of Lance Armstrong, and for that reason will restrict myself to cycling. But I think that much the same argument can be made for any big-money sport. First, I think it is clear beyond reasonable doubt that Armstrong doped. My confidence has nothing to do with however many people may or may not be ready to testify, or how many tests are “consistent with doping”. (This phrase is a constant from the USADA and I have no idea what it is supposed to mean. These are negative tests, after all. Is the idea that there is nothing in the test that entails that there could not have been some level of doping? If so, then every test is consistent with doping. But I digress.)

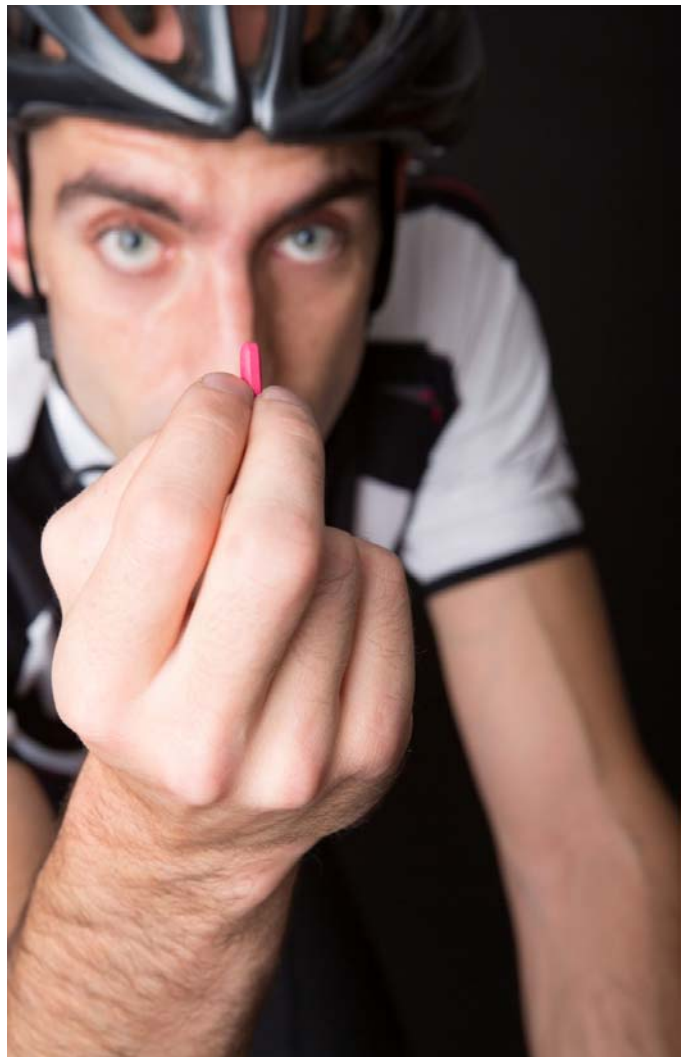
Here’s the argument: in the 80s and early 90s there were no reliable tests for moderate levels of EPO.

EPO is a massive performance enhancer. It increases oxygen carrying capacity up to 15%.

Oxygen capacity is the main determinant of success in mountain stages of races. (Any strong club rider can achieve the speeds of world-class riders on a mountain. What they can’t do is maintain it, because they go into oxygen debt.)

Many top riders of the time are known to have used EPO.

Therefore: they all did. If they hadn’t, they could not have competed.



(It is not my point here to get into the question of whether we should care about doping. But the above argument amounts to the best case for caring, I think. The reality is that if anyone does, everyone must. And use of performance-enhancing drugs is very bad for long-term health. But this too is a digression.)

So every world-class pro was doping.

Who profited from this? The riders surely did. They were able to compete in a sport that pays very well. But for all their high salaries, they were the worker bees, the little guys, of the operation. Their teams all have owners or management groups, and more importantly are sponsored by major corporations. These corporations ultimately call the shots because they control the money. They also use these events as advertising, presumably making large amounts of money in the process. Another group of kingpins are the people who control, market, and make millions off the grand tours.

If the goal is to deter drug use, it is clear that punishing riders won't work. There is constant improvement in the chemistry of doping. Testing technology is generally 5 years behind doping technology. People who get caught are either riders who push the limits – doping more than the norm, and so more easily detectable – and those who are high-profile enough, like Armstrong, to generate massive investigative investment. So a rider is never sure of being caught. That provides them a simple choice: don't dope and be unable to compete at the highest level; or dope, make lots of money, and have a chance of getting banned someday. Not a recipe for eliminating drugs.

By contrast, it would be fairly simple to set up a strict liability system for owners, sponsors, and tour organizers. You are putting out a product for the public. You are representing what that product is. You are making enormous amounts of money from that product. So let it be your responsibility to make sure it is as advertised, on pain of fines commensurate with the profits being pulled in – say \$1 million for first offense, doubling with each successive.

Is it impossible for teams to guarantee success, given the incentive for riders to dope? Not really. First, note that this is sophisticated stuff. Riders don't just hit up a dealer and shoot up in an alley. These are all carefully designed programs of recently invented chemical elements, administered in ways that take account of all sorts of medical factors. Which is to say, there is involvement at much higher levels. Second, the only meaningful way to test – given the reality of changing chemistry – is to freeze blood samples and keep them for 10 years. All salaries could be deferred – give folks a minimal salary with a huge payment

10 years later provided the blood stays clean. (It is worth noting that the market is pushing in this direction a bit. It is hard to successfully advertise using a sport where everyone knows that everyone is doping. So sponsors are pulling out. In response a couple teams have instituted serious testing that includes long-term storage. But there is no reason to think this will become the norm, or survive long. There is always a huge incentive for other teams to jump in and try to game the current chemistry.)

And finally, what if strict liability doesn't turn out to be feasible? That is, what if strict liability for kingpins means that corporations aren't willing to sponsor pro teams anymore? Well, then I guess we would be back to amateur athletics. That strikes me as a good thing, but if you think it isn't, then at least admit that you've made a deal: in exchange for keeping sports as a big-money business – in exchange for the ancillary benefits of maintaining kingpins – you are willing to accept that doping will always be a part of it.

Of this, I'm sure: stripping multi-millionaire Lance Armstrong of some titles isn't going to be much of an incentive for the next guy not to use the next generation of EPO.



### **Tips for Scenario 7**

- *The writer uses a number of firm, declarative statements which support his overall emphasis on reasoned argument, for example: 'Many top riders of the time are known to have used EPO. Therefore: they all did. If they hadn't, they could not have competed.' Note the way in which this strategy is developed throughout the piece, with the writer putting forward apparently factual statements and then drawing conclusions from them in a way that seems inevitable and logical.*
- *However, he also employs a conversational style, digressing and using sentence fragments. Consider how both these styles work together to balance each other, so that the writer presents both as authoritative and informed, and also as an 'average' likeable person offering a commonsense perspective.*
- *Comment on the writer's strategy of asking a question and then answering it. The questions suggest he knows what the reader's likely responses will be, carrying the implication that he understands and relates to them. His responses contribute to his air of authority, setting him up as someone who has all the answers.*

**END OF SCENARIO 7**

**SECTION C – Analysis of language use****Scenario 8: Car-free city centre****Instructions for Section C**

Section C requires students to analyse the ways in which language and visual features are used to present a point of view.

Section C is worth one-third of the total assessment for the examination.

Read the letter to residents from the Sterling mayor and then complete the task below.

Write your analysis as a coherently structured piece of prose.

**TASK**

How is written and visual language used to attempt to persuade the audience to share the point of view of the letter to residents?

**Background information**

- Sterling is a beachside city with a population of approximately 120 000.
- Sterling City Council recently passed a motion to introduce car-free Saturdays in the centre of the city, meaning that no motorised vehicles will be permitted within the six blocks of the main business district on these days.
- The following letter was delivered to all Sterling residents shortly after the decision was taken.

Dear Resident,

As you may be aware, the city council has recently passed a motion to introduce one car-free day a week in the city centre. We are extremely pleased to announce that the first 'Safe and Smog-free Saturday' will take place on Saturday 13 September. The intention is that Saturdays will remain car-free for the remainder of this year. If this proves successful, we will extend the program to Sundays as well.

As a resident of the City of Sterling, you will be a direct beneficiary of the many benefits such an initiative will bring, and we would like to take this opportunity to outline to you some of the many excellent reasons for introducing the scheme.

Firstly, we know how important environmental issues are to our local community. Sterling City Council has a reputation as a leader in terms of its commitment to sustainability, evident in, for example, our recycling scheme, our Clean Up the Bay Day and our Waterwise Schools program. You have told us that the environment is your number-one concern, and we see the introduction of the Safe and Smog-free Saturdays program as another way in which we can improve our local environment and minimise this community's carbon footprint.

In addition to reducing pollution and keeping Sterling clean, a car-free city centre will decrease congestion and make the roads safer for cyclists and pedestrians and, above all, for your children. Many people, particularly our older residents, have expressed sorrow over the fact that children don't seem to play in the streets as they used to. This initiative aims to give the streets back to our community's children, for the benefit of their physical and psychological health. These benefits will extend to all residents. Encouraging the whole community to spend more time walking or riding the streets will vastly improve public health.

The initiative will also make it both easier and more attractive to shop in the city centre rather than in the large shopping centres outside of town. The move supports local businesses, which have been suffering lately due to the general tendency to shop at the larger centres, where parking may not be a problem but which siphon money away from, rather than back into, our local community. A car-free business district will also be a significant drawcard for tourists, again boosting income and exposure for local businesses, and putting the beautiful city of Sterling firmly on the tourist map.



Council is aware that some concerns have been raised about the plan. We would like to reassure members of the community that we have listened carefully to all objections and have arranged matters so that no one will be disadvantaged. While parking is plentiful outside of the city, construction has already begun on a new, larger car park at the end of Davey Street. This parking will be free for residents, while visitors will be required to pay a small hourly fee. In addition, we are looking at increasing train services to the city centre.

Necessary deliveries will still also be able to take place before 8 a.m. or after 8 p.m.

We hope this letter answers any queries you might have about this exciting new initiative, and we hope that our local community will join us in celebrating the first Sterling 'Safe and Smog-free Saturday' with a walk from Davey's Oval to the city centre from 11 a.m. on Saturday 13 September.

We look forward to seeing you all there, breathing our clean, seaside air and enjoying the safe city streets.

Best regards,

*PMooney*

Piper Mooney, Mayor of Sterling,  
and Sterling City Council

*Local resident  
Bailey Izzard  
playing in  
pedestrian-only  
Stuart Street.*



**Tips for scenario 8**

- *Consider the position of the letter writer and how this might influence both her opinion and the way in which the recipients of the letter might receive this opinion. Note that she uses 'we' rather than 'I' to express her thoughts, reflecting the fact that she is speaking as a member of the Council rather than as an individual.*
- *The writer's tone is both friendly and respectful (demonstrated, for example, in the expression 'We look forward to seeing you'). This is reflective of the fact that she is in a position of some authority but also answerable to those who elected her.*
- *Comment on the possible purpose for including the photograph. Consider why this particular subject was chosen, and how it supports the letter's emphasis on family. Note that the baby appears to be unsupervised, reinforcing the impression that pedestrian-only streets are safe.*

**SECTION C – Analysis of language use****Scenario 9: Homework ban****Instructions for Section C**

Section C requires students to analyse the ways in which language and visual features are used to present a point of view.

Section C is worth one-third of the total assessment for the examination.

Read the transcript of the speech ‘The hazards of homework’ and the accompanying cartoon and then complete the task below.

**TASK**

How is written and visual language used to attempt to persuade the audience to share the points of view in the speech and the accompanying cartoon?

**Background information**

- In 2012, French President François Hollande proposed a ban on homework in French schools. The proposal sparked discussion around the world about the usefulness of homework.
- The following is a transcript of a speech made by a Year 12 student and SRC (Student Representative Council) member as part of a class discussion on the proposition ‘Gardendale Secondary College should ban homework’.

## The hazards of homework

Did you know that in the 1930s, the American Child Health Association stated that homework and child labour were the two leading killers of children who suffered from tuberculosis and heart disease?

Homework has also been blamed for causing nervous conditions and stress in young people. Now I wouldn't necessarily go so far as to claim that homework kills, but I do want to talk to you today about the proposal to ban homework here at Gardenvale Secondary. This suggestion came up the other week at an SRC meeting following a lot of discussion in the media about the fairness and effectiveness of homework after French President François Hollande announced recently that he'd like to see homework banned in French schools.

I'm with the President, and it's not because I'm lazy or lack motivation or am trying to get out of something. There is a ton of evidence to show that homework is useless at best and actually counterproductive at worst. There is also evidence that, as Hollande fears, it further entrenches inequality.

This concern is Hollande's main reason for wanting homework banned. It is based on the fact that students come from vastly differing backgrounds in terms of access to support and resources for completing homework. We've all seen this in our own lives. Many of us will be lucky enough to have doting, supportive, educated parents at home to help us, but some of us won't. Many of us will have books at home, or access to a good library, and transport to get there. But some of us won't. Most of us have computers and internet access, probably high-speed and wireless. But some of us don't. Obviously the 'haves' are going to have a huge advantage over the 'have-nots' when it comes not only to being able to get homework done, but also to actually getting any valuable learning out of doing it. This phenomenon is so well known that in the US they have a name for it – they refer to the 'summer slip', the effect that the three months' holiday US schools have over summer has on the abilities and marks of socially disadvantaged students. After the summer break, studies have shown that these kids come back to school further behind in their reading, maths and other skills than kids from more privileged families, due to spending an extended period of time in their deprived home environments.

Remember Easter hat parades in primary school? Remember how there were always some kids whose parents helped them to construct these amazing hats with rabbits and nests and eggs, using fancy glitter and paints? And then there were kids who came without a hat at all because they didn't have the resources, or their parents didn't know how, or maybe didn't

care enough, to help them. The consequences of not having the best Easter hat in the parade were pretty small. But the consequences of being left behind when it comes to learning outside of school are serious, and it's unethical to continue to promote homework as a learning tool when it furthers that kind of inequality.

But even if you're not moved by the thought of the millions of students slipping further into disadvantage due to homework, consider this: study after study has been done into the effectiveness of homework in improving outcomes, and *not one* has been able to demonstrate clear proof that homework helps at all. That's right. Unbelievable as it may seem, pretty much every school in this country, and quite possibly the world, promotes a practice founded on virtually no evidence. If any of us submitted an assignment based on the sort of flimsy proof the rationale for homework is based on, we'd get an F. But for some reason, the idea that homework is necessary in schools persists.

The arguments in favour of homework include that it reinforces learning done in school and that it teaches students to work independently. Of course, the irony is that the students who get the most out of their homework are usually not working independently at all, but getting a lot of support from family. As for reinforcing learning, surely if schools were doing their jobs properly, we wouldn't need to be doing hours of extra work to master age-appropriate skills?

What about leisure time? It's often noted how time-poor and stretched everyone is these days, and students are no different. Between extracurricular activities, part-time jobs, sports, volunteering and keeping up with friends – not to mention school – we have hardly any time left just to unwind. This isn't a healthy state of affairs. An unrested mind is not an effective one. They say homework prepares you for the 'real world', but I don't know many jobs that require you to put in a full day and then do another several hours' worth of work at home each night. And it's not only kids but parents who resent the intrusion of schoolwork into the home: a lot of parents feel stressed at having to help their kids with homework or having to nag them into completing it. It creates unnecessary tension and conflict in the home, which should be a haven from the stresses and pressures of the school and workplace. The pressure placed on parents is nicely illustrated by this cartoon [*holds up cartoon*], which shows on whose shoulders the burden of homework too often falls.



"I CAN'T COME OUT. I HAVE TO HELP  
MY DAD WITH MY HOMEWORK."

Recently some Australian researchers published a book about the homework myth entitled *Reforming homework: practices, learning and policies*. After extensive research they came to the conclusion that homework has no benefit at all for children in the early years of primary school, and not much benefit for children in later primary school or junior high. They report that spending more time on homework is associated with lower student achievement, and that in countries with high amounts of homework, students perform worse on international achievement tests.

With no hard evidence to support it, homework in schools amounts to nothing more than a social experiment on a massive scale. I don't know about you, but I have no desire to continue taking part against my will in an experiment that it's pretty clear has already failed. Homework may not cause heart disease or tuberculosis, but there's no doubt it causes stress, eats into our precious leisure time and worsens inequality. And for what? *Worse* academic performance. It's high time we stopped being passive victims of a system that's not working. Let's all join together in petitioning the school leadership to free us from the tyranny of homework.



### Tips for Scenario 9

- *Try to integrate your discussion of the cartoon with your discussion of the speech. Even if you devote a separate paragraph to the cartoon, make sure you comment on how it supports the speaker's contention.*
- *The writer uses both the first person ('I') and second person ('you') repeatedly. This contributes to the often informal, conversational tone of the speech, and is used partly because the writer is addressing an audience of their peers. You might comment on the way in which this decreases the social distance between the speaker and the audience, emphasising the friendly relationship they share and thereby encouraging the audience to feel they ought to agree with the speaker's viewpoint.*
- *The speaker also makes frequent use of rhetorical questions. A strong answer will go beyond noting that these might be used to engage or directly involve the audience to consider more specific effects. For instance, the two rhetorical questions at the beginning of the fifth paragraph encourage the audience to reminisce on a shared history, again emphasising their relationship with the speaker and assuming their shared experiences and opinions.*

**END OF SCENARIO 9**  
**TURN OVER**

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**SECTION C – Analysis of language use****Scenario 10: Penny auctions****Instructions for Section C**

Section C requires students to analyse the ways in which language and visual features are used to present a point of view.

Section C is worth one-third of the total assessment for the examination.

Read the blog entry ‘Penny Auctions: They’re Gambling’ and the accompanying comments and then complete the task below.

**TASK**

How is written and visual language used to attempt to persuade the audience to share the points of view of the blog post and comments?

**Background information**

- Penny auctions, also known as bidding fee auctions, involve participants buying the opportunity to bid on an auctioned item. When the auction finishes, the last bidder wins the item, usually paying a price significantly below the normal retail value.
- The following blog post appeared on [codinghorror.com](http://codinghorror.com), a blog run by American computer programmer Jeff Atwood, whose audience consists mostly of readers interested in computer-related topics.

## Penny Auctions: They're Gambling

Jeff Atwood

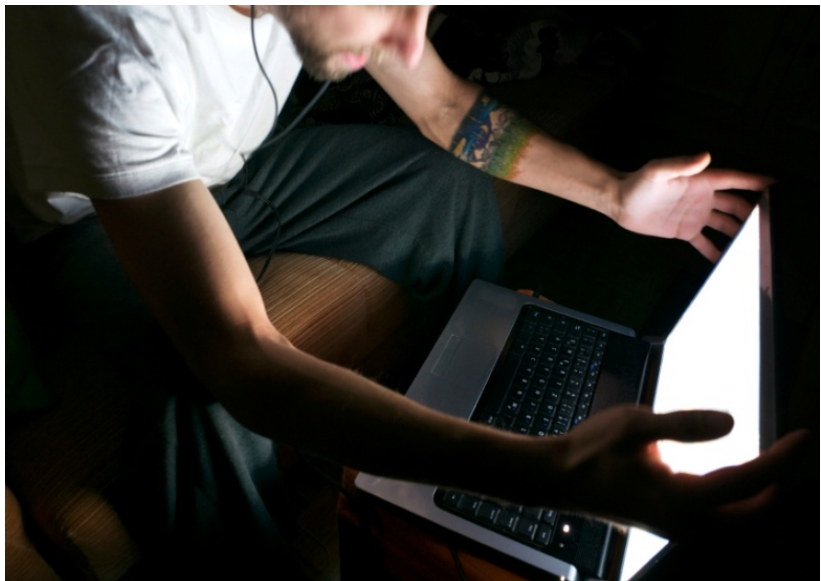
Late last year, I encountered what may be nearly perfect evil in business-plan form: Swoopo. What is Swoopo? It's a class of penny auction, a type of auction in which products such as new televisions, computers, game consoles, appliances, handbags, gold bars and more are offered for sale for starting prices of a penny to 15 cents, depending on the site.

To "win" a product, shoppers must first buy a bundle of 10 to 700 bids for 60 cents to \$1 each. Shoppers use one each time they place a virtual bid on a product. Each bid raises the price of the item by a penny to 15 cents, depending on the site. Some have automatic bidding functions similar to eBay.

Doing the math and not getting carried away is important: the final price of a product that retails for \$100 might be \$29, but the total price paid could be much more, depending upon the number of bids used. If a shopper bids 10 times at \$1 a bid, for instance, the total price paid would jump to \$39. And, there is the real possibility of using all your bids without getting the product.

Auction winners generally get their item for about 65 percent off retail but could save as much as 98 percent if there are few bidders.

Since the sites make the bulk of their revenue from the purchase of bids, they profit most when they feature a product that elicits a bidding war.



One of Swoopo's investors recently contacted me via email, and I had to marvel at the nerve you'd need to associate yourself with this kind of nastiness. Swoopo is evil beyond the likes of Saddam Hussein, the Balrog, Darth Vader and Barbra Streisand – combined.

He staunchly maintained that there was *no* element of chance in a Swoopo "auction". Once I stopped laughing, I told him these were my terms:

If you believe in Swoopo, then data speaks much louder than words.

Let's conduct an experiment.

Doesn't have to be you, personally. Take  $n$  dollars, and use those  $n$  dollars in whatever strategy it takes to win items (of \$399 or higher) on Swoopo.

If Swoopo isn't a game of chance or lottery, a skilled player should be able to win at least one item in this experiment, yes?

I'd be happy to run this experiment and write about it on my blog. Just let me know what terms you think make sense.

I haven't heard from him since. (Now I'm curious if *anyone* is willing to take on this experiment, under the same terms.)

Because **Swoopo is, at its heart, thinly veiled gambling**. The companies backing Swoopo and other penny auction sites are hoping unsophisticated regulatory agencies will buy the "It's not a game of chance" argument if it's wrapped in a lot of technical mumbo-jumbo they can't fully comprehend.

But we're no government flacks. We're programmers, and many of us develop websites for a living. It's a bit tougher to pull the wool over our eyes. In his experiment 'Trying to Game Swoopo', Joshua Stein pulled out everything in his programmer's bag of tricks to win a Swoopo auction – and, predictably, failed.

With all of this data available, I concluded that **there is no way to reliably win an auction on swoopo.com without using their bidbutler service**. There are delays on their network/servers in processing manual bids, whether intentional or just due to bad design, that cause manual bids placed with 1 or 2 seconds remaining not to be cast. Users of their bidbutler service have an unfair advantage in that their bids are placed on the server side and are not subject to these delays.

Since it is not possible to reliably place manual bids, the only way to guarantee that an auction can be won (while still coming out ahead) is to use the site's bidbutler service with high ceilings on the number of bids and amount that one will let it bid up to. Those ceilings have to take into account the item's current price, and will be lower the longer an item is being bid on.

As Joshua's data shows, there is no way to win a Swoopo auction other than through sheer random chance – that is, your client-side bid happens to wind its way through the umpteen internet routers between the server and your computer in time, ending up at the top of a queue with dozens or hundreds of other bids placed within a fraction of a second of each

other. And what's worse, you may not have any chance at all, unless you place a server-side bet through their exploitatively expensive 'bidbutler' service.

The only winning strategy at Swoopo, or any other penny auction site, is *not to play*. On Swoopo, there are nothing but millions of losers – and by that I mean they are gambling and losing millions of real dollars to the house. Which would be OK, I guess, **if it was properly regulated as gambling**. Swoopo and all these other penny auction sites should be regulated, and classified as the online gambling sites in sheep's clothing they really are.

Let's see what we can do to hasten this process along. Warn your friends and family. Complain to the Better Business Bureau and other regulatory agencies. And if you feel as strongly as I do about this, please write your congressmen/women and urge them to regulate these exploitative penny auctions.

## Comments

Amen to that!

A lot of bloggers have seen the evil of these types of sites. It's just taking advantage of stupid people.

**Maximillian** on May 25, 5:49 AM

Why do you care, man? No one's a kid here, if someone wants to go and spend their money on that website they're going to do it regardless even if it were classified as a gambling website. Other than hurting their business itself you aren't going to achieve anything or convince anyone. So why bother with this? There are better ways to use your energy.

**Gah** on May 25, 6:15 AM

**Tips for Scenario 10**

- *Remember to discuss the comments on the blog. Compare the commenters' points of view with that of the blog writer and note any differences in the way in which they approach the issue and the sort of language they use.*
- *Comment on the way in which the writer builds up a strongly negative picture of penny auction sites through the use of words and phrases such as 'evil', 'exploitative' and 'gambling sites in sheep's clothing'. Consider the connotations of these phrases.*
- *Consider the writer's background and how his position might both inform his point of view and position the reader to agree with it. Note also the way in which he appeals to the reader's ego – 'we're no government flacks' and 'it's a bit harder to pull the wool over our eyes'. Flattering the reader gets them on side and inclines them to accept the writer's argument because they want to accept his positive characterisation of them.*

**END OF SCENARIO 10**

## Sample student response for Scenario 1

The opinion piece ‘Sports sponsorship and kids’ health: who are the real winners?’ begins with a headline containing a play on words, which implies that the public may be being misled as to who the ‘real winners’ of the partnership between fast-food companies and sports are. The reader is likely to respond with concern – the more so given the use of the casual, affectionate word ‘kids’, which is likely to evoke warm, protective feelings in the reader.

The credentials of writers Rona Macniven and Bridget Kelly are outlined at the beginning of the article, immediately establishing them as experts in their field and suggesting that their approach to the issue will be evidence-based. This suggestion is reinforced by the frequent use of statistics throughout the article, in such statements as ‘almost one in four Australian children is currently overweight or obese’ and in the reference to the study that found that ‘of 108 junior community sports clubs in NSW and the ACT ... 17% of the 347 sponsors were food or beverage companies, 50% of which were deemed unhealthy’. The effect is to suggest that the writers’ opinion is based on research and evidence, encouraging the reader to view the writers as truthful and logical.

This impression is supported by the reasonable and calm tone used throughout the piece. The writers avoid overly emotive language and hyperbole in favour of clear but mostly mild criticism of partnerships between fast-food companies and sports. The relatively understated reference to fast food as ‘hardly the fuel of champions’ and the acknowledgement that adults may enjoy alcohol or pub food while watching sports suggest that the writers are taking a balanced and fair view of the issue, inclining the reader to look favourably on the conclusions they draw. The focus in the latter half of the piece on alternatives to fast-food sponsorship, and on a possible holistic approach to the issue, also contributes to establishing the authors as interested primarily in solutions, and as genuinely having children’s health as their main concern.

While the writers mostly eschew overly emotional language, their contention that fast-food companies should not sponsor sporting events is made clear through their use of firm, unambiguous statements such as ‘Children’s exposure to high levels of junk-food advertising affects the food and drink they like, ask for, buy and consume’. Such short declaratory sentences and the absence of colourful or aggressive language contribute to the sense that the piece is similar to a report. However, this impression is offset somewhat by the occasional use of more casual words and phrases, such as ‘kids’, ‘hardly the fuel of champions’ and ‘gone are the days’. This more informal language balances the overall formal tone of the piece and softens the reader’s likely impression of the writers by making them seem more down-to-earth and approachable.

The likening of fast-food sponsorship of sports to tobacco and alcohol sponsorship has the effect of making fast food seem as dangerous as these drugs, which have been proven harmful. The fact that tobacco and alcohol companies are no longer permitted to sponsor

sporting events suggests to the reader that, by analogy, the same outcome for fast-food companies is both logical and desirable. Many (if not most) readers of the piece would be adults who may have children of their own; associating fast food with drugs and alcohol is therefore likely to evoke fear and concern.

This appeal to fear is developed throughout the piece, beginning with the question in the headline, which subtly implies a potential threat to children's health. The opinion piece subsequently builds upon this with reference to the number of children in Australia considered overweight or obese, and the poor state of their diet and activity levels. Such statements establish Australian children as vulnerable, predisposing the reader to be all the more anxious to learn that 'children aged ten to 14 are influenced by food and beverage sponsorship in sport, with strong brand recall and positive attitudes to sponsors'. The implication is that fast-food companies are preying on children, knowingly exploiting their impressionability to maximise profits.

Likewise, the prominent photograph of happy children watching a football game in the sunshine evokes warm feelings in the reader, inclining them to want to protect children's wellbeing. The fact that the children are dressed alike, in their football team's colours, is a subtle reminder of the way in which children can be influenced by their environment, serving to underscore the writers' claim that fast-food advertising is effective at influencing children's food choices.

The piece is followed by two comments from readers. The first commenter, Eli, takes a contradictory position to the authors, arguing that it's unfair to target fast-food companies' sponsorship of kids' sports when other companies might also be considered poor role models. While he feels that eating junk food occasionally is not 'a big deal', he identifies responsibility for children's diets as ultimately lying with their parents. He uses casual and colloquial language such as 'copping a bashing' and 'hold the purse strings' to convey the impression that he is an average citizen whose views are based on common sense and likely to be representative of the majority.

By contrast, the second commenter identifies themselves as a nutritionist, inclining the reader to assume that they have expert knowledge in the areas of food and health. The writer uses a firm tone, established through the use of predominantly short, clear statements, to express agreement with the writers of the article. Like them, 'Nutritionist' presents his or her views as being supported by 'studies' and emphasises the risks to children's health over all other concerns. This comment bolsters the impression created by the opinion piece: that fast-food companies are a malignant influence that even parents and teachers are afraid to criticise. The closing three statements of the comment exemplify the writer's logical, no-nonsense approach; the emphatic conclusion is intended to remove any doubt from the reader's mind.

## Sample student response for Scenario 2

The subject line of the GetUp! email is designed to intrigue the reader, provoking their curiosity about the sort of research that could be powerful enough to ‘shut down’ coal seam gas mining and prompting them to open the email to learn more. The opening line of the email builds on this sense of suspense: the reader is driven to wonder what, exactly, is not supposed to be happening, and the suggestion of dishonesty or even of a conspiracy is conveyed.

The statement’s impact is increased by its being isolated in a paragraph of its own. The use of such short paragraphs recurs throughout, catering to the fact that emails are read onscreen and are thus unsuited to longer stretches of text. It is also a result of the nature of the communication: as a mass email sent to members of GetUp!, the text is likely to reach a sympathetic and interested audience but its form means there is a risk of it not being read if it doesn’t immediately capture the reader’s attention and retain it until the message is delivered. The use of bold text for several key sentences assists by highlighting main points for readers who might skim the piece.

The email goes on to quote from *The Sydney Morning Herald*, a respected news source the reader is likely to trust. The association of GetUp! with established, credible groups is reinforced by references to the ABC, ‘scientists’ and a Melbourne University professor, encouraging the reader to feel that GetUp!’s objection to coal seam gas is shared by experts and based on sound evidence. Such an impression is reinforced by the use of statistics (‘Methane is ... 21 times more powerful’) and the citing of sources in footnotes, both conventions of a scientific report that lend the email gravity.

The email purports to reveal the truth about coal seam gas, and paints the gas industry as duplicitous and self-interested. Seeking to ‘debunk’ the industry’s claims that coal seam gas is safe, the email argues that the industry is ‘getting away with ... fugitive emissions’. These expressions align the industry with criminals, tainting their image in the reader’s mind and positioning the reader to discredit the industry’s claims.

The theme of the gas industry’s untrustworthiness is further developed through the diagrams included with the email. The two diagrams set up a stark contrast between industry claims and ‘the reality’, effectively branding the industry’s version a lie. The diagrams identify where drinking water is obtained under the soil, emphasising the threat of its pollution through the idyllic image of a house set in lush green surrounds with a swing set out the front. The impression given is that the gas industry’s activities threaten to harm both the families who live in such homes and drink tap water, and the lush green environment they live in, evoking a sense of danger and anxiety in the reader. The swing set is a reminder that the wellbeing of future generations is also at risk, while the sharp contrast between the settings above the ground and those below underscore the hidden and deceitful nature of the gas industry’s wrongdoing.



The email encourages the reader to feel a personal investment in the issue, not only through the depiction of a typical suburban scene facing corruption, but also through the use of inclusive language. Phrases such as ‘our government’ and ‘the CSG industry has been telling us’ combine with an appeal to the hip-pocket nerve in the phrase ‘you’ve got a climate bill worth billions’ to position the reader to feel that the gas industry is ‘ripping them off’.

This idea of personal investment is underscored by the sense of urgency that permeates the email, heightening the reader’s fear and alarm. This urgency is conveyed through the use of exclamatory sentences such as, ‘It thoroughly debunks the gas industry’s claims that CSG produces 70% less emissions than coal!’; the use of bold text; the use of words such as ‘serious’, ‘urgent’, ‘important’ and ‘timely’; and the description of the expansion of coal seam gas mining as occurring at a ‘breakneck pace’. These features of the text all work together to create the sense that the issue requires immediate action, before it’s too late.

Having thus prepared the reader to agree that urgent action is needed, the email ends with a call to action, the repeat of an earlier request. The reader is urged to write to the Federal Climate Change Minister Greg Combet to get the government to investigate the gas industry’s claims thoroughly. The organisation provides a link to a sample letter it has prepared, making it as easy as possible for the reader to act as directed. The sense of ‘us’ (GetUp! and the reader) against ‘them’ (the gas industry and negligent government) is retained to the end, with the postscript referring to ‘us’ and ‘we’, and the descriptions in the information statement at the bottom of the email describing the organisation as a ‘community’ group that ‘empower[s] Australians’. The email develops a sense of imminent danger, evoking fear in the reader, as well as a sense that urgent action can and should be taken. The reader – who is likely to already be sympathetic to GetUp!’s viewpoint – is likely to be moved to indignation and outrage, and finally to wish to take action.

### Sample student response for Scenario 3

The editorial 'Solarium ban a victory for good sense' strongly supports the announcement by Ted Baillieu that solariums will be banned in Victoria from 2014. In formal language and in a serious, emphatic tone, the writer argues that solariums present an extreme threat to public health and that there are no good reasons for their use or their continued existence.

The writer's point of view is expressed primarily through a sustained critique of solariums and by emphasising the extreme danger they pose. A detailed description of the effects on the skin uses words and phrases with strong negative associations: 'grim', 'thinner', 'prone to wrinkling'. Elsewhere, terms such as 'unnatural' and 'fatal' reinforce the sense of solariums as dangerous and even life-threatening. This sense of a sinister threat is reinforced by the image accompanying the editorial, which shows a girl whose skin has clearly been damaged and who is now trying to repair the damage with a cream. She is looking directly at the camera with a frank, serious look on her face – the overall impression is far from the idea that a tan is associated with happiness and a healthy outdoor lifestyle. She looks concerned, and the damaged appearance of her skin is likely to make the reader feel alarmed. The caption plays on the expression 'to die for', the colloquial meaning of which is something that is very desirable. In this context, though, the phrase is a pun in which the literal meaning is now all too evident. The idea conveyed by this pun and the image is that no tan can really be worth 'dying for': an idea that encapsulates the view presented by the editorial.

Those whose health is damaged by using solariums are characterised as 'victims' who have been exploited. They are portrayed as mostly young and innocent, although the editorial does acknowledge that some 'prioritise tanning over their physical health'. In fact, this acknowledgement serves to suggest that such individuals cannot be entirely trusted to make the best decisions, either in their own interests or those of others. Their vulnerability is conveyed in particular through the account of Clare Oliver, whose death is described as 'tragic' and who 'worked tirelessly' to make others aware of the dangers of solarium use. Clare's youth, combined with her capacity to do good, are reinforced in the final paragraph by the idea of 'precious potential'. These words and ideas lead the reader to feel pity for Clare and anger towards those whom the editorial frames as being largely responsible for her death. The overall picture is of an industry that endangers the health, and even the lives, of young, innocent individuals for no other reason than to make money – an industry that should be closed down as soon as possible.

The critique of solariums also draws the reader's attention to the cost to public health. The editorial aligns itself with the public throughout, positioning itself as presenting the view of the mainstream. Phrases such as 'the costs to the community' and 'costs [to] the Australian health system' allow the writer to highlight emotional costs of solarium use as well as financial ones. These references to the public and the community work together with the inclusive language of 'most of us would agree', signalling that the editorial is expressing the

view of the majority; in this way, the reader is led to feel that they too share the view of the editorial.

Despite its strongly critical viewpoint, the editorial is not simply a strident attack. The argument is expressed in mostly moderate, balanced language and is supported by statistics in the opening paragraph. It also includes an acknowledgement of opposing viewpoints: those of the solarium operators and employees, and also of some solarium users. In this way the editorial presents its view as considered and objective, enhancing its credibility and authority in the eyes of the reader. Opposing views are acknowledged as having some validity, such as those of people wanting to preserve freedom of choice and the voices of business owners who are ‘understandably concerned’. The editorial signals that its approach is thoughtful and thorough, and that its view has come from weighing up all the arguments, as well as the evidence. Similarly, the rebuttal of opposing views draws on logic and reason rather than on purely emotional appeals, referring to ‘consequences for public health’ and making explicit the connection between an individual developing cancer and the costs to the health system.

Towards the end of the editorial, though, the tone becomes more urgent and the attack on solariums and those who run them becomes more scathing. Emotive terms such as ‘absurd’, ‘passé’ and ‘superficial’ work to dismiss the views of those who run or use solariums, as does the sarcastic tone of the short, blunt sentence: ‘It’s called spray tan.’ This sarcasm denigrates the intelligence and judgement of those who use solariums by implying that they have been unable to grasp the ‘cheaper and safer alternative’. The editorial’s strongest attack on solarium owners comes near the end, in the phrase ‘they are to be condemned for their callousness’. This phrase suggests that solarium owners are unfeeling and cruel, ensuring that the reader feels no sympathy for them or any inclination to support their businesses.

The editorial concludes by returning to the loss of life and wasted potential embodied in Clare Oliver, eliciting the reader’s strongest possible feelings of sympathy and of agreement with the editorial’s position. This expression of regret leads to a rousing, affirmative conclusion, as the reader is encouraged to feel relief and hope for the future. The government’s decision to ban solariums is endorsed in overwhelmingly positive terms: a ‘matter to be celebrated’ and a ‘victory of compassion and good sense’. This emphatic ending produces a strong sense of closure, leading the reader to feel not just agreement with the decision but also pleasure and a feeling of achievement.

## **END OF SECTION C EXAM PRACTICE**