insight™

▶innovative ▶engaging ▶evolving

YEAR 12 *Trial Exam Paper*

2018

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Written examination

Sample responses

This book presents:

➢ high-level sample responses
➢ mark allocations
➢ tips on how to approach the exam.

THIS PAGE IS BLANK

SECTION A – Short-answer questions

Question 1

Sample response

Two distinct functions of the text are to entertain and to build and maintain rapport. The entertainment function is evident in the shared interest that the speakers have in 'sport', shown with the repetition of the noun in lines 4, 6 and 25. Similarly, Cam's unexpected French lexical choices ('Bonjour. Ca va?', line 2) and his use of the hyperbolic adjective 'heinous' (line 71) entertain through humour. The two speakers also use the text to build rapport with one another and their audience, as well as to reduce social distance. This can be seen with Dave's vocal effect of laughter (lines 66 and 70) in response to Cam's emphatic stress of 'millimetres' (line 69) to highlight the 'absurdity' (line 4) of the penalty to Lexi Thompson, demonstrating that he is attentive to Cam's positive face needs.

Mark allocation: 4 marks

- 1 mark for each distinct function identified (up to 2 marks)
- 1 mark per example per function (up to 2 marks)

Other approaches

Other functions you may refer to in your response include the informative function, which is clear in the structured story told about Lexi Thompson by Cam (lines 30–71). The story follows a logical referential structure: introducing Lexi (line 30), referring to the 'four shot penalty' (line 36) and the reasons for the penalty (38–39; 47–49); and emphasising how trivial the infringement was (67–69).

Tips

- *You must ensure that you identify two clearly different functions, as per the question. Note that 'entertain' and 'create humour' are not distinct functions. Similarly, building rapport and reducing social distance are too similar to be considered distinct from one another.*

Question 2

Sample response

The text is moderately informal with some elements of formality. In this case, informal lexis includes colloquial language such as 'won the toss' (line 28) and 'double whammy' (line 41). In terms of discourse, the frequent overlaps reflect informality, such as in lines 44–5 and 55–6. Cam also uses frequent non-fluency features, such as the varying lengths of 'um' (lines 30, 35 and 51). A moderately informal register containing colloquialisms and non-fluency features supports the function of building and maintaining rapport, as it allows the conversation to mimic a phatic exchange between friends.

Note: The text could also be considered moderately formal, with some elements of informality. Both speakers use an elevated lexis, which adds to the formality of the text. This is evident through Cam's use of the nouns 'Anglosphere' (line 7) and 'infringement' (line 38). However, both speakers also use colloquial language occasionally, such as Dave's utterance 'Ya' (line 12). In terms of discourse, moderate formality is evident in the planned nature of the discourse. It begins with a formulaic opening typical of a podcast ('Hello … and welcome', line 1) and proceeds to Cam's planned anecdote that begins 'Ummm Lexi Thompson' (line 30). A moderately formal register supports the function of entertaining as it allows Cam and Dave to appear knowledgeable about the field of golf while still allowing the discourse to be accessible by all involved, including those listening to the podcast.

Mark allocation: 4 marks

- 1 mark for accurately identifying the register
- 1 mark for linking the register to at least one function
- 1 mark for lexical explanation
- 1 mark for explanation from another subsystem

Other approaches

Other formal features you may refer to in your response include the frequent use of politeness markers and the adherence to standard syntax; for example, 'Are you well?', which is atypical of the spoken mode. This supports the rapport-building function as it acts to simulate a phatic exchange.

Tips

- *You must make sure that, as per the question, you refer to lexis and one other subsystem.*
- *Remember that, technically, lexis and morphology are from the same subsystem.*
- *You must adequately use evidence to demonstrate your opinion on the register through accurate use of metalanguage.*
- *When a question has multiple aspects, ensure your answer explicitly responds to each part. This question requires you to link the register to at least one of the functions of the text.*

Question 3

Sample response

The text is somewhat spontaneous. Although it features overlaps and non-fluency features that are typical of spontaneous conversations – which include pause fillers ('um ah for ahhh', line 31) and repairs ('s- open', line 26) – it also features a formulaic opening typical of the text type ('Hello … and welcome', line 1) that suggests planning by the participants. It is also clear that the participants have some prior knowledge of the semantic fields being discussed, particularly Cam, who holds the floor for much of the discourse, having used the interrogative 'can I s- open please' (line 26) to explicitly manage the order of speech in order to relay his pre-prepared story.

Mark allocation: 3 marks

- 1 mark for identifying that the text is somewhat, but not entirely, spontaneous
- 2 marks for justification with evidence (including line numbers) and accurate use of metalanguage

Tips

- *Read spoken texts carefully for hints of planning. The trap is to assume that spoken discourses between people of close social distance are inherently spontaneous; this is not always the case.*
- *Also consider the text type: most podcasts require a certain amount of planning.*

Question 4

Sample response

Given that this discourse is a cooperative one, from the outset Dave is happy to cede the floor to Cam in order for him to recount his story, as evidenced by the emphasis placed on Dave's utterance 'absolutely' (line 27). This gives Cam permission to relay his story about Lexi Thompson. From line 30 onward, Dave's role is a largely supportive one, as he guides Cam to tell his story. Dave backchannels ('Ah yes', line 40) to encourage Cam to continue, thus managing the discourse. He also uses an imperative ('So let me just get this straight', line 55) to pass the floor back to Cam, as well as an interrogative ('do you have details …', line 63) to encourage Cam to continue his turn for the benefit of the listening audience. Dave also uses rising intonation as a topic management tool, saying, 'Her ball is on the green/' (line 61) to seek clarification from Cam about the details of the incident being described. Overall, Dave uses a range of strategies to allow Cam to tell his story and fulfil the entertainment and informative functions.

Mark allocation: 4 marks

- Responses to this question should be marked holistically:
  - ➢ 4 marks: The response demonstrates a detailed knowledge of the topic and is supported by relevant examples/evidence from the text. Metalanguage is used appropriately and effectively. Features of written discourse are consistently used.
  - ➢ 2–3 marks: The response demonstrates a sound knowledge of the topic and is supported by some examples/evidence from the text. The metalanguage used is relevant. Features of written discourse are mostly evident.
  - ➢ 0–1 mark: The response demonstrates a limited knowledge of the topic and contains few examples from the text. The use of metalanguage is limited or absent. Few features of written discourse are evident.

Other approaches

Other strategies/features you may refer to in your response include the following:

- supportive laughter throughout the text
- discourse particles that prompt for more information and show interest, or interjections used to briefly take the floor and show animated interest (e.g. line 53)
- prosodic features throughout the text.

Tips

- *Remember that features are often evidence of strategies that interlocutors are employing.*
- *It is appropriate to consider prosodic features for this question.*

SECTION A

SECTION B – Analytical commentary

Question 5

Sample response

'The Hottest 100 has a new home' is a written online text, which has the primary purpose of informing triple j listeners of the change of date to their Hottest 100 broadcast and promoting the new date. Its underlying social purpose is to justify the change and reaffirm the ABC's neutrality regarding the controversial date of Australia Day. The audience of this text is triple j listeners, particularly those who tune in to the Hottest 100 or those who are curious about the change of date for the event. The radio station is also intent on ensuring that it justifies its decision as being reflective of listener preference. The register of this text, while mostly adhering to conventions of Standard Australian English, is somewhat informal, as the author has adopted a casual tone. This assists in maintaining familiarity with triple j's followers and close social distance.

The text is somewhat informal in register, but includes a range of formal features in keeping with a press release from the national broadcaster. At the informal end of the formality continuum, the author refers to readers using the familiar, informal second person pronoun 'you' numerous times (lines 2, 7, 46, 59), as well as contractions including 'we'll' (line 3) and 'wasn't' (line 38). These informal lexical and morphological choices lend the text a casual register that allows the author to appear more familiar with the readers. Similarly, the text features a range of lexical choices that are not only relatively informal, but also convey aspects of triple j's identity as representative of Australian youth. These include the somewhat colloquial 'heaps' (line 6) and 'tonnes' (line 15) as quantitative adjectives to mean 'many', 'went with' (line 23) to mean 'chose', and the shortened name 'Caz' (line 42), which is a typically Australian feature. The reference to 'Caz's pool' (line 42) is further evidence of an Australian identity, in that it reflects the typical Australian experience of spending time at a friend's pool during summer. Despite these informal features, the text maintains an appropriate level of formality that befits a press release from the ABC. There are examples of elevated lexis in 'perspectives' (line 48) and 'questionnaire' (line 50). The text mostly adheres to standard punctuation and spelling throughout, where full stops are used at the end of sentences and capital letters at the beginning of sentences (e.g. 'Well' to begin line 59). However, it is noteworthy that capital letters are not used when referring to 'triple j', in keeping with the station's branding and its desire to appear more casual. The register has been carefully chosen by the writer to be conversational in order to immediately decrease the social distance between the radio station and the readers, thus supporting its function and purpose.

The text's function is to inform readers that the Hottest 100 countdown has moved date and to promote the countdown's new date of 'Saturday 27 January 2018' (lines 2–3). This is established in line 1 with the subheading 'The Hottest 100 has a new home'. This metaphorical declarative sentence immediately establishes the topic: that the Hottest 100's 'new home' will be a different date. The clear communication of this shift is reaffirmed throughout the text with repetition of the noun phrase 'fourth weekend in January' (lines 22 and 23). Syntax has an important role in the informative function throughout the text. Interrogatives are used in its subheadings, such as 'Why did you choose the fourth weekend of January?' (line 22) and 'What did people have to say …?' (line 45). These then allow the questions to be answered in the following lines by declaratives (such as 'Your voice … is as important as ours', line 46) that fulfil the informative function. The promotional function is explicitly supported in the final sentence with the imperative sentence 'Start getting your playlists sorted …' (line 59).

As well as informing readers about the change – which is the text's primary function – it also has the underlying purpose of justifying the change to readers; for this reason, generalisations in the form of noun phrases such as 'heaps of you' (line 6), 'the majority of you' (line 53) and 'most of you' (line 8) demonstrate the democratic nature of the decision. Furthermore, the author has included statistical and numerical data to prove that there were '64,990 responses [to the survey] to be precise' (line 50) and that '60%' of those were 'in favour of moving the Hottest 100 to a different date' (lines 53–4). This not only reassures listeners that their views have been heard, it also helps to promote the values of the radio station, which aims to be representative of the people. This suits the role of the ABC, Australia's national broadcaster. Triple j also wants to appear mindful of its public perception and to reassure its followers that it is sensitive to public tensions surrounding Australia Day itself. The writer uses the modal verb 'should' in lines 39 and 40 ('It should be an event that everyone can enjoy together …') to demonstrate the view that the Hottest 100 ought to be more inclusive than it is currently due to the controversy regarding Australia Day. The writer also ends this paragraph with the anaphoric 'This is really important to us' (line 41), allowing the writer to demonstrate their inclusive values, which they hope are in line with those of their readers. Thus, the text aims to build solidarity with its audience.

The text is coherent, which further aids its achievement of its function and purpose. Because it is aiming to inform readers (listeners of triple j and the Hottest 100 program), the information provided must be logically ordered and clearly presented. And so the text begins with a heading that is a declarative sentence that immediately informs readers of the content and focus of the piece: 'The Hottest 100 has a new home' (line 1). This line also features semantic patterning in that 'new home' refers to the new date for the countdown. The text also includes listing, using bullet points of 'key dates' for listeners to put in their 'diary' (lines 16–21), which aids its coherence through formatting. Indeed, the formatting makes the change of the Hottest 100 and all subsequent date changes clear to readers, without ambiguity. Bolded type is used on lines 1, 16, 22 and 27 to again make the presentation clear. Inference is required to make sense of the text on a number of occasions. This is evident in line 42 with the list of 'Busselton, Bundy, Alice', which are places in Australia. This serves to further convey the Australian identity of both the writer and the readers who, it is assumed, will understand these geographical references and find the text coherent.

The text's semantic fields of broadcasting and music are consistently communicated throughout. Repetition of the broadcasting phrase 'Hottest 100' (lines 1, 24, 38), and musical lexemes such as 'musician' (line 40) and 'songs' (line 10) show this. Referencing is used throughout the text to reduce lexical density, such as the substituted noun phrase 'the date' (line 55), which refers to 'Saturday 27 January' (line 2), and the anaphoric pronoun 'it' to refer to 'the 4th weekend in January' (line 13). 'It' (line 38, among others) also anaphorically refers to 'the Hottest 100' (line 1) throughout the text. In these ways, it is a cohesive and coherent text.

Other approaches

Other language features you may refer to in your response include the following:

- information flow and the way it contributes to the cohesion of the text
- the ways the author employs other conversational language to reduce formality and decrease social distance (e.g. 'shoulda', line 10)
- the way the text adheres to the face needs of those who oppose the date change by acknowledging their views
- more explicit elements of the promotional nature of the text.

SECTION B

Tips

- *Remember to explore several aspects of situational context: mode, field, setting, audience or the relationship between participants, and function. Where relevant to the text, you should also look to engage in a discussion of cultural context and/or the identity or identities constructed in the text.*
- *It is important that you address the text as a whole, rather than focusing on just one section, such as the opening and closing lines.*
- *You must clearly link the features of language to the major contextual factors, the register and the purpose of the text.*
- *While there is no specific structure for Section B, if you arrange your response according to subsystem, you can occasionally limit your opportunities for discussion. However you structure your response, it should be well organised and in paragraphs. Subheadings may be appropriate to help organise some responses and you will not be penalised if you use them effectively.*
- *Your first paragraph should include an identification of the text, social purpose(s), register (including the degree of formality) and any relevant elements of situational and/or cultural context that you will be discussing. No conclusion paragraph is required, but you should nevertheless aim to give the piece a sense of completion.*
- *Be aware of a range of possible organisational strategies before sitting the exam so that you can be flexible in your approach and respond in the most effective way to the exam text.*

SECTION B

SECTION C – Essay

Question 6

This question requires students to draw primarily on their knowledge of Unit 4, Outcomes 1 and 2, as well as elements of Unit 3, Outcome 1. Students are invited to consider the role of Australian English and its non-standard varieties as expressions of both cultural and social identities. Students should consider contemporary examples of language in use in Australia, and how and why language might be used as a marker of identity.

The stimulus material points students towards a discussion of Australia's multicultural identity, and how language reflects and celebrates this, as well as a consideration of Standard Australian English itself, particularly looking at the accent and lexis, and how this is viewed both globally and locally. The stimulus also directs students to consider the role of Aboriginal English in Australia, as well as social variation including teenspeak and more informal variations of language.

Responses might consider the following:

- *what the terms social and cultural identity refer to*
- *the differences between social and cultural identity as evident in language*
- *ways in which Australian English has the capacity to convey cultural identity, which could include discussion of ethnolects, accent variation, lexical/regional variation, and the influence of religion on lexical choices*
- *elements of social identity, including age-related variation (including but not limited to teenspeak), level of education, socio-economic status and the extent to which language can convey these things across all subsystems*
- *contemporary examples of cultural identity: such as the Broad Australian accents of Jacqui Lambie and Bob Katter; non-standard features of Aboriginal English speakers (including Stan Grant and the way he style shifts); speakers of Australian ethnolects (including Anh Do, or participants in* Gogglebox *such as Anastasia and Faye or the Delpechitra family)*
- *contemporary examples of social identity such as the influence of sexuality (e.g. Joel Creasey), the influence of socio-economic status / level of education (e.g. Malcolm Turnbull and how his accent and syntax compares to previous prime ministers, as well as to Barnaby Joyce in terms of accent and lexis)and public figures' use of Twitter (e.g. Julie Bishop and Daniel Andrews, as well as many athletes and celebrities)*
- *Triple M's launch of its own version of a Hottest 100-style countdown on Australia Day called the 'Ozzest 100'.*

Sample essay

English in Australia conveys cultural and social identity equally clearly. Each form of identity can influence language more notably than the other, depending on context. However, since cultural factors are less likely to change over time than social ones, there is some room for individuals' social identities to change according to their aspirations, while the cultural identity with which people are born is likely to be permanent.

Australian English is very noticeable and, indeed, is a key cultural touchstone that is recognisable around the world. As John Clarke so succinctly says in stimulus B, 'You can tell an Australian the minute he opens his mouth'. Clarke argues, then, that cultural identity is conveyed more clearly than social identity via the spoken mode; Australian accents support this notion. This is certainly true of public figures who use Broad Australian accents, such as politicians Bob Katter and Jacqui Lambie, who are very recognisable for the elongated vowel sounds that distinguish them from most other members of parliament. Overseas, Australians are recognisable not only by their accent but also by their lexical choices. This was illustrated in January 2018 when a video uploaded to Twitter by the Boston Celtics showed Australian basketballer Aron Baynes using Australian slang. In the video, Baynes quizzes his American teammates about the meaning of the term 'woop woop', which is Australian slang for 'in the middle of nowhere', but his American teammates are not at all familiar with the denotation. Therefore, the cultural identities of the Australian and American players were clearly on display. In the same video, however, Baynes makes several jargonistic basketball references, such as 'training', which are specific to those with an interest in the sport – a social factor. Therefore, while cultural identity was prominent in this case, in Baynes' lexis as well as his accent, social identity also played a role. It is clear that, both in Australia and around the world, cultural identity is conveyed by Australian English phonologically and lexically.

As stimulus D shows, not everyone can use the language of all social groups. This is certainly true of age; as the meme says, 'When your parents use slang like 'lit' … you're like no, just no'. This communicates the commonly accepted idea among teenagers that their social identity, as conveyed through language, belongs to them only; when others who are not in their age group use it, it draws attention to their outsider status. A secondary effect of parents' use of teen slang such as 'woke' is that the words used by parents cease to be part of teenspeak, and will be replaced by others. In this way, the communication of social identity is prominent enough to be an important driver in language change. While age is not a variable that can change, the language used by speakers in Australia does evolve as they grow older. Semantically, the adjective 'free' would typically mean an unsupervised house party if used by teenagers, while it could equally refer to being able to do as one wishes when used by adults in their 20s to 40s. This sort of variation may well override the appearance of any cultural language factors in such a case. Similarly, the variable of gender is mostly fixed for life – except in cases of a full shift of gender identity – and is easily betrayed by language. Females speak, usually, at a higher pitch than males, which immediately identifies them as female. And so viewers of *Sunrise* are able to tell whether David Koch or Samantha Armytage is speaking, whether or not they are on screen. In this case, social identity is unmistakable and highly prominent regardless of cultural identity.

Despite such cases of prominent social factors in Australian English, Aboriginal culture presents a different scenario. Syntax and semantics, especially when expressed in the spoken mode, demonstrate cultural identity more clearly than social identity in Aboriginal English. As stimulus C shows, a syntactic feature of Aboriginal English, but one rarely seen in everyday vernacular Australian English, is the ellipsis of copular verbs; for example, the verbs 'is' and 'was' have been ellipted from the phrase 'my real name Bilari, under a bilari tree I born'. Immediately, this text is recognisable as Aboriginal English – most clearly by use of the compound 'whitefella' – and therefore it conveys cultural identity most clearly.

SECTION C

Semantics also has a role in showing the cultural identity embedded in Aboriginal English, such as when journalist Stan Grant wrote about 'welfare men' and 'segregated missions' in an opinion piece about Australia Day for the ABC in January 2018. Here, the embedded meaning within those noun phrases carries a particular negative connotation due to the mistreatment of Indigenous people by such men on those missions, which conveys Grant's Indigenous identity. On the other hand, Grant also clearly communicates aspects of his social identity in his writing as well as his speech. As he is a journalist and broadcaster, his writing meets the standard, and when he speaks on television he eschews the typical non-standard pronunciation evident in everyday Aboriginal English. Thus Grant himself illustrates that both types of identity are prominent in English in Australia, although culture stands out as more significant for many Indigenous Australians.

Somewhat similarly, cultural identity as marked by migrant ethnolects is also clearly conveyed with morphology, lexicology and the phonology of accents. First-generation migrants often retain elements of their mother tongue upon migrating to Australia and acquiring English; for example, many Italian migrants include the '-a' morpheme on the ends of nouns to mimic Italian, such as 'farma' instead of 'farm'. Phonologically, French migrants to Australia, due to the rolled 'r' sound of French, roll the 'r' even when referring to Australian places or things, such as my French-born acquaintance Fabien who pronounces Gibb River Road as 'Gibb Rrriver Rrroad'. In cases such as these, cultural identity is more evident than social identity.

Ultimately, English in Australia is a clear marker of both social and cultural identity. It is unclear which is more prominent as, depending on the context, either cultural or social factors can be most evidently discerned in spoken and written English. In any case, what is certain is that Australian English itself, including its many varieties, continues to be a strong marker of the identity of the vast majority of those who inhabit this country.

SECTION C

Question 7

This topic requires students to draw primarily on their understanding of Unit 3, Outcome 2, as well as some understanding of Outcome 1. Students should demonstrate an understanding of the place that euphemisms have in helping to maintain social harmony and navigate taboo topics within contemporary Australian society, including why people use them, how they are used and what impact they have on face needs and clarity of information. It would also be acceptable for students to provide some consideration of dysphemisms as a point of comparison, so long as this does not steer them too far away from the original topic – that being to assess the necessity of euphemisms in both formal and informal contexts. It is also important that students distinguish between contextual factors in the formulation of their response.

The stimulus invites students to discuss the way that euphemistic language can be used to make political comments in order to lessen offence; to consider how 'correct' politically correct language actually is; to discuss the ways in which institutions change their language in order to appear more sensitive to the needs of the people they are advocates for, such as those in aged-care facilities; and to consider how corporate industries use euphemistic language to tackle uncomfortable topics, such as firing employees.

Responses might consider the following:

- *what euphemisms are and what they are intended to do (to navigate taboo and help maintain social harmony)*
- *the role of euphemisms in formal contexts*
- *the role of euphemisms in informal contexts*
- *the marriage equality debate, including use of noun phrases such as 'lifestyle choices' or 'that way' in reference to same-sex relationships*
- *euphemisms to describe Australia's policies around asylum seekers, the Budget and other topics, as well as the ways that politicians use language to carry out their own agenda (weasel words, obfuscation, exaggeration)*
- *informal use of euphemisms – consider anecdotal or personal examples for death, bodily functions, bodily fluids, sexual intercourse*
- *euphemisms that aid the communication of discriminatory views.*

SECTION C

Sample essay

Love them or hate them, euphemisms are a necessity in successful communication between people and groups in Australian society. While to some they may appear to obfuscate uncomfortable topics, they do serve an important purpose in allowing topics that are seen to be taboo or sensitive to be discussed without offending. The primary purpose of euphemistic language is to maintain social harmony while providing speakers with a lexicon that allows them to navigate social context and its varying expectations. There is some argument that more formal contexts demand more euphemistic language; however, there is a place for euphemisms in both informal and formal communication.

Euphemisms can provide speakers with more politically correct language that can assist in the maintenance of social harmony by avoiding offence, especially in more formal contexts. This is often the case when discussing sensitive topics such as race or racial discrimination, as seen in stimulus A where Osamah Sami made the observation that he was only on the stage assisting in the presentation of an award so that the AACTA could 'fulfil the diversity quota'. Use of the noun phrase 'the diversity quota', rather than directly saying something such as, 'I am here because I have brown skin', allowed Sami to make his point that the television industry 'doesn't care about diversity' without causing undue discomfort to those watching. Similarly, at funerals, which are highly formal, rather than using direct and abrasive phrases such as, 'sorry your great aunt has carked it' or 'gee, it's a shame that your neighbour fell off the perch', people tend to use euphemisms in the form of verb phrases that are more sensitive and often barely relevant to the notion of death, such as 'passed on' or 'gone to a better place'. These are often supplemented by platitudes such as 'sorry for your loss'. People feel the need in emotionally charged situations to use language that is the least likely to cause offence, and this is certainly appropriate in formal contexts such as ceremonies and funerals.

Furthermore, aged-care facilities, and the very name by which we refer to them, are known to often skirt around what they are really there to do – to provide care to old people who are now no longer able to care for themselves, essentially until they die. Rather than be so blunt about this function, however, institutions such as this are mindful of not causing offence to their residents or residents' families, instead referring to themselves as 'residential institutions' or 'low-level care facilities'. Some of the proper nouns given to these institutions include 'Waterford Valley Lakes', 'Glenhuntly Terrace' and 'Eliza Park', and their aim is to focus on an aspect of the facility such as its location, rather than its function, so as to take away focus from uncomfortable notions such as being incontinent and dying. While not always technically euphemistic, these titles perform a euphemistic function that is essential. In an entirely different industry, euphemisms were used on the 2017 reality series *The Bachelor*, with contestant Leah describing her occupation as a 'party planner' when, in fact, she ran an adult entertainment (that is, stripping) business. This was deemed more appropriate in the context of a television show that was aired during prime time. Euphemistic language thus allows for companies and individuals to communicate in various contexts (most certainly formal ones) with the least possible offence caused.

Euphemisms can sometimes go beyond their necessary function, such that their meaning is unclear or obfuscated to the point of making little sense or carrying little meaning. Politicians are renowned for doing this, particularly when referring to the financial status of the people they represent. According to the *Sydney Morning Herald*, 'there are two four-letter words you will never hear escaping from the lips of politicians … rich and poor'. Instead, lexemes such as 'battlers' and phrases such as 'hard-working families' are thrown around in political speeches so as to not offend the referents themselves. Politicians are reluctant to utter the term 'taxes', preferring instead to use noun phrases such as 'efficiency levy' and 'deficit levy'. Like wealth, taxes carry negative connotations and thus politicians would rather circumnavigate the plain English equivalent in order to minimise aggravation in their

SECTION C

electorate. Schools can also use euphemistic language in order to pacify parents and students, especially in school reports where adjectives such as 'energetic' or 'capable' might be used instead of 'talkative' or 'lazy'. Arguments vary as to whether or not this is deliberately misleading. In response to the release of Year 12 results, a school principal recently described students who were not academic or had clearly struggled to finish Year 12 as having demonstrated their 'personal best' and overcoming 'personal hardships'. Parents and students do not necessarily want to hear the plain truth as this might cause embarrassment or angst, so in response to this, more euphemistic terms are deemed to be the most appropriate and are, indeed, necessary in such formal contexts.

Sometimes, however, language can be used based purely on social purpose and function, with formality having little to do with it. Often the level of solidarity shared between interlocutors as well as the social distance between them will dictate the language used, which might be euphemistic or dysphemistic. Family members, for example, might enjoy sharing euphemisms about taboo topics, such as defecating, simply for the purposes of entertainment and fun; siblings might try to outwit one another by listing as many terms as they can, such as 'laying some cable' or 'having a load to deliver'. Even though there is a high level of intimacy between them, euphemistic language is deemed appropriate in this situation. On the other hand, the reputable toilet paper brand 'Who Gives a Crap', who pride themselves on being recycled and sustainable, and who donate proceeds towards animal welfare, have named themselves using an interrogative that contains a possibly dysphemistic term. However, to them, this is key to their marketing and the positioning of their brand in the public domain. And so, in a number of cases, euphemisms are deemed unnecessary in contexts that can be either formal or informal.

Language has a range of functions and the use of euphemisms is a necessary element of communication. While the formality of context can certainly demand the use of euphemistic language, in some instances this is irrelevant. Regardless of this, there is definitely a place for euphemisms in successful communication in contemporary Australian society.

SECTION C

Question 8

This topic requires students to primarily draw on their knowledge of Unit 3, Outcomes 1 and 2, but could also draw on Unit 4 in its consideration of contexts. Students should demonstrate a balanced consideration of the importance of register in the maintenance of face needs. High-scoring responses will explore the importance of context (in terms of social distance, solidarity and hierarchy) in determining one's language use and how face needs might be met. Students should consider both public and private contexts, and perhaps be mindful of the content covered in Unit 4, Outcomes 1 and 2, since language used to express and reflect identity might be relevant also.

The stimulus material points students towards a discussion of the relationship between register and linguistic politeness, as well as the possibility of misinterpreting language (consider implication versus inference); the role of direct and formal language when clear communication of information is required and the speaker/writer is not concerned with adhering to the negative face needs of their audience; the way that politicians can often adopt a register that is so formal that the face needs of the audience cannot be met due to the lack of clarity in the message; and a discussion of contexts whereby certain features of language must be used in order to attend to both the face needs of the recipient and the achievement of the text's purpose, particularly in the online realm.

High-scoring responses must include consideration of both positive and negative face needs, and how use of language can maintain or threaten the face needs of both speakers/writers and their audiences.

Responses might consider the following:

- *the influence of context (cultural and social) on register*
- *the way that face needs can impact on social interactions*
- *the influence of social distance and hierarchy*
- *anecdotal or personal examples of speakers using a register that is either too formal or too casual for the context*
- *contemporary examples such as politicians, which might include Donald Trump's regular adoption of an inappropriate register, Julie Bishop's use of emojis and Daniel Andrews' use of memes.*

SECTION C

Sample essay

Adopting the appropriate register is essential if one's goal is to maintain the face needs of one's audience. This is true of both formal and informal contexts, and regardless of the relationship between participants in a discourse. While most language users adopt strategies to meet face needs, there are examples of those who seek to deliberately threaten face needs and thus do not take on the most appropriate register.

When the social distance between interlocutors is close and the solidarity between them is high, an informal register would be most appropriate in order to adhere to the face needs of the people conversing. As stimulus A suggests, 'any particular example of linguistic behaviour might be perceived quite differently by different … groups, and even by individual members of a particular group'. For example, politeness markers could be considered impolite if they are deemed insincere when used in an exchange between two teenagers who know each other well. For example, if two teenagers were discussing an Instagram post and one were to make a comment such as 'I am deeply impressed by your fashion sense', it is possible that this would be inappropriate and seen as sarcasm, whereby a more informal comment along the lines of 'looking tank af in that flick' or 'you look boss' would be considered genuine, and would thus be more likely to attend to the positive face needs of the recipient. Similarly, teenagers will often use language that in other circumstances could be seen as threatening face as a means of marking in-group membership. This can include calling each other dysphemistic or derogatory terms such as 'ho'. For many teens, terms such as this are used as a way to show approval and to establish a sense of belonging, rather than as an insult or a means of putting one another down based on sexual promiscuity. In most cases, it is not context alone that determines one's linguistic choices but the nature of the relationship between speakers, and how language can be used to maintain the face needs of participants.

Language users who occupy different rungs in social hierarchies are required to adopt a formal register in order to maintain negative face needs: specifically, to show respect. Even in impersonal circumstances, syntax can be used to demonstrate this, as in stimulus B, which says that 'All residents are advised' and 'We trust that there will be no formal action required following receipt of this notice'. Both sentences have an implied imperative function; however, in deference to face needs, this is hedged by the use of two declaratives. In other formal settings, a formal register is used in order to maintain negative face needs through the use of appropriate vocatives. In an educational setting, honorific titles such as 'Mr', 'Ms' or 'Dr' are used by students to acknowledge the hierarchy in which they are below their teachers. On the other hand, teachers typically use first names such as 'Jameela' or 'Chad' to refer to students. Doing this appropriately acknowledges the power that each group holds within this context. This is not limited to hierarchies where there is a difference in age; in the military, soldiers use the rank of other soldiers for similar purposes. Thus, the use of an appropriate register is a key component of maintaining negative face needs in a wide range of private and public settings.

The political world is replete with examples of individuals who show that their goal is to threaten face needs, rather than maintain them. To achieve this, such individuals usually adopt an inappropriate register that quickly draws attention to their goal. American President Donald Trump is the prime example here. Trump insults other politicians and leaders by giving them derogatory nicknames that he utters in public – usually via Twitter – constituting explicit face threats. He refers to North Korean leader Kim Jong-un as 'Little Rocket Man', which is an explicit breach of diplomatic custom and therefore a significant face threat. He also takes some delight in alliteratively referring to his former strategist Steve Bannon as 'Sloppy Steve', and using a racial slur to attack his political rival Senator Elizabeth Warren, referring to her as 'Pocahontas'. However, most politicians choose to maintain face needs and do so by adopting the appropriate register, even when describing rivals. For this reason, Prime

SECTION C

Minister Turnbull refers to Bill Shorten as 'leader of the opposition' or 'the Member for Maribyrnong'. The result here is that Turnbull also maintains his own face needs, as he is deemed to be respectful enough to adhere to the expectations of public discourse. Thus, politicians adopt a register that attends to or threatens the face needs of others, depending on their purpose, and also attend to their own positive or negative face needs at the same time.

It is evident that public figures are becoming more mindful of how their language choices can impact both on the public's perception of them and the face needs of the people they are speaking about or to. As Gary Nunn details in stimulus C, the 'language politicians use has got to change'. Where once the public would not have been overly concerned with politically correct language or official terminology being used, many public figures now make sure they use appropriate language when describing different groups in society. QANTAS CEO Alan Joyce, for example, would never be seen using the noun phrase 'the gays'; instead, he uses the accepted initialism 'LGBTQI' when referring to that community in discussion about marriage equality and related issues. This attends to the face needs of people who, for many years, have suffered at the hands of public language, and in no way marginalises them or causes offence. The same can be said of Bill Shorten who uses the noun phrase 'asylum seekers' when referring to refugees in detention, rather than the more derogatory term 'boat people'. Despite recent criticism from Peter Dutton for 'trying to appease the left in his party', Shorten is making a deliberate effort to attend to the face needs of the people he represents and is speaking for, through his language choices.

Register and its appropriate use are imperative in ensuring that the face needs of all participants in a linguistic exchange are met. There are instances, however, where this is not the concern of a speaker or writer whose intent may be to directly threaten face, achieved by deliberate deviation from the most appropriate register.

SECTION C

Tips

- *Your essay must have a clear contention established in the introduction, as well as several main body paragraphs and a conclusion.*
- *Your main body paragraphs should be structured around arguments or discussion points. Do not use the stimulus items to structure your main body paragraph (i.e. a different stimulus quote as the subject for each paragraph).*
- *In this section, you have an opportunity to draw from a wide range of linguistic concepts for discussion; however, it is important that you show both a breadth and depth of knowledge of the course.*
- *Generalised discussion is not rewarded; you must support your ideas with specific metalanguage terms and relevant evidence.*
- *It is important that you focus on understanding the nuances of the topic and select appropriate linguistic evidence for your analysis. Avoid providing pre-prepared responses to broad areas of study (e.g. an 'identity' or a 'public language' essay). Instead, deal in detail with the wording and implications of the specific topic. Pre-prepared or generic responses are easily detected and not well rewarded.*
- *You are required to use at least one of the provided stimulus items to inform your response. It is important to remember that the stimulus must be interpreted with the topic in mind. Ask yourself: how can this information contribute to my understanding of the key topic ideas?*
- *While you are welcome to use more than one piece of stimulus, avoid using every stimulus quote. Doing so usually results in scattered and superficial responses that do not sufficiently demonstrate your knowledge and understanding. Try to engage with the underlying ideas presented by the stimulus, rather than simply quoting extracts from it. If you encounter stimuli that appear to overlap, consider how each item reinforces or challenges the ideas in the other. Synthesise the information and be selective.*
- *You should include recent and relevant examples of language use to support your discussion. Creativity and currency in examples is always preferable to using unoriginal or dated evidence.*
- *You will be rewarded for including relevant evidence of wider academic reading. This might come in the form of quotes from experts or by referring to linguistic research.*

END OF SAMPLE RESPONSES

SECTION C