VATE

VICTORIAN ASSOCIATION FOR THE TEACHING OF ENGLISH

VATE Publications 2018

VCE English Language
Units 3-4 Written Examination
Sample Answer Guide

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 (2 marks)

Comment on the writer's use of syntactic patterning between lines 15 and 18.

Listing is used on line 16 "the winds, tides and seasons" to explain the "synchronicity created by nature" and to also describe what is contained in the "series of moodboards" created by Lisa Luscombe, Anne Morley and Shannon Morris.

Students could also comment on the listing used on line 17 "dedicated architects and builders, artists, chefs and craftspeople" which acts to highlight the impressive number of professionals involved in creating Cape Schanck Resort. This allows readers to infer that the resort is not just well-designed, but also artistically beautiful.

Question 2 — sample answer (2 marks)

What sentence types are used between lines 19 and 20? How do they reinforce the purposes of this text?

The first sentence "Cape Schanck Resort opens on 1 August" is declarative and provides a statement of fact to the reader supporting the purpose of informing about the opening date of the resort, and the final sentence "racv. com.au" is a declarative fragment allowing readers to infer that bookings can be made via the RACV website. The second sentence "Book now…" is imperative, directing readers to place a booking and encouraging them to do so online, and quickly, while the "opening offers" are available. This supports the purpose of eliciting bookings for the resort.

Question 3 — sample answer (3 marks)

Analyse the use of information flow by identifying the discourse strategy that is used and explaining its relevance to the social purpose of the text.

Front focus of prepositional phrases is dominant throughout the text. This use of front focus is primarily descriptive, ranging from describing the landscape "from the region's rugged…" (2), RoyalAuto's mission to capture the essence of the resort "on a mission…" (11), and the output of that mission "in a series of moodboards…" (15). This supports the purpose of the text as it suggests that the resort and its surroundings are so "extraordinary" (13) that it took a team of creative professionals to begin to describe it. This is a marketing strategy that increases the incentive for readers to book a room to stay.

Question 4 — sample answer (4 marks)

How does the use of adjectives contribute to the social purpose of the text? Support your answer with specific reference to the text, quoting line numbers where appropriate.

Adjectives are used throughout the text in order to describe the resort and its surroundings. The use of adjectives of colour "golden" (5), "crimson" (6) and "ruby-red" (6) evoke strong imagery of a vibrant environment around the resort, supporting the purpose of making the resort's surrounds appealing. The resort itself is described as having "sensual" (8) and "curving" (8) shapes which is suggestively risqué and titillating; it allows readers to infer that the resort would be an appropriate place for a romantic getaway, promoting the social purpose of increasing the incentive to book a stay.

Students could also discuss other uses of adjectives, such as:

- "soaring" (8) suggest expansive buildings and spaciousness

- "rugged" (2), "rocky" (2), "rolling" (2), and "wild" (9) suggesting the rough nature of the environment

- "extraordinary" (13) and "special" (13) to emphasise the beauty and uniqueness of the location

Question 5 — sample answer (4 marks)

Analyse the language features that contribute to the coherence of this text. Support your answer with specific reference to the text, quoting line numbers where appropriate.

Cohesion: Using the noun "trio" (15) in cohesive substitution of the names of the art director and photographers helps achieve coherence by linking paragraphs together and reducing unnecessary repetition of the names of people; as they are unimportant to the description of the resort, it is not necessary to name them again.

Inference: Readers can infer that the resort is luxurious, high-class and romantic through the descriptive elements of the text, such as the use of positively connoted adjectives "stunning", "sensual", "curving", and "extraordinary".

Logical ordering: The text is logically ordered, in that it introduces the resort in the first paragraph with the post-modified noun phrase "Cape Schanck Resort on the Mornington Peninsula" (3), then describing the resort's surroundings in the second paragraph, with "raw, uncompromising beauty" (7). The next two paragraphs outline the mission of the art director and photographers of RoyalAuto in describing the resort to readers, and the final paragraph informs readers of the opening date of the resort and directs them to book online to receive special offers.

Formatting: Larger font sizes have been used to highlight elements of the advertisement. The heading, "Cape inspiration" (line 1) is a substitution for the name of the resort, "Cape Schanck Resort" (line 3), and entices the reader to engage with the advertisement to find out which cape is being described.

Students could also discuss:

- Bolding and increased font size in the first paragraph to highlight the rugged beauty of the natural surroundings and also to mention the name of the resort

- Bolding in the final paragraph to direct readers to place bookings

- Colour scheme and image of the advertisement as outlined in the context description in supporting the advertisement's description of the Mornington Peninsula by reinforcing the context of the beach and ocean.

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.

The following points are examples of the types of linguistic features needed in an analytical commentary. Students may choose to structure the AC in whichever way they prefer, either by using subsystems or language features to organise the analysis, or by looking at the text holistically. Students must ensure that they remember the three dot-points in the instructions for the AC; that they address all of them, whichever method they use. Students must also make certain that they also refer to at least two subsystems in their analysis. An opening paragraph outlining briefly the situational context is useful (students might also refer to the cultural context, social purpose and register), but there is no requirement to write a conclusion as such.

Contextual factors, social purpose and register

Reporter Tom Steinfort's interview with Australian-born NBA star Ben Simmons was screened on Channel 9's current affairs program *60 Minutes* and is also available to be downloaded and viewed via YouTube. Its primary functions are to both inform and entertain the viewers who want to find out about Ben Simmons and his experiences living in the USA and playing in the NBA. The wider social purpose of Text 2 is to build rapport through the shared Australian identity of both Tom Steinfort and Ben Simmons which manifests itself through their use of colloquial language and occasional backchannelling, as well as other language features. Overall, this is a relatively informal text. While the informative function of the interview requires some structure and pre-planning in order to maintain an appropriate level of professionalism, the entertaining function supports a degree of informality in order to attract and engage viewers, mainly a younger audience and those interested in basketball. While Tom Steinfort almost certainly prepared interview questions in advance (and may have shared these questions with Simmons prior), Simmon's responses appear unscripted and spontaneous – as evidenced in part by the presence of non-fluency features.

- **Mode/audience:** Spoken interview with elements of planning and spontaneous dialogue recorded for a TV and digital audience who would be interested in social/current affairs and, in the context of this specific segment, interested in sport, specifically basketball and the NBA.

- **Medium:** Digital, broadcast on Channel 9's TV show *60 Minutes* and also available to be viewed on YouTube.

- **Semantic fields:** Basketball, Australian culture

- **Participants:** Reporter Tom Steinfort and guest Ben Simmons. Both the participants and the viewing audience would have expectations about the roles of each in the context of an interview such as this.

- **Function:** To inform the viewers about Ben Simmons and his experiences playing in the NBA and living in the USA. As this is a TV show, there is also an entertaining function to attract and engage viewers.

- **Social purpose:** A number of social purposes: to promote the NBA and particularly Ben Simmons to a wider audience; for the interviewer, Tom Steinfort, to meet Ben Simmons' positive face needs by showing interest in his experiences and to offer praise for his achievements; for both participants to build rapport through the interview.

- **Register:** Primarily informal – the opening word "Mate" signals the informal, conversational, personal tone/ nature of this interview. Text 2 does, despite its overall informality, follow the familiar and expected structure of a TV interview, lead by the interviewer T who has clearly come with some prepared questions/topics he would like to explore with his guest (and possibly shared prior with his Ben Simmons – B has an answer for every question and never seems caught entirely off-guard). T's narrative in lines 1-6 also appears prepared, missing many of the non-fluency features which characterise a lot of the transcript. Here, the longer pause at the end of line 5 seems deliberate, pausing for dramatic effect and to enhance the impact of his next statement in line 6.

- **Cultural context:** While the conversation takes place in a US setting (the city of Philadelphia where Simmons is living and playing basketball), the main focus of the interview centres around aspects of Australian identity and sporting culture and underlying this, the importance of country and home as central to one's sense of self.

Stylistic and discourse features

Lexical features

- Use of **colloquial language:** "Mate" (line 1) is reflective of a shared Australian identity and also of egalitarianism – a stereotypical Australian value. Addressing someone as "mate" often implies a level of friendship/camaraderie between the speaker and the addressee, so is also a way in which rapport is built between the interview participants.

- Other **examples of lexicon** which contributes to the informal register: slang such as "you know", "yeah", "yep", "guys", "big deal" (line 6), "play hard" (line 13), expressions such as "Whipped out" (line 4), "spots" (line 57), use of "pretty" as an adverb (lines 53, 54), use of contractions "they'd" and "would've" (line 53)

- **Proper nouns** add specific geographical context to the interview. These terms would require a degree of **inference** on the part of both Australian and American viewers in order to understand the references to these places (at least those that are relevant to each context): "Melbourne" (lines 39-40), "Blackburn North" (line 41), "Goody's Chicken" (line 42), "City Park" (line 52). Of interest is that Simmons' adopted town of Philadelphia has been shortened to "Philly" (line 8) which adds a level of informality and intimacy as it would be the way locals refer to the city. T also refers to "four 'n' twenty pies" (line 16) – an iconic brand of meat pie sold at sporting events in Australia; **cultural inference** is required here to understand its significance in the context of this conversation.

- **Jargon**, specifically from the domain of sport with reference to "The Eagles Phillies" (line 10), the NFL team who won the 2018 Superbowl, and the "Sixers" (line 11) which is colloquial for the Philadelphia 76ers, the basketball team which Ben Simmons plays for.

Informal pronunciation

- Examples of **elision**, including "Coz" (line 53), "wanna" (lines 13, 47), "kinda" (line 19), "-em" (lines 19-20) – all of which are expected in a more informal and spontaneous conversation such as this.

Syntactic features

- Typical of the interview format is the use of **interrogatives** which build on information that has already been given and allow new points to be introduced. T uses interrogatives to help him manage the conversation in his role as interviewer and elicit conversation from B: for example, in lines 23 and 29, T poses questions to prompt B to expand on why it's funny seeing people eat a pie with cutlery; in line 32, T's question signals a

topic shift, and subsequent questions (lines 34, 37-38, 40, 52) try to steer the conversation and encourage B to keep talking and add detail to the conversation. Asking questions shows interest in Simmons and in this way attends to his face needs. In the context of the TV show, the use of questions also supports viewer engagement to ensure that they will stay tuned into the program. B uses a tag question "right" (line 26), converting his statement about the way Americans eat pies into a rhetorical question, and inviting T to agree with him as he does in line 27 "Yeah".

- **Declarative sentences** support the informative function of the interview. They feature, for example, in lines 1-6 where T is narrating his "story" to B, affirming the high regard in which B is held by the Philly locals and fans of the NBA.

- The **syntax** in Text 2 is typical of more **informal, unplanned/unscripted speech**, including:

   - a truncated intonation unit in line 38

   - sentence fragments (lines 7, 17, 27-28, 30, 39)

   - long sentences with multiple clauses broken up by non-fluency features ("you know", "ah", "um"), for example, the compound-complex sentences in lines 13-15 or in lines 35-36

   - use of conjunction "and" in sentences to hold the floor, link ideas, and keep developing a particular point in the conversation – both speakers do this, B in lines 10-15, and T in lines 1-3.

Prosodic features

- **Stress:** Steinfort uses **emphatic stress** between lines 1-6 to highlight the popularity and status of Ben Simmons in his adopted home town of Philadelphia. T tells B that the woman's eyes "<u>fell</u> out of her head" (3) and that she "<u>love</u>[s] that man" (3). T goes on to say that "<u>you</u>" (5) (B) was the woman's phone/screen saver as well as affirming B that he is a "big <u>deal</u>" (6). (See also lines 29, 34)

- **Volume:** use of *forte* – loud speech in line 43 adds to T's laughter and clearly indicates to B that T is enjoying their discussion, listening and encouraging this line of conversation about B's preference for fried chicken!

- **Tempo:** Use of *allegro* – fast paced speech by T in lines 37-38, combined with the repetition of "where where" and "which which" perhaps suggests that T is quickly formulating his thoughts/questions as he is speaking; or it may be an example of rapid self-correction whereby T tries to clarify his first question (and explain to the viewer) where Simmons is actually from, not just "home".

- **Pitch:** use of **rising pitch** can often indicate that a speaker wishes to keep talking, as in lines 1-2, 10-11, 13, 18-20, 41-42; but it can also signal an invitation to the other interlocutor to respond, as in line 53 as T hands the floor over to B; use of **falling pitch** often signals the end of turn and a willingness of a speaker to hand over the floor, eg. B in line 15, allowing T to initiate a topic shift in line 16 to move the discussion on to pies; and T in line 32, rather than a questioning intonation, here the falling pitch signals to B that it's his turn to speak and answer T's question about "what's on the agenda".

- **Intonation: continuing intonation** clearly indicates the desire of a speaker to keep talking, to continue to hold the floor and finish a particular point (eg. T in line 3 and again in line 31, B in lines 9, 35 and 56); on the other hand, **final intonation** signals the conclusion of a speaker's point/turn and a willingness to hand over the floor, eg. B in line 30, he's clearly not going to elaborate and T follows in line 31 with the introduction of a topic shift, moving on to B's plans for end of season. Similarly, at end of line 33, the final intonation signals the end of B's contribution, prompting T to step in and ask a question to prompt B to expand.

Features of spoken discourse

Examples of all of these are present in this informal largely unplanned spoken interview:

- The **overlapping** in Text 2 is positive and supportive, a sign of each speaker's engagement in the conversation. Despite their different and distinct roles in the interview, both speakers overlap the other; T only overlaps B with laughter (lines 21, 43, 50) while B is speaking, whereas B quite often overlaps with words, often the last word of T's question (or, in lines 17 and 48, with what he thought would be the last word). This may be because B is less experienced in interviews than reporter Tom.

- **Discourse particles,** for example, the use of "So" in line 52 allows T to take the floor and shift the conversation back to Philly, re-establishing the focus of the interview after the previous laughter in lines 43 and 50. B repeats the discourse particle "kinda" to take the edge of what he is saying by being less direct (lines 19, 26). This is important at this point in the discourse as he is negotiating a face threatening act by gently laughing at what the American fans are doing but clearly not wanting to really offend his adopted country. Another hedge used by Simmons is "a little bit" (7) to downplay T's comment that B is very highly regarded in Philadelphia. This is often regarded as a typically Australian trait, not wanting to be seen as big-noting oneself.

- **Repetition:** B in lines 8, 18, 24, 55, 39; T in lines 37 and 38 – this is the only point where T is not polished and it seems to be him backtracking to a piece of information he meant to elicit before then, eg. the specific location that is "home" for B. While many of these are non-fluency repetitions, B's repetitions in lines 24 and 39 may be for clarity, because the first utterance overlapped with T's speech and may not have been as clearly heard.

Other **non-fluency features** which reflect the spontaneity of the conversation include:

- pauses: for example, B in lines 7, 8, 12 as he works out what to say while thinking on his feet. Not all pauses, however, are non-fluency features; the pause on line 23 signals more surprise as T moves to clarify what B has suggested, that American fans attempt to eat meat pies with cutlery!

- filled pauses: "um", "ah", "you know", "oh=" (line 35); mostly by B, as the interviewee he is probably less prepared than T the interviewer and so has to think on his feet and prepare his responses as he is speaking. B's also less practiced while T interviews for a living.

- false start and repair in line 22

- truncation (line 25), as B interrupts T and overlaps him and takes the floor in line 26.

Strategies in spoken discourse

- **Topic management**: Both participants adhere to their expected social roles in this interview, for example, T is the only one to ask questions, and T does not volunteer any information about himself. This differs from a conversation between friends, where questions are often reciprocated. While not always fluent in his speaking, B is reasonably concise in his answers to T, showing some understanding of the fixed and relatively short time frame allowed for airing an interview such as this on TV. A purpose of the interview is to focus on the shared "Australianess" of T, B and the audience, and to contrast this with the oddities of American's/ life in the US. To that end the topics cover areas such as how Philly locals have taken to four 'n' twenty pies, what B misses about home, and the difference between mundane food like fried chicken in the two places.

- **Turn-taking:** see previous discussion about pitch and intonation

- **Minimal responses/back-channelling** – employed by both Simmons and Steinfort to show that they are engaging in the conversation and are encouraging each other to continue (lines 17, 27, 28).

Face needs

- T does a lot in this interview to flatter B, and in this way meets B's positive face needs. T does this directly by telling him how "great" he is, eg. lines 3, 6, 16; and also, indirectly, through laughter (lines 21, 43, 50) signalling to B that he's enjoying his stories and jokes, and by agreeing with B, as in "Yeah" (line 27). B is clearly a bit uncomfortable and embarrassed with the flattery and the focus on himself, downplaying it in his statement in line 7. T establishes a rapport with B, and respects his face needs, by engaging him in topics he is familiar with and by referencing their shared cultural understanding of Australian identity as evidenced by the discussion of the "four 'n' twenty pie" (line 16). Similarly, T's question (line 40) about where B goes when he is in Melbourne helps to connect B to Australia and his culture even though he is living in the US.

- B's attention to T's face needs is less overt, but in responding to T's questions and largely agreeing with T's evaluation of events (e.g. incredulity in how pies are eaten, "right" in lines 17, "exactly" in lines 48 and 51) B shows some concern for T's positive face. B also recognises the difference between T's information-seeking questions and his use of the rhetorical question "what's all <u>that</u> about?" in line 29, and responds appropriately (i.e. shares incredulity). This further helps build a sense of T, B and the audience as forming an ingroup of Australians who know how to eat pies and who are having a light-hearted laugh at the expense of an American outgroup.

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)

'What it means to be Australian is constantly being challenged and reshaped, and this is reflected in contemporary language use.'

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

Ideas and examples to consider:

1. "Australian identity" is not a clearly or easily defined concept. However, there are a number of values that tend to be listed as typical of Australian culture by linguists and other commentators. These include *egalitarianism*, *informality*, *mateship* and *community spirit*. It is thought that some typical features of Australian English, such as slang and accent, reflect these values in a number of ways.

2. Slang has a particularly iconic role in Australian culture. Classic Australian slang, including lexical terms such as "bloke", "grouse" and "cobber" and idiomatic phrases such as "flat out like a lizard drinking", are often thought to reflect our preference for informality. Australians also tend to have pride in the creativity and obscurity of our slang—using and understanding it serves as a marker of in-group membership and, perhaps more significantly, excludes those in the out-group.

3. However, slang changes quickly and Australian slang is no exception. In 2017, pie company Four 'n' Twenty ran an advertising campaign called "Save Our Slang" that drew attention to the fact that many "traditional" Australian slang terms have lost favour over time. This campaign glorified words and phrases like "drongo", "budgie smugglers" and "she'll be right" and suggested that the decline in usage of these words would represent a blow to Australian culture.

4. As Stimulus b points out, the decline of Australian slang is often blamed on the increasing influence of American media such as TV, movies, popular music and social media. Terms like "salty", "lit" and "savage" have recently become popular with young Australians and this kind of change can be seen as a challenge to Australian culture and a threat to our unique national identity.

5. While some forms of slang have lost popularity, there are other types of Australian slang that have gained prominence. Australian diminutives such as "truckie", "uni" and "journo" are widely used and have been shown by recent research at the Australian National University to make Australians seem more likeable to each other. Formed by a combination of shortening and affixation, these word formations also seem to reflect the Australian preference for informality and egalitarianism, addressing a wide variety of people, places and things in a consistently colloquial way. This connection between diminutives and Australian culture has been described by linguist Anna Wierzbicka and is also alluded to in Stimulus a—"Maccas" is a diminutive form of McDonald's, but to use the full name of the restaurant rather than the shortened form might be considered "unAustralian".

6. Politicians often try to win popularity with the Australian public by exploiting Australian language norms. Terms like "fair go", "fair dinkum" and "battlers" are regularly used to appeal to egalitarian values. A recent example was a comment made by Opposition Leader Bill Shorten on television show Q&A: after talking to audience members, he said that "This is more fair dinkum to me than half the rubbish we carry on in Parliament".

7. The Australian accent is another distinctive feature of our language. Its uniqueness is a point of pride to many of us, and Australians tend to be quick to criticise poor imitations of our accent (a recent example was the actor John Lithgow in *Pitch Perfect 3*, described in the Daily Telegraph as delivering "one of THE worst Australian accents in history").

8. The Australian pronunciation of sounds in connected speech—including the word "Australia" itself—has been ridiculed for decades (see for example Afferbeck Lauder's famous book *Let Stalk Strine*—the title itself is a case in point). Stimulus c suggests that this criticism is unfair and "un-Australian". Webb challenges the notion that the Australian accent or the pronunciation of "Straya" suggests anything negative about Australian people or culture. While some prescriptivists might criticise Australian pronunciation as "lazy", "uneducated" or "wrong", others stand up for it and take pride in its distinctive and relaxed nature.

9. Stimulus d points out that traditional notions of Australian English are being challenged by increasing multiculturalism and diversity in Australian society. Migrant ethnolects, varieties of Australian English influenced by the language backgrounds of migrant communities, can be seen and heard in a wide range of contexts. For example, while ethnolects have traditionally been fodder for TV comedy (from "Con the Fruiterer" to *Fat Pizza* to the more recent *Mychonny: The Chinaboy Show*), they have also been shown in a less stylised way on the show *Gogglebox*, the regular cast of which includes Australians of Greek and Sri Lankan descent. Such representations of language diversity in Australia can be seen to reflect broader changes in society.

Question 8 (30 marks)

'Groups of people tend to use language in a way that encourages conformity rather than diversity.'

To what extent is this true in contemporary Australian society?

Refer to at least two subsystems of language in your response.

Ideas and examples to consider:

1. Language plays an important role in constructing identities, both of individuals and of groups. By conforming to particular linguistic norms, language users can support their membership of certain in-groups. These norms can involve all subsystems of language, for example particular pronunciations, lexical choices or grammatical features.

2. For example, conforming to norms related to Australian English helps people fit in among fellow Australians. As alluded to in stimulus b and c, Australian slang is one component of this (consider the "Save Our Slang" and research mentioned in points 3 and 5 in the answers to Question 1). Furthermore, changes in the Australian accent demonstrate some tendency towards phonetic conformity. While Mitchell and Delbridge in the 1960s famously identified three major Australian accent varieties—broad, general and cultivated—the prevalence of both broad and cultivated accents has decreased and the general accent has become dominant.

3. On the other hand, new influences are adding to diversity in Australian English. While some may cling to traditional Australian slang and accent as markers of Australian culture, globalisation and migration are two forces putting pressure on pre-existing language norms. For example, international media and popular culture have a significant influence on the language used by Australians (one recent example is the slang term "lit" mentioned in stimulus a, but students are likely to have a long list of more contemporary examples). Furthermore, migrant ethnolects are becoming highly visible in Australian culture (see point 9 in the answers to Question 1), and in recent years linguists have identified a new variety of Australian accent: "ethnic broad".

4. People also use language to fit into particular groups within society, whether based on age, interest, culture, religion, location or occupation. Language users tend to adopt the linguistic habits of those they spend time with (or want to spend time with), so within particular social groups there is often conformity of lexical choice, grammar and pronunciation. These social ways of speaking might be quite widespread (e.g. across all people with a particular socio-economic status), and hence form *sociolects*; or local to a specific group of friends or colleagues.

5. As has always been the case for the English language, new words are being formed continually. This can be seen in the yearly "word of the year" announcements made by various dictionary publishers (examples from 2017 include the Macquarie Dictionary's "milkshake duck" and the Australian National Dictionary Centre's "kwaussie"). These announcements tend to highlight the diversity and innovation present in both global and Australian English. However, the widespread response to these recent examples was confusion—many believed these words were not actually part of common Australian usage and as such didn't warrant inclusion in dictionaries. Such a response demonstrates the way language users can try to protect a particular language variety from those who appear to be threatening conformity.

6. The distinction between Standard English and non-Standard English in Australian society can be difficult to define. In general, we expect formal and public language to conform to the rules of Standard English, following spelling and meanings codified in dictionaries and grammar rules taught in schools or published in style guides. However, there is no single authority that determines what is considered Standard Australian English.

7. Different language varieties can have prestige within society for different reasons. Standard Australian English has *overt* prestige—it is highly regarded in mainstream society and expected in formal contexts. However, some varieties of Australian English have *covert* prestige in particular situations. For example, young people might adhere to language norms associated with the sociolect of "teenspeak" in order to have covert prestige among their peers, including particular slang words or non-Standard grammar. In either case, conformity to particular norms is crucial for gaining prestige.

8. As suggested by stimulus d, jargon is a type of lexis that encourages conformity in particular contexts. Speech communities based on particular professions use jargon as a marker of in-group membership, for example scientific jargon, legal jargon ("legalese") or aviation jargon—the ability to understand and use jargon is what marks the speaker as part of a professional community. Using the appropriate jargon is an important way to

conform to language norms within groups. It allows people to communicate effectively and efficiently with fellow jargon-users, and can also ensure that users are respected by those outside of the group because of the prestige it grants them (when we hear an airplane pilot using technical jargon it can give us faith in his or her knowledge and expertise). Some people argue that jargon can be a bad thing because it is exclusive, but others might argue that the wide variety of jargons that exist could also be a marker of linguistic diversity.

9.   An *idiolect* is the language variety associated with an individual language user. While we are all part of particular groups within society and we tend to conform to many aspects of the language used by people around us, each of us has our own unique language variety. Some of us may try to conform to particular language norms to fit in (such as the students in the Australian slang class mentioned in stimulus b) but at the same time we are all members of a variety of different groups, all of which go towards influencing our personal idiolects.

Question 9 (30 marks)

'It is important to consider the context you are in and choose language carefully in order to maintain others' face needs and promote social harmony.'

Discuss, with reference to contemporary Australian society. Refer to at least <u>two</u> subsystems of language in your response.

Ideas and examples to consider:

1.   Using taboo language—language that challenges or breaks social conventions—can be fraught, especially considering the way that long-established social taboos can change rapidly. Depending on the hearer's attitudes towards particular taboos, taboo language can challenge positive face needs.

2.   Taboos around swearing have relaxed in contemporary Australian society. In a well-known decision of the NSW Local Court in 2003, Magistrate Heilpern found that "the word fuck is extremely common place now and has lost much of its punch". Swear words are now commonly used in mainstream media, including free-to-air TV (at night time) and some radio stations. Triple J, Australia's public youth radio station, sometimes issues a "language warning" before songs with a considerable number of swear words, but no longer does so if the swearing is only occasional. Perhaps because of contextual factors (Triple J is aimed specifically at teenagers and young adults), what is considered taboo by the audience of one radio station might be different to the audience of another.

3.   However, swearing is still found offensive by many Australians. In 2017 the Advertising Standards Board (ASB) revealed that one of the year's most complained about advertisements was a Youfoodz campaign in which a young boy impersonating celebrity chef Gordon Ramsay used the word "forkin'". Despite the pun's humorous intention and (thinly-veiled) censorship, the ASB upheld the complaints and found that the ad breached standards. (However, the word "forkin'" is still used in Youfoodz advertising.) Another recent example was when Victorian Roads Minister Luke Donnellan told the Corangamite Shire Mayor during a meeting that the government's funding was "better than a kick in the dick". Attempting to create humour with his taboo language, the result was widespread objection and a forced apology.

4.   While views about swearing are relaxing, many other issues in our society are becoming more taboo, such as gender, race and religion. Society is developing stricter expectations for language users to use language that is inclusive and non-discriminatory in order to negotiate these taboos. For example, Qantas staff have

recently been advised to substitute gendered terms for gender-neutral terms when talking to customers, such as substituting "mum" and "dad" with "parents" or "husband" and "wife" with "spouse" or "partner". This is to avoid making incorrect assumptions and hence minimise any unnecessary threat to customers' face needs. An example of a public figure using taboo language related to race is given in stimulus b.

5. Stimulus e is an example where the careful use of language is necessary to avoid threatening positive face needs. Many Indigenous Australians believe that the use of the noun "Aborigine" has historically racist connotations and should be replaced with terms like Aboriginal Australian, Torres Strait Islander, First Australian or Indigenous Australian. Not to follow these norms would be considered disrespectful and thus challenge their positive face needs. In order to best show respect to particular groups of people and maintain social harmony, it is sometimes necessary to take great care with specific lexical choices.

6. Some argue that these kind of language substitutions are examples of "political correctness gone mad". "Political correctness" is often used in a pejorative sense to describe what some people see as changes in language norms or social values that are unnecessary or against tradition in some way. However, others would argue that using politically correct language is an important politeness strategy to avoid causing offence. It can help meet others' face needs and promote social harmony.

7. As suggested by stimulus d, politeness strategies are an important way to meet others' face needs. In addition to lexical choice as mentioned above, this can involve discourse strategies including turn-taking, topic management and minimal responses/back-channelling. Politeness can also be achieved through grammatical choice (for example phrasing an instruction as an interrogative—"Would you pass the butter, please?") or phonology (for example a rising intonation can indicate uncertainty and make a statement less threatening— this is also thought to be one function of the Australian high rising terminal).

8. The appropriate level of politeness also depends on context. Stimulus a points out that some politeness norms are not applied in conversations between speakers who are very close. In fact, politeness markers can reinforce social distance and might not always be necessary or desired. Similarly, in the right contexts, the use of dysphemistic language can help build solidarity and may even be used as a way of showing affection (for example calling a friend "you old bastard").

9. Euphemisms are one way to meet face needs and promote social harmony. Stimulus c gives one example of how avoiding certain terms ("cancer" in this case) and replacing them with euphemistic language is a way to avoid threatening the face needs of patients. However, in certain contexts this could be seen as obfuscatory or manipulative.

10. Dysphemistic language can threaten face needs, especially if used in the wrong context. One ongoing example is the case of Wicked Campers, a business that hires out vans painted with striking designs and slogans. Some of these slogans use dysphemistic language (frequently related to taboo topics like sex and drugs) which has led to a number of complaints from members of the public. These slogans are intended to be humorous and irreverent (and some people might agree with this, but many people believe that the messages displayed are not appropriate to be seen by the general public.

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