

# 2017 VCE English as an Additional Language (EAL) examination report

## General comments

The 2017 English as an Additional Language (EAL) examination consisted of three sections: Section A required short-answer responses to two aural texts, Section B required an extended response to one text and Section C required the completion of two tasks in response to unseen material.

Assessment of extended responses in Sections B and C was holistic, using the published assessment criteria. Assessors related student performance directly to these criteria, and their judgments were assisted by the use of a set of descriptors. Teachers and students should be aware of the assessment criteria, the descriptors and the sample examination, which are published on the VCAA website. Assessment of short-answer responses in Sections A and C is discussed later in this report.

## Specific information

**Note: Student responses reproduced in this report have not been corrected for grammar, spelling or factual information.**

This report provides sample answers or an indication of what answers may have included. Unless otherwise stated, these are not intended to be exemplary or complete responses.

The statistics in this report may be subject to rounding resulting in a total more or less than 100 per cent.

## Section A – Listening to texts

Students were required to respond to short-answer questions based on their comprehension of two unfamiliar spoken texts. For each text students were supplied with brief written background information. The first text was a radio interview with the author of *Tea Drinking in Australia*. The second text was a conversation between friends about travel to Antarctica. The topics were deemed accessible, and there was a mix of question types, with varying degrees of challenge. Most students made effective use of the note-taking space provided beside the questions on the examination.

Overall, most questions were attempted and responses showed familiarity with the question types. Responses reflected the teaching of key knowledge and skills and exposure to the sample examination.

Identifying tone and delivery is challenging for students and emphasis on this is needed. Exposure to a wide variety of spoken English will assist. Students need to develop their critical listening skills both in and outside of the classroom. They are encouraged to listen, in English, to anything that interests them – current affairs, news, documentaries and podcasts can all be useful. Students should listen for the added effect of emphasis, pauses, sighs, hesitations, etc. Students are expected to be familiar with the terminology used in the key knowledge and skills for this task.

Students are encouraged to use the key words in the questions as a focus for their listening. Short-answer questions require concise and precise answers. Responses that demonstrated understanding provided what was asked for without including extraneous information. Expression skills need to be sufficiently controlled to convey meaning accurately.

**Question 1a.**

Marks	0	1	Average
%	17	83	<b>0.9</b>

Listeners (of his national radio program). 'Audience' was accepted as a correct answer.

The most common incorrect answer was 'Emma'.

**Question 1b.**

Marks	0	1	Average
%	38	62	<b>0.6</b>

Stefan means that he drinks coffee often and certainly prefers coffee to tea. Answers that referred to the frequency with which Stefan drinks coffee or his preference for coffee were accepted.

Incorrect answers included:

- those that just substituted a synonym for 'committed', for example, dedicated
- answers that just said he did not like tea

**Question 1c.**

Marks	0	1	2	Average
%	5	17	78	<b>1.8</b>

Any two of the following ideas were correct:

- Drinking tea was used to welcome people into our home.
- Talking about a family event always started with a pot of tea.
- Discussing a problem as a family always started with a pot of tea.
- Tea was how we started and finished each day.

The question asked for examples from Emma's childhood. Answers that referred to her time at university were incorrect.

**Question 1d.**

Marks	0	1	Average
%	27	73	<b>0.8</b>

The words 'untold tale' mean that the story of tea in Australia has not been documented.

**Question 1e.**

Marks	0	1	Average
%	70	30	<b>0.3</b>

Correct examples were:

- '...history is so much more than facts and figures'
- 'it's (history) is about people just like us...'

Incorrect answers included:

- fascinated/fascinating
- passionate
- references to tea growing in Queensland

**Question 1f.**

Marks	0	1	2	Average
%	3	19	78	1.8

Any two of the following were correct:

- Young people are very interested in the varieties of tea now available.
- There is scientific evidence that tea is good for your health./Some people claim that different teas calm them or help them to sleep.
- The popularity of coffee does not mean that tea is any less important to Australians.

Incorrect answers drew on general reasons for the book’s appeal, including:

- the anecdotes and photos in the book
- references to a visually beautiful book

**Question 1g.**

Marks	0	1	2	Average
%	53	36	11	0.6

Any two of the following words were accepted as correct: cool, formal, (overly) polite, professional, defensive, unpleasant, respectful, sarcastic, awkward, tense, detached, strained, unfriendly.

Incorrect responses included: friendly, embarrassed, curious, disappointed.

The question asked for two words, and any two adjectives that accurately described the interaction between Emma and Stefan at the end of the interview were accepted. The question called for listening for key words and the tone of voice used to express them.

Some responses misunderstood the interaction as friendly when it was clearly awkward. Stefan’s teasing tone was seen by some as humour and that this meant they had a friendly interaction. Further work on the conventions of spoken texts as listed in Unit 3, Area of Study 3 would assist students in interpreting tone in this type of question.

**Question 2a.**

Marks	0	1	2	Average
%	14	35	50	1.4

George – the research and booking (either or both were accepted)

Leonie – thinking of the destination

Incorrect answers included:

- Leonie took photos.
- Responses that overlooked the word ‘planning’ in the question.

**Question 2b.**

Marks	0	1	2	Average
%	41	33	26	<b>0.9</b>

Any two of the following were accepted:

- ice
- isolation
- spectacular scenery
- (amazing and diverse) wildlife

Incorrect answers included:

- getting close to the animals
- no polar bears, so safe to walk around
- take photographs

The question prompted students to listen for the word ‘awesome’. It also asked for characteristics of Antarctica. The incorrect answers were things a visitor could do rather than characteristics of the place.

**Question 2c.**

Marks	0	1	Average
%	50	50	<b>0.5</b>

Any one of the following was correct:

- migratory bird
- migrates from summer at the North Pole to summer at the South Pole
- travels 70 000 kilometres annually
- always lives in summer

Incorrect answers included those that picked up on an appropriate aspect but were not able to express the idea meaningfully; for example, summer is always the Arctic tern.

**Question 2d.**

Marks	0	1	2	Average
%	23	35	42	<b>1.2</b>

One response for each island was required. Acceptable answers were:

	Campbell Island	Balleny Islands
<b>Attraction</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• home of the albatross and many other birds</li> <li>• opportunities for walking</li> <li>• climbing Mount Honey</li> <li>• opportunities to take close-up photographs</li> <li>• wildlife</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• volcanic cliffs</li> <li>• glaciers that project into the sea</li> </ul>

The word 'attraction' in the question was a key word to focus listening.

Incorrect spelling of unfamiliar words, for example 'albatross', was accepted if the meaning was clear.

Incorrect answers included:

- responses that confused the islands
- inaccurate information, for example, volcanic glaciers
- limited information, for example, cliffs

### Question 2e.

Marks	0	1	2	3	Average
%	17	26	35	22	1.6

The question had three aspects: how did Leonie show her disappointment, an example of her choice of language and an example of her delivery.

Any one of (choice of language):	Any one of (delivery):	Consideration of 'how' rather than just listing examples:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• use of 'I'd hoped' twice ('... I <b>hoped</b> I'd be able to walk on Antarctica itself', 'I <b>hoped</b> it would be possible in another place...')</li> <li>• 'It wasn't to be'</li> <li>• 'Anyway, despite that disappointment...'</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• when asked if they had any disappointments, George and Leonie talk over each other, which suggests it's something they have talked about before</li> <li>• when asked if they had any disappointments, Leonie exclaims, 'I do!'</li> <li>• emphasis of: 'I had one really <b>big</b> disappointment'</li> <li>• emphasis of: '... I knew it was possible that we <b>might</b> not be able to land...'</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• telling the story of what is important to her in visiting new places</li> <li>• repetition</li> <li>• specific explanation of her experience – explanatory style, which helps her to accept her disappointment</li> <li>• pauses</li> <li>• sighing</li> </ul>

The following are examples of high-scoring responses that address all aspects of the question.

*She sighs when Maria asks her about the disappointment and she strongly emphasises the phrase "I do" when she is asked. Her tone shifted from excited to disappointed. She emphasises on how the trip fails to meet her expectation.*

*Her disappointment is that they have no chance to land on Antarctica because the ice is so thick. She says "Big disappointment" and there is emphasis in the phrase "big". She also slow down her speaking speech.*

*She claims that it is a "really big" disappointment and contrasts with what she "strongly believed" before the journey, in a downcast tone of voice.*

The following is an example of a mid-scoring response that addresses two aspects of the question – example of language and use of explanatory style.

*When she goes to new places, she loves “putting her feet in new land “however it was not possible on this trip as the sea ice was “too thick”. The weather condition was so bad “so landing was not possible.”, “big disappointment”.*

Low-scoring responses addressed only one aspect of the question or simply told what happened.

## Section B – Analytical interpretation of a text

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Average
%	0	0	2	6	13	20	22	19	10	5	2	5.9

Students were required to write an analytical interpretation of one text. There were two topics for each of the 28 prescribed texts. The descriptors used for assessment related to knowledge of the text, including consideration of its concepts and construction, the structure and relevance of the response and the writing skills as demonstrated in control of the conventions of written English.

The most popular texts and their percentage average scores are shown in the table below.

Text	% of students	Average score
<i>Medea</i>	20.2	6.0
<i>All About Eve</i>	13.2	5.7
<i>Invictus</i>	9.7	6.1
<i>Black Diggers</i>	8.3	6.0
<i>I am Malala</i>	8.2	5.4

The highest-scoring responses demonstrated an in-depth understanding of the questions and the texts by crafting meaningful, analytical and relevant discussion in direct response to the chosen question. These responses also demonstrated a skilful weaving of knowledge of the text into the analysis of the question. Student writing generally reflected awareness of the construction and interpretation of texts. Almost all responses displayed at least some knowledge of the text and an adequate knowledge of essay structure.

High-scoring responses were characterised by a sharp focus on the key words in the questions, selective and considered use of the text, and ideas expressed with strong language skills. Low-scoring responses tended to be more descriptive and dominated by detailed retelling of the content of the text rather than selective use of the text. Students generally showed a good understanding and knowledge of the texts and were familiar with the main ideas raised in the questions. There were few very short or incomprehensible responses. In planning, students need to brainstorm all the key words in the question, paying particular attention to modifying words and comparatives. A well-planned response is less likely to slip into retelling the story or adapting a previously written response to fit the question.

The majority of responses were on a small number of texts. The most popular texts included a variety of genres. The following texts were used in over half of the responses: *Medea*, *All About Eve*, *Invictus*, *Black Diggers* and *I am Malala*.

Both topics on *Medea* provided multiple entry points and called for comprehensive discussion of all characters and the play as a whole, with plenty of scope for students to draw on their knowledge of the text. While most responses to the first *Medea* topic addressed the conflict between reason and passion, fewer of them wrote about the comparative element, 'the most important conflict'. Some responses focused on how each character failed to show moderation. Others wrote about reason and passion separately rather than the conflict between these. The second *Medea* topic, which asked 'Do you agree?', required students to present their points of view about the statement. High-scoring responses, and some mid-range responses, included a nuanced discussion of 'desperate' and 'despicable', exploring the terms in relation to the historical and geographical context of the play, while responses that did not score well took up extreme positions.

There was a range of responses to the first, and more popular, topic on *All About Eve*. Responses that did not score well simply listed facts about the relationships, while responses that scored well addressed the specific wording of the topic and even challenged it. Some did not see positive relationships as 'intense', while less relevant responses just wrote about the gender dynamics in the film. Higher-scoring responses used a range of characters to discuss the theatre world as inherently competitive. Responses to the second topic often misunderstood the idea of 'the structure of the film' and wrote about filming techniques. Higher-scoring responses focused on the way in which, like the main characters, the audience is deceived by Eve's initial appearance. They explored the framing through which Eve is presented as seemingly vulnerable and naive, and the gradual revealing of her manipulative and duplicitous nature. Some pointed to the pre-figuring of Eve's true nature in the negative reactions of key characters in the first scene and in Birdie's astute observations about Eve early in the film.

The *Invictus* topics were generally well handed and responses showed strong textual knowledge. Although the first topic provided an open entry for discussion, some responses discussed the concept of forgiveness without addressing whether it was more powerful than revenge. Some responses to the second topic concentrated on change and did not give sufficient emphasis to leadership. Others focused on what Mandela did but glossed over the concept of leadership. The highest-scoring responses drew on leadership theory to explore the topic.

Responses to the first topic on *Black Diggers* needed to draw on the whole play in order to form a view about 'justice after the war'. Both topics focused on values that were central to the text and could be discussed using a range of characters. Quotes were often well integrated with the discussion, and answers that scored well dealt with the structure of the play.

Low-scoring responses to the first topic for *I am Malala* relied heavily on storytelling. With the second topic some students had difficulty working with all the terms 'power', 'unity' and 'persistence' and the way they needed to be interpreted from the topic. These students tended to deal with either unity or persistence. Although this topic asked about Malala, some of the responses that scored well observed that the unity the Taliban established was an integral factor in the oppression of people.

As part of their preparation, students need to consider the ways authors/directors create meaning and build the world of the text by examining the choices made in the construction of texts. Students need to explore different interpretations of texts, synthesise ideas and develop an interpretation of their own. A thorough knowledge of the events, the themes and the characters in the text is required to achieve this. It is important to be familiar with the language used for analysis. Analytical writing can include description, such as facts or information, but its focus is on the relationships between pieces of information. It may include comparing and contrasting, or assessing. Students need to develop writing skills that will enable them to incorporate knowledge of the text into their analysis. Writing that simply describes/tells what a character did rather than exploring why and how, and the effect of the behaviour relevant to the set topic, is a limited response. Students also need to be familiar with the variety of ways in which topics can be worded and understand the requirements of different task words and phrases, such as 'discuss', 'do you agree?', 'to what

extent', etc. Thoughtful planning is needed to craft a response that directly addresses the set question. With collections of stories, students should look for the links and connections between the stories.

### Student response – Example 1

The following upper-range response to *All About Eve* presents a considered analysis of the topic and uses the text selectively to support discussion of the implications of the topic. It is organised and contains some weaknesses in expression but these do not detract from the meaning.

**'In *All About Eve*, the world of the theatre is presented as a place of intense competition and intense relationships.' Discuss.**

*Produced in the golden age Hollywood, the satirical melodrama "All About Eve" directed by Joseph L Mankiewicz depicts the theatrical world of the 1950s Broadway, New York to be viciously competitive on the way to success, and is filled with toxic relationships. However cases of unity and supportive relationships is also portrayed by some characters in the film. The director deploys various film techniques to show the audience about the 50s theater people that they are competitive, have complicated relationships but some can be heartwarming at the same time.*

*The theater was shown by Mankiewicz as a place that is constantly undergoing competition. From Karen's narrative of the theater being "a season, a lifetime" to the symbolic ending scene where infinite amount of Phoebe's images were reflected in the mirrors. These manifests to the audience that success in the theater does not last, and there will always be new actresses showing up. Therefore the competition to the pinnacle will never end in the theater. Margo and Eve's feud suggest to the viewer the intensity of the race to the top of the theater. The audience sees how unscrupulously Eve can become in order to win the "rat race" when she "blackmails Karen" to give her the part of Cora and tells her that she "would do much more for a part that good." Thus the audience sees how brazen, violent and "bitter" characters can get in competitions, hence the theater world is of intense competitions.*

*Mankiewicz also presents the theater to be a place full of toxic relationships. The director foreshadows Eve's mysterious personality using film noir in the alley way scene when Eve first meets Karen. The shifts of Eve in and out of the shadows implies that she is not truly how she appears. Which is later testified when her genuine identity is exposed to be someone with "unsatiable ambition and talent." While she elaborately act as a self effacing ingenue "like a loose lamb in a jungle story" in front of Margo. This positions the audience to have a sense of how fake and untrue-to-heart relationships are in the theater. This is intensified through Eve's relationship with Addison. From Eve trying to tell the others "I wish I never knew him, I'd like him to be dead" while needing his help to "notify every paper in town" to see her performance, to the even more toxicated, inhuman "sound like something out an old melodrama" relationship where Eve "belongs" to Addison. These suggests to the viewers the struggles theater people had to face, how their connections between each other would be extremely unhealthy and the intensity and toxicity in the relationships.*

*However, Mankiewicz also shows that people in the theater can be united and have supportive and heartwarming relationships. Bill is shown to the audience as an incredibly loyal companion to Margo. Apart from satisfying the viewers, his straight forward rejection to Eve, "I go after what I want to go after, I don't want it to come after me" sends the message that Bill and Margo have a secure, unbreakable relationship. This idea is further reinforced by Mankiewicz through always making Margo the focus in every frame when ever Bill is present. The relationship between Margo and Karen is also heart warming to the audience when they had the heart-to-heart talk in the car scene about "going back to being a woman." Margo's apologie "I haven't been very pleasant for weeks" tells the audience that Margo is a sensible and deserving friend. And Karen's apologie and the reaction shots further strengthens her deep guilt. This reliefs the audience to know that Karen is guilty, and that their relationship is still supportive, as they both want good to each other. Thus there were no competition between these characters in the film,*



*and that they have healthy, positive and united connections.*

*In conclusion, the film 'All About Eve' does present the world of theater as a place of intense competition and intense relationships. However there were also aspects of the positive sides in the theater shown through the film. Which were demonstrated to the audience through characters' interactions and the uses of film technique.*

## **Student response – Example 2**

The following mid-range response maintains a focus on the question and presents a clear point of view that challenges the assumptions in the statement. It is a structured piece of writing that demonstrates adequate control of language, with occasional incorrect choice of words, for example, 'exploits' instead of 'explores' in the first sentence.

**'Euripides's character Medea is a desperate woman who is badly treated by a despicable man.'**

**Do you agree?**

*Medea, written by Euripides, exploits betrayal and hatred in depth and is considered to be a revolutionary play at the time. In Medea, Euripides has built constant tensions revolving around the two main characters, Jason and Medea, and through these tensions, their complex characteristic is reflected. It is undeniable that Medea is a powerful woman, who gets back at Jason for the wrong she thinks he does which makes him nowhere near despicable, but a victim of hers.*

*Although, Medea is portrayed as a weak and helpless woman at the start of the play, but it is all Euripides' intention to build a twist in the play. At the start, Medea was lying and crying on the floor but it does not show that she is desperate and weak; she is a powerful demi-god with pride and intelligence. Medea is capable of doing harms and she is well aware of that and she uses it to her advantage. She is proud and powerful, and she makes sure that everyone is aware of it. "Let no one think of me as humble or weak or passive", she says. She represents herself as a dangerous woman and people fear her. The tutor fear for the children, of how she "watching them, her eyes like wild bull's" and Creon also fears her. Medea may have her weak moments but to say she is desperate is an understatement.*

*It is undeniable that Jason's marriage to Glauce breaks her heart but it is not true that he treats her badly. It is a common thing at the time to have a second wife and what Jason has done is no exception. Medea knows it but chooses to take it differently, as his betrayal to her. Medea hurts herself by not accepting this common thing as her pride would not let her. Instead, Medea blames Jason for the crime he does not commit and hurts him in the worst way possible. Therefore, it is fair to say, that Jason is just a victim of her own drama inside her own head and he is nowhere near a bad buy who is "oath-breaker" and treats her badly.*

*After blaming Jason for the things he does not do, Medea gets back at him by killing everyone he cares about, including her own kids. In her defence, she is hurt and wants revenge which is totally normal but murder is not an act of a desperate and hut woman, it is a act of a "savage". Deaths of Clauce and Creon is just horrid and shows much much of a villain Medea is for killing the innocent. Medea thinks that they have done her wrong for banishing her while she does it to herself, she deserves it for cursing other people regardless of how hurt she is. She does not have the right to go out and kill whoever she wants and still get pity for blaming Jason, she is responsible for the deaths of the innocent and it is not justified. Regardless of how the kids beg for her pity, she still kills them out of pride and revenge. To say that Medea is desperate woman is unfair, for people die under her hands and her power.*

*Medea is a powerful and dangerous character in Medea and gets her revenge at Jason, a poor guy who is caught up in her own drama and is not at all, a despicable man.*

## Section C – Argument and persuasive language

The task material consisted of two pieces containing opinions about packaging waste. Both were published on the website of a fictional primary school. The first piece was the Principal's weekly message, and the second was a response from a parent. The topic, language, length and style of the pieces offered opportunities for students at all levels to demonstrate their skills. The written articles contained two differing opinions and were accompanied by two visuals. The first was the school logo, which appeared at the top of the Principal's Message. The second was a photograph of a mountainous pile of bagged rubbish, illustrating the Principal's view that excessive packaging 'fills up our bins and eventually, our world'.

### Question 1

This question assessed comprehension of the task material, and answers needed to be precise to demonstrate comprehension. Most responses showed that students had understood the questions; however, some responses were incomplete or unclear.

#### Question 1a.

Marks	0	1	Average
%	27	73	<b>0.8</b>

Correct responses identified a big-picture reason behind the Principal's wish, such as:

- a reduction in the amount of waste material filling the world
- preservation of the planet
- sustainability of the planet.

Incorrect responses included:

- no overflowing rubbish bins
- school will look more clean

#### Question 1b.

Marks	0	1	2	Average
%	6	31	63	<b>1.6</b>

Correct responses were:

- parents and their children: references to preparing food, which included the use of a reusable container, a washable plastic bottle or a lunchbox
- staff: replacing the coffee pod machine or using a staff teapot instead of teabags

Incorrect responses included:

- changes proposed for the canteen
- have fewer takeaway meals

#### Question 1c.

Marks	0	1	2	Average
%	7	17	76	<b>1.7</b>

Correct responses were:

- The Principal: Takeaway food increases the amount of waste.
- Louise: Takeaway food is a great help for busy people or gives parents the occasional night off from cooking.

Incorrect responses included:

- Takeaway food uses unnecessary packaging.
- Takeaway food damages the environment.

**Question 1d.**

Marks	0	1	2	3	Average
%	6	10	30	55	2.3

Any three of the following reasons were correct:

- We should be able to enjoy the benefits of 21st-century living.
- Parents are time-poor – mornings already chaotic, have to get to work.
- Biscuits will go soft if the cheese is spread at home.
- We've lost a lot of plastic bottles already.
- Children will make a mess serving themselves with a soy sauce bottle.
- Children will drop the large bottle onto the floor.
- The coffee pod machine was donated by the Parents and Friends group – wasteful to throw it out.
- It is old-fashioned to expect everyone to use the same pot of tea.

Incorrect responses included:

- references to views on takeaway food
- details of the ways in which Louise's family already supports the Principal

**Question 1e.**

Marks	0	1	2	Average
%	19	57	24	1.1

Correct responses captured the idea of 'challenge' and included ideas such as:

- asking busy parents to change their behaviour
- she says, 'I know how busy your lives are'
- asking for a change at home as well as at school
- recognition that packaging was part of everyday life or was very convenient
- specific examples of behaviour change at home and at school (could be direct quotes)

Incorrect responses included:

- unrelated examples such as children cannot manage big bottles
- responses that referred to things said by Louise

The following is high-scoring response is a clear, detailed explanation with insightful commentary.

*As it need staff, parents and children to take responsibility to reduce the packaging waste. In addition, the principal says "I know how busy your lives", it addresses the idea that people are too busy to take time out to do the series of things that may reduce the packaging waste.*

The following high-scoring example responds to the idea of 'challenge' and picks up on the implications of 'hopes' in relation to the staff.

*The principal says "reducing packaging will be a challenge" because she acknowledges that the parents have "busy lives". She also says that she "hopes to influence" the staff, the term "hope" suggests that she recognises the difficulties in reducing packaging.*

The following is a mid-scoring response that gives two reasons that show awareness of 'challenge'.

*It is challenging because children use packaging very often. In families, people are busy while packaging provides convenience.*

Low-scoring responses were a generic comment only about trying to persuade the audience.

## Question 2

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Average
%	1	2	4	12	18	22	19	14	7	3	1	5.2

High-scoring responses used a wide variety of language for analysis, and saw the progression of argument through the Principal's piece and the way Louise had matched this structure in her response. Most commented on the photograph and could link it to the consequences of the unchecked use of packaging. Some also mentioned the graphic design and linked it to the pride in being environmentally conscious. High-scoring analyses began with a discussion of how Denise attempted to engage her readers, with some referring to her self-mockery or her attempt to build on the sustainability credentials of the school.

Most responses tried to balance an analysis of argument with an analysis of language. The highest-scoring responses analysed argument use and language in an integrated way. Some responses used a comparative approach that analysed arguments and counter arguments from both texts in the same paragraph. However, only comparatively few responses focused on how the overall argument was structured.

Low-scoring responses described rather than analysed the arguments and the language. The material was generally well understood, even though a few students appeared to think that it was just about takeaway food.

Almost all students wrote about the visual but there was wide variation in how much detail students devoted to it. The highest-scoring analyses referred to what was seen in the photograph (rubbish bags and dark sky) and explored the implications of the visual, such as concern for the future of the world. Higher-scoring responses identified it as threatening and linked to the text around it. Many responses overlooked the school logo but some noted the contrast between the two visuals (sustainability of a healthy tree versus a bleak future).

Upper-range responses were well written and demonstrated a strong understanding of the ways in which written and visual language and the use of argument were used through effective analysis of the material. Features of upper-range responses included:

- a clear understanding of the context of the writing and the points of view expressed
- ability to integrate analysis of language and argument
- exploration of the implications of specific language choices, for example, 'unnecessary packaging', 'asking... insisting... hope to influence', 'vague idea', 'chaotic', 'old-fashioned', '21st century living'
- analysis expressed with a range of precise vocabulary
- clear explanations linking the visuals and the words, and exploring the intended effect of the visuals

Mid-range responses showed awareness of the task but some moved between explaining the material and an attempt to analyse it. Limitations of these responses included:

- difficulty describing tone accurately
- generalised descriptions of persuasive techniques
- describing rather than analysing the use of argument

- little or no reference to the visuals or reference not linked to the texts
- in a few cases, using only one of the texts

### Student response – Example 1

The following upper-range response demonstrates strong understanding of the task and the material. It examines a range of ways in which words, visuals and the use of argument can position an audience. Despite the occasional incorrect choice of word, the vocabulary is extensive and precise.

*In the weekly message in Spire Primary School’s newsletter published on the school’s website, the Principal, Denise Walker, contends that unnecessary packaging for food must be reduced. Benevolent and worried in tone, she aims to target parents of students in Spire Primary School with the inclusion of an accompanying image to reinforce her point of view. In response to the Principal’s message, a parent, Louise, denigrates walker’s contention that packaging needs to be reduced. Critical and informal in tone, she appeals to not only the Principal but also other parents.*

*Upon commencement, Walker advocates that excessive packaging for food causes damage to the environment and therefore must be reduced. She attempts to establish a friendly rapport with the readers through the use of inclusive language “we”, and in appealing to their sense of social responsibility by asserting “we are responsible for the future of our world”, readers may be instilled with a feeling of obligation to help preserve the planet. She further insinuates her deep concern for the environment by interpositioning figurative language “hamburgers in boxes” and “packets of tissue”, which is reinforced by the visual accompaniment that depicts mountains of garbage piled beneath a grey, foggy sky. Conjuring these confronting images of rubbish in the readers’ minds, they may be compelled to cultivate anxiety and concern for the damage created to the environment and the substantial impacts made to the world.*

*Walker continues her onslaught of criticism regarding the amount of rubbish kids and parents create, and proposes solutions to cope with this crisis. Citing a personal anecdote to provide instances in which students contribute to “more rubbish”, Walker interjects a negatively connotated word “dangerous” in illustrating the potential danger that “little tomato sauce containers” poses to the audience’s children, she intends to appeal to the parents’ care for their children, who may culminate apprehension for their well-being posing a rhetorical question “why not prepare your own vegetables...?” coupled with a switch to the use of exclusive language “you”. Walker directly targets the parents for being one of the culprits of damaging the environment. She induces in the readers a sense of guilt, who may engender apologetic feelings and thus feel more inclined towards reducing packaging waste to improve the environment and set a decent example for their children.*

*In contrast, Louise belittles Walker’s point of view through a prolonged canon of appeal to readers’ compassion, especially understanding from fellow parents. Interpositioning negatively connotated words “pity” and “vague”, as well as statement of “you wouldn’t believe”, she describes in detail the many instances in which using ‘unnecessary’ packaging may be unavoidable due to “chaotic” lifestyle of parents which many can relate to. The rhetorical question – “why shouldn’t parents have the occasional night without cooking?” seeks to not only mock Walker’s inconsiderate beliefs but also enlist the support of parents by appealing to their sense of logic and empathy. Thus, readers may be positioned to agree with Louise’s perspective, as a seed of scepticism may be implanted in their minds towards the ability of the Principal in considering the difficulties parents face. As a result, readers may be likely to rebutt the notion of substantially reduce packaging, as they can largely relate themselves to Louise’s situation.*

## Student response – Example 2

This upper mid-range response demonstrates some understanding of how language, visuals and the use of argument can persuade. A strength of this piece is that it uses language that tracks the structure of the argument. Some parts are more descriptive than analytical and there is minimal discussion of the visual. Language, although not always precise, is generally strong.

*In response of the issue of over-packaging in school and the consequential environmental problem, the Principal of Spire Primary School writes a weekly message for the school's website at the parents of the students in the school. The letter is published on 8 July 2017. Concerned in tone, Principal contends that everyone should make an effort to reducing packaging. The letter is accompanied by a visual which shows a huge amount of rubbish. On the other hand, Louise, a parent, voices a different opinion in her comment to the Principal's letter. She adopts a primarily confrontational tone and asserts that reducing packaging is impractical in the reality.*

*The Principal commences by arguing that over-packaging is a serious problem that they need to solve. Throughout the letter the Principal constantly addresses the readers directly by using second person narrative "you". In doing so she seeks to target a sense of responsibility and engage the readers to review their roles in the issue. At the outset of her article, the Principal firstly celebrates the achievements which have been done by the school, such as "vegetable garden" and the "four different bins", followed by the appeal that "we at Spire can do more". This is designed to arouse a sense of pride in the readers and before pulling them back into reality that there are still lots of severe issues. Therefore the readers would feel obligated to do more in order to sustain their status as a role model, thus prepare themselves to accept the Principal's following suggestions. By repeating the phrase "our world" the Principal aims to add weight to the issue. The implication is clear here, someone who do not agree with reducing packaging should be ridiculed for being indifferent to the future of the planet. The parents are therefore most likely to believe that such change should be done to protect younger generations from further harm. The urgency to address the issue is further reinforced by the accompanying image, which shows the bleak future of the planet with huge piles of rubbish. The readers are invited to feel concerned about the environment and realise the urgent need to reverse the trend before the situation deteriorates.*

*The Principal proceeds by asserting that people should make effort in their daily lives to reduce packaging. An anecdote is employed by the writer to reveal the current situation about over-packaging. As the children are "holding little plastic packets" and "drinking juice from cardboard boxes". In doing so, the writer establishes her credential on the issue due to her personal observations in the real life. The readers are inclined to think of their observations and thus align themselves with the writer in advocating package reduction. Moreover, the Principal makes a list of possible ways to reduce packaging in their daily lives, such as "using washable plastic bottle" and replacing the "teabags" with "tea pot". This provides the readers a sense of hope that a serious problem can be relieved by such simple acts. As she aligns herself in the movement, the readers are encouraged to follow her steps.*

*On the other hand, Louise, a parent, voices a different opinion saying that such movement is impossible as they are too busy. By stating that "we have always support your green ideas about the environment", the writer highlight that they also share the Principal's concern about the environment. Then she moves on to make a list of the reasons why its impossible for the movement such as that the "plastic bottles" would often "lost by children". In doing so, the writer seeks to modernise the Principal's point of view that it's simple to make changes and point out the lack of feasibility of the movement.*

The background information given on the examination provides the context for the task material. It is important that students read and understand this information before attempting the task. In using language to persuade writers have an 'audience focus' and the analysis needed to reflect this. Introductions should have been limited to showing an awareness of the audience, the context and the overall contention of the piece. Students needed to be able to distinguish between: argument

as a structural feature; the support for the argument, for example, facts, evidence, statistics; and emotional pressure or appeals. Students' analysis should have included these distinctions. Students should look for linguistic cues to the reasoning of the author. Students may find it helpful to practise deconstructing samples in this report by using different coloured highlighters to identify argument and language, and so reveal visually how integrated they are.

It was not necessary for students to explain the persuasive techniques; for example, the use of inclusive language includes everyone. In preparation students should focus on understanding the context of the argument and how it works, for example, the significance of words like 'but' and 'I know... but...'. The aim is an integrated analysis of argument use and language use. Language that tracks the structure of the argument will help to achieve this, for example, 'The Principal commences by arguing...', 'constantly addresses the readers directly...'. Integration is also important in the analysis of the visual(s). Students should consider what they actually see and its implications. In the 2017 task material students could explore how the Principal's argument was supported by the visual and vice versa.

In the time available in the examination it is not possible to analyse everything in the material, so students need to choose the most significant features to analyse. They should focus on what the writer is saying, how they are saying it and why. As part of developing skills in analysis students need the functional, not descriptive, vocabulary used to analyse argument, language and visuals.