



Victorian Association for  
the Teaching of English

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# **VCE ENGLISH LANGUAGE WRITTEN EXAMINATION SAMPLE ANSWER GUIDE**

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## SECTION A: Short-answer questions

### Questions 1–5 refer to Text 1

NB: This is a guide only to the scope of the answers students may give to each question. Students' answers will necessarily reflect exam conditions and time limits.

#### Question 1 — sample answer (3 marks)

**How does the register of Text 1 support the social purpose of Malcolm Turnbull's speech? Provide two lexical features to support your response.**

The register of Text 1 is clearly formal which is entirely appropriate given the context, the speaker (Prime Minister), and the topics of Turnbull's discourse (politics, history, law). Other than the occasional use of some contractions and the personal pronouns 'we' and 'I', there are really no informal language features present in the text – therefore, cannot accept semi, moderately, or mostly formal. The formal register supports the social purpose of Malcolm Turnbull which is to present and argue a particular point of view, in this case, about the political issue of balancing security and individual liberty (lines 3-4). The use of formal language promotes Turnbull's image as an educated leader with the authority to speak on this topic of national security and liberty thus persuading the target audience to adopt his position. The formal register is evident in the use of elevated lexemes, including 'venerated' (1.18), 'liberty' (1.4), 'affixed' (1.17), 'distillation' (1.27), 'tyranny' (1.34), 'inalienable' (1.50), 'inherent' (1.50); and archaic lexemes, such as 'whence' (1.14).

#### Question 2 — sample answer (2 marks)

**Discuss the function of the modal verb(s) used in lines 7-14.**

The repeated modal verb is 'should' (lines 9, 12, and 13). One of the functions of the use of this modal verb, especially in line 9, is to establish and reinforce Turnbull's voice of authority which is appropriate given his important role as Prime Minister of Australia. The repetition of the modal verb also eliminates any ambiguity; it strengthens Turnbull's statements outlining his contention and the direction of his speech – this is particularly the case in lines 12-13.

#### Question 3 — sample answer (3 marks)

**Analyse how Turnbull uses prosodics in lines 15-28 to help the listener follow his speech.**

The use of a loud volume in line 15 marks a shift in Turnbull's speech, in this case, it signals to the audience the commencement of his description of the historical background and importance of the Magna Carta. The use of emphatic stress draws the listeners' attention to key points in his narration. For example, key verbs and nouns are stressed: 'failed' (1.19), 'generations' (1.25), and 'ye=ar' (1.22). The use of stress also reinforces characteristics that Turnbull wishes to emphasise, for example, the adjectives 'despised' (1.16) and 'venerated' (1.18). The varied use of intonation helps shape the delivery of each point being made by Turnbull as he describes the history of the Magna Carta. The use of a rising pitch (lines 15, 19 and 21) and a continuing intonation (lines 20, 22, 25, 26) signals to the audience to keep listening as there is more information to come. Conversely, falling pitch, as in lines 19, 23 and 28, marks the end of a particular point made by Turnbull. Faster speech is used on two occasions for comments that are not essential but nevertheless add extra detail to the main point being made. This can be seen in line 20 with the remark 'within a month', and also in line 26 with the added explanation about the British descendants.

**Question 4 — sample answer (3 marks)**

**What effect is created by the use of the passive voice between lines 40 and 51? Provide examples and line numbers in your response.**

There are a number of examples of the use of the passive voice between lines 40-51. These include:

- ‘No person shall be deprived...’
- ‘Magna Carta has been even more celebrated...’
- ‘...in the land in which it was written’
- ‘...our Australian Constitution was being framed’
- ‘these rights were judged...’

One of the effects created by the use of the passive voice is to contribute to the formal register, by adding to the impersonal tone and reinforcing a degree of social distance between the participants – again, this is appropriate given the context, purpose, speaker and subject matter of this speech. Most of these are also examples of agentless passive so the use of the passive voice also helps the speaker, Turnbull, direct the audience’s attention to what he considers the more important element/s. For example, in line 40 what is important is that no person shall be deprived (of life, liberty and property); there is no need to mention by whom. In line 45, the passive construction helps place primary focus on the fact that the Magna Carta was celebrated. Similarly, in line 50 the use of the passive places more importance on the fact that the rights were judged inalienable and inherent.

**Question 5 — sample answer (4 marks)**

**Analyse the information flow in lines 43-47. How does this contribute to cohesion in Text 1?**

Between lines 43 and 47, there is an example of front focus. Fronting the sentence with ‘Carved in stone in congresses and courthouses, recited in State Constitutions...’ (lines 43-44) highlights the immense historical, political and legal significance of the Magna Carta which endures even today. Placing these phrases at the beginning of the sentence gives them prominence and therefore importance in Turnbull’s discussion of the Magna Carta - the use of both stress and alliteration in these phrases also adds to this. In this way, the use of front focus contributes to cohesion in the text by helping to connect his ideas. It creates a link between Turnbull’s description of how the Magna Carta was established and his desire to persuade his listeners of its value in contemporary society. It reinforces his contention, previously stated in lines 12-14, that in order to understand the future ‘we should not forget from whence we came’.

## SECTION B: Analytical commentary

### Question 6 refers to Text 2

Write an analytical commentary on the language features of Text 2.

In your response, you should comment on the:

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

Refer to at least **two** subsystems in your analysis.

NB: This is a comprehensive sample analytical commentary that shows the scope of language features which can be discussed. Students' responses may be shorter and less detailed, reflecting exam conditions, and time limits.

#### Question 6 sample analysis (30 marks)

Text 2, 'Australia's Gold Digging Past at Sovereign Hill' is a post on the travel blog 'Happiness and Things' by Silke: a German born, Sydney-based travel writer and mother. While the post aims to inform the audience about the Victorian tourist attraction, Sovereign Hill, one of its broader social purposes is to encourage readers to visit this site by presenting it as a place full of fun, historical value and education. More than this, however, is the author's goal to build and maintain rapport with her intended audience; the parents of school-aged children who are seeking new travel experiences and have an interest in Australian history. In order to achieve this, the author constructs a friendly identity and therefore applies a predominantly informal register, although Standard English is used throughout the text. As expected in an online text, the address and web details are supplied on line 53.

As one of the social purposes of the text is to build rapport with her peers, parents with children, the author frequently uses the first person pronoun 'I', such as in the opening line and paragraph (lines 2-4) and in the body of the text (lines 19, 21, 28, 39, 41, 49, 51), and the possessive determiner 'my' (lines 2, 48). This reduces the social distance between the author and her audience to create an informal, conversational tone. By building a connection with her readers, Silke is more likely to gain their trust, in turn, driving her social purpose which is to encourage them to visit Sovereign Hill.

The opening exclamative 'I love history!' (line 2) also achieves this aim, as well as revealing additional information about her identity as a 'history nerd' (line 2), thus establishing her expertise to write on such a topic and her opinion therefore carries more weight. The online audience can sense the author's excitement through the predicate 'naturally jumped at the opportunity' (line 3) and the inclusion of the simile on line 7, 'It's like Disneyland for history lovers', suggesting this place is a theme park for her fellow history enthusiasts. To add to this, the second person pronoun 'you' is found throughout this text, such as on lines 11, 21, 22, 25, 27, 34, 35 and 38. By utilizing pronouns in this way, it makes the writing seem conversational, as though the author is directly addressing the reader, thus contributing to the informality of the text. Further to this, the inclusion of the possessive pronoun 'your' in the imperative sentence 'Write your message here...' (line 55) is not only typical of this form of text, but it makes the text more interactive and social as it invites the reader to respond. The use of exclamation marks (lines 17, 49, 52) reflects something of the personality of the writer, as well as her enthusiasm for the place and her attempt to instil a feeling of excitement in her readers.

The choice of positively connoted adjectives, such as 'fantastic' (line 4), 'exceptional' (line 9), 'impressive' (line 23), 'lovely' (line 25) and the superlative 'most impressive' (line 23), is important as it supports the secondary social purpose of the text, which is to promote the attraction and encourage readers to experience it. Further to this, the use of the informal intensifier 'totally' (21) and lexical repetition on lines 9 'many, many', 13 'lots and

lot' and 17 'lots, lots' emphasises how impressed she is with this outdoor museum. This also adds to the overall conversational tone of the piece. Adverbs such as 'truly astounding' (line 10), 'just lovely' (line 12) and 'extremely knowledgeable' (line 15) function to provide a positive response to this place and its employees, further promoting the social purpose. The informal noun choice of 'kids' (lines 30, 40, 49, 51) is used frequently with the more formal synonym 'children' only being used once (line 46). The former is often preferred in everyday speech employed by the parents, who are the target audience, and further reinforces the casual tone of the article. 'Grown-ups' (line 46) and 'adults' (line 49) are also referenced in the text as this article is aimed at parents with school-aged children.

Colloquial lexis and idiomatic phrases commonly heard in informal spoken discourse have also been included, such as 'check out' (line 12), 'try their luck' (30-31), 'set you back' (lines 35-36) and 'had a blast' (line 49), with 'of course' on line 14 acting as an aside. Whilst supporting the informal register of the text, these phrases also create a friendly and relatable identity for the author. The register is also lowered through the use on non-Standard syntax such as sentences starting with the coordinating conjunctions 'So' (line 2) 'But' (line 9) 'And' (line 15) and 'Or' (line 25). There are examples of ellipsis, such as '[You should] Expect to spend some money' (line 18) and '[Sovereign Hill is] Highly recommended!' (line 52), as well as the additive style of listing on line 17: 'There's the sweets shop and the soap shop, the jeweller, the photographer...' These are features which are more typically seen in the spoken mode and they all contribute to the conversational tone and informal register.

Though the text is predominantly informal due to its conversational nature, there are elements of formal language. Standard English is used which is to be expected in a blog such as this. The author is promoting herself as a serious travel writer and therefore in order to be seen this way, it is important that she applies the rules of Standard English. At times she uses elevated lexis such as the noun 'artisans' (line 22), the verb 'encompass' (27), the adjective 'makeshift' (29) and the noun 'interactions' (44).

Most of the sentences in Text 2 are declaratives, which supports the informative and descriptive functions of the text. There is, however, also the exclamative 'I love history!' (line 2) and the imperative 'Just take a self-guided tour' (line 10) which endorse the author's wider social purposes to promote her image as a travel blogger, as well as encouraging the travel enthusiasts who read her blog to consider visiting this attraction. The imperative sentences in lines 54 and 55, 'Post a comment' and 'Write your message here', also support the interactive and two-way nature of a blog post. There are also sentence fragments, such as 'Highly recommended!' in line 52, and the formulaic expression, 'Little did I know...' in line 4, which promote the informal register and conversational tone of the piece.

Though a range of sentence structures indicates that this text has been planned and edited by the author, the text maintains a casual feeling and a degree of spontaneity, supporting her aim to build rapport with her audience. Short simple sentences such as 'I love history!' (line 2) and 'It's huge' (line 7) clearly convey the author's thoughts. The range of sentence structures allows the author to provide the reader with more information and detail, and helps the author to elicit further interest on the part of her readers. Complex sentences 'Sovereign Hill has...where you can learn everything about the business of gold mining' (lines 34-35) and compound-complex 'Their interactions and conversations happen...something that delights not just the children but also the grown-ups' (lines 44-46) add depth to the author's description of the place, assisting in the function of informing the parents who are reading this blog post. Active sentences are also important as they identify the author as experiencing Sovereign Hill first hand. This personalises the text, making it livelier and more engaging for the reader, thus supporting one of the social purposes which is to maintain her readership.

Listing has been used as an economical way of adding detail, such as in lines 6-7: 'main street, shops, an industrial complex, civic buildings, a theatre...', and lines 13-14 'wooden surfaces, lots of drawers, handwritten labels, old fashioned packaging'. Parallelism is evidenced within many of the lists with an adjective-noun grouping, such as the previous examples, and verb-noun grouping in lines 22-23: 'working metal, 'making candles, boiling sweets'.

The antithesis of ‘dangers and rewards’ on line 39 shows the many facets of gold mining in colonial Australia. All of these support the function of informing the audience about Sovereign Hill by painting a picture of this historical time. They also appeal to the entertainment value of the attraction which in turn supports the aim to promote it to this history-appreciative audience.

The text is made coherent through a number of devices. The bold title ‘Australia’s Gold Digging Past at Sovereign Hill’ informs the reader about the subject and domain of the text. In addition, parentheses are included in lines 27-28, 30 and 41. As well as providing the reader with additional information and adding emphasis, they support the social purpose of building rapport with the audience by mimicking asides in spoken discourse. She also puts quotation marks around the noun phrase ‘old fashioned’ (lines 19-20). This implies that although ginger beer is still sold widely, it is of older provenance than more popular drinks such as Coca-Cola. Inference may be required for the colloquial terms ‘hobo’ (line 42) and ‘corny’ (line 37) as these are older terms. Some prior knowledge of Australia’s colonial past is also needed to understand references to ‘the famous gold rush’ (line 5), ‘gold digging’ (line 39) and the ‘Chinese community’ (line 29). However, for the intended audience of those with an interest in history, these terms should not be a problem.

Cohesion is created through a range of devices. Firstly, the author uses conjunctive adverbs ‘Then’ (line 21) and ‘However’ (line 35) and the adverb ‘Again’ (line 21) to begin her sentences, providing a smooth transition from one idea to the next, therefore, supporting the informative function of the text as information flow is ordered and logical. Repetition is also avoided through the use of anaphoric referencing. ‘This’ (lines 4 and 9) and ‘it’ (line 7) refer to ‘Sovereign Hill’ (line 3). The author’s use of Standard English and a range of stylistic features to create an engaging and cohesive text reflects her identity as a learned individual with a passion for travel.

NB: Various approaches are acceptable for the analytical commentary:

- subsystem
- thematic
- combination of both subsystem and thematic.

## SECTION C: Essay

### Task

Students are to choose ONE of the three essay topics and write an expository response. They **MUST** make reference to at least one of the examples of stimulus material for their chosen essay topic. This can be done in a variety of ways – either a direct quote, or a reference to the idea/incident/thought/example presented in the stimulus. It is not necessary (or indeed, advisable) to refer to all the stimulus material presented in the essay topic – the stimulus is there to encourage students to think about the topic and the different ways they might address it. It is not meant to be a suggested structure for their essay. Students are encouraged, instead, to bring their own ideas and examples/references to the essay; it is a requirement that they show an understanding of contemporary linguistic issues and examples from the media. For this reason, it is important that students read widely during the year on topics/issues concerning language. Students are also encouraged, where appropriate, to draw on their own personal linguistic experiences and reflections. In addition, students must use metalanguage accurately and refer to at least **two** subsystems in their response. Standard essay-writing conventions apply – an introduction, clear body paragraphs, and a conclusion, as well as coherent, cohesive prose and accurate spelling and punctuation.

The following notes are not meant to be prescriptive – there are various ways of responding to essay topics. These are merely some of the ideas and examples which may arise in the discussion of these topics.

## Question 7 (30 marks)

**‘Social inequality is often represented linguistically. Thus, the first step towards a more inclusive society is removing inaccuracies, stigma and prejudice from our language.’**

To what extent is this true in the contemporary Australian context? Refer to at least **two** subsystems of language in your response.

Some ideas to consider:

1. Sexism in language is still rampant, as stimulus a) suggests. Gender bias is not to be taken lightly – calling women ‘shrill’ or ‘hysterical’ in the workplace leads to negative image and unfavourable career advancement; telling boys that they ‘throw like a girl’ not only projects badly on women, it is a form of bullying.
2. Politicians need to choose their language carefully so as not to aggravate social harmony – as role models who are constantly in the public eye, they must not use language which is perceived to be inflammatory, racist or sexist. (stimulus b)
3. Language choices reflect our social attitudes and it is important to use language which reflects the sort of society we wish to belong to. The public play a role in calling the media to account when it uses language which doesn’t correspond with social mores or values – letters to the paper, expressions of outrage on social media such as Twitter and on-line petitions are examples of ways of getting others to alter their language.
4. Terms such as ‘single mother’ or ‘stay-at-home mother’ (stimulus d) carry negative connotations for women and are another example of gender-biased language. Gender bias is also evident in the choices of honorifics people must use (particularly for formal documents such as passports or job applications) – this is why some companies now provide non-gender specific options such as ‘Mx’.
5. The terms surrounding marriage equality, such as ‘gay marriage’ and ‘same-sex marriage’ are biased and are not neutral terms. ‘Marriage equality’ is a far better choice of terminology as it applies to everyone and has no stigma attached.
6. The media is expected to use language which is accurate and free of bias or prejudice. This is relevant when referring to people with a disability, for instance – the media is expected not to use terms such as ‘disabled’, ‘handicapped’, ‘victim’ but rather to use ‘person with a disability’. The Disability Discrimination Act, the Racial Discrimination Act and the Sex Discrimination Act ensure that the language we use does not result in stigma, inequality and prejudice.
7. ‘Ageist’ language should also be avoided. Labels such as ‘old’, ‘senior’ or ‘elderly’ are not empowering for those to whom these terms are directed (particularly for those who are still in the workforce or who intend to work) Terms such as ‘retirement’ also connote withdrawal from society, whereas many older Australians are active and engaged in their communities.
8. Politically correct language is an attempt to foster accurate and unprejudiced language use, so that all people are represented fairly and equally. Using terms such as ‘female pilot’ rather than ‘pilot’ diminishes women and makes it seem unusual for a woman to have such a career; similarly, ‘male nurse’ is a loaded term and is gender-biased.
9. The morphological suffix ‘-ess’ is regarded as gender-biased and many female actors shun the term ‘actress’, preferring the gender-neutral ‘actor’.

Some relevant/recent examples:

1. Many people complain about the term ‘graffiti artists’, claiming they are ‘graffiti vandals’ rather than ‘artists’ – using the term ‘artist’ glorifies their ‘crime’.
2. Some people objected to the term ‘mastermind’ being used for the perpetrators of the Paris attacks last year, preferring ‘ringleader’. Similarly, referring to Muslims as ‘moderate’ rather than ‘mainstream’ was seen as subjective rather than objective and accurate.
3. In Australia, female jockeys and trainers appear with ‘Ms’ next to their name in form guides, whereas there is no ‘Mr’ for male jockeys.
4. David Morrison, Australian of the year, objected to calling women ‘guys’, claiming it was sexist and offensive. Many women concurred, saying that men would not like to be called ‘girls’ or ‘ladies’; other people thought this was ‘political correctness gone mad’.
5. Eddie McGuire raised the public ire when he referred to journalist Caroline Wilson as a ‘black widow spider’ he’d like to ‘bomb’ and ‘drown’ in the pool – he didn’t see that his language was violent or sexist towards Wilson and towards women in general. Broadcaster Steve Price weighed into the debate on Q&A, referring to Van Badham as ‘hysterical’ when she explained how such attitudes fed into a culture of gender-violence – the use of this term ‘hysterical’ is highly sexist, and Price was criticised for this.
6. PM Malcolm Turnbull accused Labor of a ‘war’ on various matters in the election campaign and was chastised for using this term – it was seen as particularly disrespectful towards war veterans and their families.
7. The lead-up to the Australian election was also known for its use of the insult ‘bedwetters’ – Peta Credlin referred to the Turnbull side as ‘a hapless set of bedwetters’, and Senator James McGrath referred to Alan Jones as ‘king of the bedwetters’. Many people were unimpressed with this term, as bedwetting is an embarrassing and difficult problem for many children, and this term was seen as vindictive and petty.

## Question 8 (30 marks)

**‘When we wish to build rapport or strengthen social bonds, we invariably rely on informal language.’**

Discuss, referring to at least **two** subsystems of language in your response.

Some ideas to consider:

1. Informal language can build rapport by encouraging inclusiveness, intimacy, solidarity and equality. Australians enjoy using nicknames as a sign of endearment and solidarity (stimulus a). Morphological features include shortening names and/or adding suffixes such as –o or –ie or –a. The use of diminutives such as these is not particular to Australia but is certainly a key feature of our language use. Local concepts and ideas are another example where Australians tend to use diminutives – for example, the ‘G for the MCG, or Macca’s for McDonalds. The use of such language engenders a sense of belonging, familiarity and group solidarity and thus fulfils a social cohesion function. Even news reporters on television use diminutives to refer to each other (e.g. ‘Hendo’ for Ian Henderson, ‘Brownie’ for David Brown) – this is seemingly an unusual context for this to occur but is probably aimed at making viewers feel closer to the reporters and a sense of rapport.
2. Written texts as well should be considered in this discussion. Technology enables us to write to people we don’t even know – social media, Twitter, blogging, text messaging, through websites and email, instant



messaging etc. Stimulus b) illustrates how even punctuation can be used informally to create rapport and show support – the question mark and exclamation marks are pithy yet appropriate to the context, and show enthusiasm and encouragement. Other ways we might use informal language to strengthen social bonds is through abbreviations and shortenings ('arvo', 'smoko'), acronyms (FOMO) and initialisms (FYI), creative word play (puns, neologisms) and lexemes from specialist semantic fields (jargon pertaining to particular social groups or occupations). Syntax can also form part of this discussion – elliptic sentences (such as those in the punctuation stimulus material) are another way of creating in-group solidarity.

3. Swearing and taboo language can also foster rapport and strengthen social bonds (stimulus c and d). Context plays a huge role in determining whether people are offended or not by the use of swearing – for those people who share a close relationship, the use of swear-words can signal endearment and group solidarity. The word 'bitch' can be either derogatory or a 'sisterhood term', depending on how it is used and to whom it is addressed – semantics and word connotations could be discussed here.
4. Jargon and slang contribute to a sense of group membership if used within a social group – those outside the group can feel excluded if they are not in the know. Flight attendants, for instance, use their own jargon, such as 'crotch watch' (seatbelt check) and 'landing lips' (reapplying makeup at the end of a flight) to foster a sense of togetherness and solidarity amongst the crew – passengers are not privy to this secret 'lingo'.
5. Sometimes informal language is inappropriate for building rapport or strengthening social bonds – context plays a role in determining the appropriate choice of register and language. For instance, in situations which require tact and diplomacy, a more formal register is more useful in building trust and adhering to face needs (particularly negative face). In such situations, informal language may be read as broaching social mores.

Some relevant/recent examples:

1. New emoticons for smart phones which are not only playful, but which strengthen the social bonds between those people who use them. Emoticons are fast becoming integrated into on-line language and complement the written word, sometimes even eclipsing it.
2. Google Maps and Google apps are in the process of introducing Australian abbreviations/slang into its search engines – it will recognise such shortenings as 'Brissie', 'servo', 'footy', 'arvo' and 'Maccas'. This is not only practical and useful, it also engenders a feeling of national identity and belonging – hearing Australian accents on GPS also adds to this feeling.
3. Oxford Dictionary made the word of the year in 2015 an emoji (a face with tears of joy), showing a recognition that informal language is important in digital communication and that people use emojis to build rapport and share emotions.
4. Letters to *The Age* this year showed that many readers were unhappy to be addressed as 'guys' or 'dudes' – whilst young people use such terms amongst themselves to create bonds, sometimes older people find this language disrespectful or inappropriate.
5. Using Aussie slang makes you more likable to your fellow Australians – but only if you use a 'fair dinkum' Aussie accent. New research from the Australian National University this year revealed that using words such as 'ambo', 'uggies' or 'mobes' (ambulances, Ugg boots, mobile phones) increases your likability among fellow Australians. The lead researcher, Dr Evan Kidd, of the university's research school of psychology, said the use of 'hypocoristics' seemed 'to promote common ground' and indicate social closeness between people whose accents indicated they were Australian. Using Australian slang didn't have the same effect for those people who were not Australian, or who didn't have genuine Australian accents.

**Question 9** (30 marks)

**‘Standard Australian English may have overt prestige in mainstream society, but non-Standard varieties of Australian English carry their own linguistic value for local communities and groups.’**

Discuss, referring to at least **two** subsystems of language in your response.

Some ideas to consider:

1. Standard Australian English is the variety most used in public discourse and which is promoted in schools, broadcasting, the media, bureaucracy, the law, politics, the government and social institutions, dictionaries and grammar guides.
2. SAE is just one dialect of Australian English – there are many. There are ethnolects and Aboriginal English dialects, as well as other non-Standard varieties. There are also other forms of Standard English around the globe – Standard American English, Standard British English, etc.
3. Standard English is an artificial variety of English; it has arisen out of the work of style guide writers, dictionary makers, teachers, editors and the like. It has not been legislated by any language academy – the ‘rules’ have been reached by consensus from these various groups over time, and are open to change at any stage.
4. SAE involves a standard grammar and vocabulary, but not pronunciation – it can be spoken in any accent.
5. Anyone can use SAE – it is not confined to a particular place, although it is most likely to be spoken in Australia.
6. It is more uniform in writing than in speech, and more easily recognisable in the written form.
7. Standard Australian English is regarded by educated people as the idealised variety of English in Australia – it is the one which must be taught, rather than naturally acquired. However, it is not linguistically superior to any other variety of English – it is not more ‘logical’, or more ‘grammatical’, or more ‘expressive’ than any other variety. Put simply, it is a more convenient variety to know as it is the one more readily understood, and it also carries overt prestige within the wider community.
8. Non-Standard varieties may not have the overt prestige of SAE (which exploits overt norms and allows its users to construct a prestigious identity associated with their class, education, occupation, social status and aspirations), but they are afforded covert prestige by the local groups who use them. They are powerful in constructing identities and establishing group membership.
9. Non-Standard varieties can have hidden/covert prestige – non-Standard usage can have a macho value for men, for example (Stimulus d), and can also make users seem more friendly or trustworthy.
10. Societal attitudes and individual prejudices can lead to social disadvantage and discrimination against users of non-Standard English dialects – those who do not conform to the Standard can be stigmatised and regarded as invisible or less worthy (stimulus b and c). This is particularly true of non-native English speakers and speakers of ethnolects. It also applies to speakers of Aboriginal English; children are supposed to acquire SAE during their education and they can be made to feel ashamed of the non-Standard variety they speak at home.

11. Sometimes people wish to speak in a more down-to-earth manner, eschewing some of the ‘uppity’ connotations of the Standard (stimulus a). Many politicians have endeavoured to portray themselves as more ‘common’ in order to appeal to the wider community.
12. Non-Standard varieties differ from Standard varieties more at the level of grammar: for example, multiple negation (‘I didn’t do nothing’), or using non-standard pronouns, (‘I cooked that meself’, ‘Where are youse going?’), or using the past participle instead of the preterite, ‘He done it’.

Some relevant examples:

1. Aboriginal Englishes can reflect a wide spectrum, from those which are very close to SAE to those which are more like creoles. Aboriginal Englishes are important in fostering a sense of group identity and for keeping cultural values alive. Syntactic features of Aboriginal English include not marking past tense (‘I go yesterday’), using ‘unna’ as a type of interrogative tag, or for emphasis, and semantic differences in lexicon. The television show *Black Comedy* provides many examples of Aboriginal English, and examples of Aboriginal lexicon, such as ‘deadly’, are filtering their way into SAE.
2. Television shows such as *Upper Middle Bogan* illustrate how both Standard and non-Standard varieties have prestige within their separate social groups. The ‘bogan’ family swear, use non-Standard grammar and speak with Broader accents and enjoy close solidarity and pride; the ‘posh’ family speak with accents which are General (and sometimes Cultivated – the grandmother in particular) and use SAE. The clash of linguistic repertoires is often at the root of the comedy behind this show.
3. Ethnolects such as Lebanese Australian English (Arabic-influenced English) carry great prestige (covert) within their cultural groups. Lexis such as ‘habib’, ‘shoo’ and ‘yallah’ are common, as are distinctive phonological features such as saying ‘dis’ for ‘this’. Using this language is a way of showing cultural and ethnic links to this group, as well as distinguishing themselves from mainstream society. Other ethnolects in Australia include Greek, Italian, Chinese, Vietnamese and Indian.

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