

**VATE Publications 2019**

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

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2019 VATE ENGLISH LANGUAGE SAMPLE RESPONSES 2

**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 support the purpose(s) of Text 1?**

Although this text is a formal interview, there are many informal language features used throughout that give it a relatively chatty or informal tone. The primary social purpose of the text is to inform viewers in an entertaining way about the genesis of the Sydney school climate strike and give them insight into the work and achievements of JH and AH. Another purpose is for the students to demonstrate their intelligence, credibility and likeability as a way of implicitly building support for their cause.

The host JS welcomes the students in a formal and polite way, introducing them by their full names (line 2) and meeting their face needs when he thanks and congratulates them (lines 3-4). But both the interviewers and the students make frequent use of informal language features throughout the text in order to create a conversational tone and impart information in an interesting/entertaining manner. For example, in line 6, JS uses the relatively informal metaphor “kicked this off” instead of a more formal term such as “instigated”, while JH describes her own initial idea to organise a Sydney climate strike in a self-deprecating way as “absolutely insane” (line 14)
and “not very well thought through” (16). Given Australia’s tendency to cut down tall poppies, these minimising statements can be seen as politeness markers that attend to the audience’s face needs by making clear that JH is not bragging about her achievements. Rapport and intimacy are further built by using colloquialisms like “yeah” (line 8), discourse particles like “kind of” (line 23) and idioms like “mind blowing” (line 54). The relatively unplanned nature of JS and AH’s responses is seen in the frequent use of simple coordination (such as ‘and’ and ‘but’) to join clauses/idea units (e.g. lines 33-35; 37-41) as well as AH’s “Umm” at line 20. These features make the conversation seem somewhat natural and spontaneous and give it a casual, friendly tone as opposed to being a strictly formal interview – though note that in a truly informal conversation we would expect more false starts and hesitations than are seen in this text.

Students need to describe the register accurately, identify at least one relevant purpose of the text and show how the two are connected, using relevant examples. Note that the purpose(s) discussed can be the social purposes listed in the English Language Study Design, but other purposes are also acceptable provided that they accurately reflect the text.

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**Question 2 — sample answer** (2 marks)
**Discuss the politeness strategies used by JS and JH between lines 1 and 17. Provide two different examples.**

As a host, JS is very welcoming towards his young guests and demonstrates both positive and negative politeness when introducing them. He meets their positive face needs by congratulating them on their achievements (line 4) and meets their negative face needs by thanking them for their appearance on the show (line 3). Thanking them is also a threat to JS’s own negative face, but as this is reciprocated by JH (line 5) the damage to JS’s face is mitigated.

JS goes on to address JH directly by her first name “Jean” (line 6), which could challenge her negative face needs to some extent. However, this threat is softened by JS’s use of the hedging adverb “essentially” and interrogative tag “didn’t you”, as well as the vocal effect of quiet laughter (line 6). This helps to ensure that JH feels able to speak comfortably and confidently. Laughter comes up again on line 17 where JS uses it to show agreement

with JH’s laughing statement that her email was “<@ not very well thought through\ @> (line 16). This has the effect of making her feel understood and meets her positive face needs. As discussed under the sample answer for question 1, JS’s use of self-deprecation in lines 14-16 can also be interpreted as a politeness strategy that seeks to deflect any praise she might receive for instigating the Sydney climate strike.

Students need to refer to two specific examples from lines 1-17 and explicitly mention one or both of positive and negative face needs. Students’ analysis must correctly identify whether face needs are being met or challenged in the examples given.

**Question 3 — sample answer** (2 marks)
**Comment on the function of two different prosodic features used by JH between lines 31 and 42.**

**Tempo:** JH speaks in a fast tempo on lines 32 (“<A particularly target train stations ...”) and 33 (“<A as well as doing ...”). The function of the increased tempo appears to be for JH to quickly and efficiently add parantethical detail to her account before moving back to the main narrative. Speakers frequently use fast pace to make an aside in a way that is similar to the use of brackets in written texts.

**Stress:** JS stresses a number of words to give her speech variation, to make it more engaging for listeners and to emphasise key points. For example, the adverb “really” is given emphatic stress in both lines 34 and 40 to demonstrate additional intensity. When she stresses “their friends” (line 38) it links back to her mention of the organisers’ “own page” (line 35)—this contrast helps to illustrate the spread of their message via social media.

**Intonation:** Falling intonation at the end of line 34 (“social media really was helpful\”) adds emphasis to JH’s statement in order to correct JS’s earlier suggestion that they didn’t have enough of a budget for social media promotion and hence had to resort to “old fashioned posters” (line 29). Rising intonation at the end of line 38 (“on their own/”) indicates that JS has not yet finished speaking about the current topic (social media promotion) and enables her to hold the floor long enough to finish her explanation.

**Note:** Pauses and audible breathing are not prosodic features.



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**Analyse the turn-taking in this conversation. How does it reflect the situational context of this text? Refer to specific examples and line numbers in your response.**

As this text is a televised interview, turn-taking is controlled by the hosts JS and JN. They do this by prompting the two guests with interrogative sentences and passing the floor to them with a questioning intonation, seen for example on lines 19, 30 and 44. As there are two hosts, they seem to share this role by alternating, with JS asking the first question (line 9), JN asking the next (line 19), JS the third (line 30) and JN the fourth (line 44). JN also makes sure to address one question directly to AH (line 19) in order to make sure he has the chance to participate in the interview (since JH answers the rest of the hosts’ questions).

In general, there is very little overlapping speech in this transcript, reflecting the formal context and structure
of the TV news broadcast. The exception to this is near the beginning when JH takes the floor from JS with the discourse particles “[Yeah so/]” (line 10). While JS is unable to finish asking the question he starts on line 9 (“how/”), he politely cedes the floor to JH. This is appropriate in this context as his role as host is to encourage the guests to speak. It would also be difficult for viewers of the broadcast to follow the interview if the speakers overlapped for a longer period of time.

In this transcript, JH holds the floor for the longest amount of time, perhaps representing her position as the protest’s main Sydney organiser. As she is one of the interviewees, this ensures that she is able to her to tell her story in detail. The main way that she holds the floor throughout is by using rising pitch or continuing intonation at the end of clauses that might otherwise be interpreted as the end of a turn(for example lines 12, 14, 15, 35, 38, 40, 48).

**Question 5 — sample answer** (3 marks)
**How does JH’s use of syntactic patterning between lines 46 and 54 support the social purpose(s) of the text?**

JH uses antithesis in lines 48 to 51, contrasting the number of participants expected (“we were expecting maybe (.) one thousand five hundred” (line 48)) in last year’s rally to the larger number that turned out (“we got seven thousand” (line 49)). This is then further contrasted with the even larger number in this year’s rally (“we got thirty thousand” (line 51)). By structuring her speech in this way, JH highlights the rapid growth of their cause with a sense of confidence and adds dramatic effect to the statistics. This helps to establish her power and authority and also gives a sense of excitement and momentum to the movement she represents. This is compounded further when she adds that “even across Australia we got one hundred and fifty thousand” (line 52), stating the larger overall number of participants in a parallel structure to the previously mentioned numbers. This further emphasises the strength of the movement and aims to convince viewers that the number of students involved in the strikes was significant and growing; hence, their cause should be taken seriously.

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**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.

Various approaches are acceptable for the analytical commentary – there is no prescribed structure. Students may choose to analyse by subsystem, core themes, social purposes, or a combination of all three approaches. 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.

**Sample response**

Text 2, ‘Thirty years in Melbourne. Thirty years of love’, written by Danny Katz, is written in a register that has both formal and informal language features. As an anecdotal piece discussing Katz’s experiences in Melbourne over the past thirty years, the article has a phatic social purpose, whereby the author pays homage to the city he lives in while also reminiscing about the experiences he and his ‘beloved’ (line 8) have lived in those thirty years. This is achieved humorously with frequent uses of irony, such as with the reference to ‘arriving in style’ (line 11) in Melbourne being modified by the nested prepositional phrase ‘on the back seat of a Firefly all-night coach’; hardly a stylish mode of arrival. Such humour appeals to an Australian audience, particularly a Melbournian one, as it plays upon the tendency for Australians to appreciate dry, self-deprecating humour.

As the piece is published on *The Age* website, Katz adheres to a register that, while mostly informal, still adheres to expectations of language that appears in published newspapers, whether online or in print. For example, standard punctuation has been used predominantly in the text, such as the appropriate use of commas (‘good to me, it’s given me...’ (line 5)), apostrophes marking contractions (‘I’d’ (line 14), ‘we’ve’ (line 44)) and possession (‘worker’s’ (line 31)) as well as the use of standard capitalisation in almost every sentence, including when using proper nouns (‘Caulfield South’ (line 41)). Katz does deviate from these standard language forms, however, which contributes to the informal elements of the register. For example, his use of all-caps on lines 35-37 to mimic the lyrics of a song sung with gusto does reduce the formality. Similarly, Katz frequently employs informal lexical choices throughout the text, such as his use of slang terms ‘numbnut’ (line 21), a jocular insult frequently heard

in Australian discourse in the 1980s and 1990s, and ‘bonk’ (line 48), a euphemistic slang reference to sexual intercourse. Colloquialisms are also frequent, such as the verb ‘chuck’ (line 20) to mean ‘throw’ and the noun ‘kid’ (line 44) instead of ‘child’. This reduced formality, coupled with a conventional writing style that conforms to standard language rules results in a text that is playful while still being appropriate for the context in which it has been delivered.

Katz employs syntactic listing to create a rhythmic, playful tone within the text. For example, when he refers to his partner as a ‘citizen of St Kilda’, he then describes the suburb with the listing of adjectives ‘hippie-dippy, happy- scrappy, grungy-scungy’ (line 10). This list of creative reduplications with the same syllabic structure creates a phonologically rhythmic description of St Kilda that is quite evocative; readers can infer that the citizens of St Kilda, including his partner, are just as ‘hippie-dippy’ as the suburb itself. Thus, when he uses the same technique

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to describe his own daughter as a ‘dippy-hippy, happy-scrappy, scungy-grungy daughter’ (lines 32-33), readers can also infer that his daughter has followed her mother’s footsteps in relation to her personality and character, as a ‘St Kildan baby’. These pre-modified descriptive noun phrases as used by Katz contribute to a social purpose of entertaining, as many Melbournians would agree with such descriptions of St Kilda and its residents.

Adjectives and adjectival phrases are used in the text to draw attention to Katz’s down-at-heel ways. For example, ‘all’ he possessed when he moved was a ‘portable black and white TV with a rusty coathanger aerial’ (lines 14- 15), where the adjectives ‘portable’, ‘black and white’ and ‘rusty’ all connote poor quality, cheap products that are years out of date. With these adjectival descriptions, Katz presents himself as someone short on cash and down on his luck, stooping so low as to steal ‘a plaster bust of Beethoven’ off his flatmate ‘because he owed me money and it was the only thing he had worth stealing’ (lines 16-17). Intended primarily for humorous effect, this playful use of language also creates a solidarity between Katz and his egalitarian readers.

Katz utilises personification in order to make his text more lively. Throughout his piece he refers to Melbourne as if it is a living person, such as the comment that Melbourne had ‘been good’ (line 5) to him, where the colloquial adverb ‘good’ refers to Melbourne having treated him well over the past thirty years. Similarly, he refers to Melbourne as having ‘given’ (line 5) him things, an action normally requiring sentience. This personification is further reinforced by the use of parallelism on line 8, where the prepositional phrases ‘with Melbourne’ and ‘with my beloved’ have structurally parallel placement in the main and subordinate clauses in which they are contained (‘I fell in love... I fell in love...’ (line 8)). Katz’s use of personification makes Melbourne come alive in the readers’ minds, which in turn creates an engaging text.

Throughout his piece, Katz applies morphological patterns to support his purpose of engaging his readers and thus reducing social distance. He frequently employs hyphenation in his creative word formation, such as with ‘round- the-table poppyseed-teeth-checks’ (line 25) to describe the actions of ‘old Jewish men’ who ‘argue about politics’ (line 24). This creative word formation allows him to concisely describe how these men, who had ‘schlepped off to Balaclava’ (a Yiddish borrowing closely tied to Jewish identity (line 40)), pass the time, without needing to

go into unnecessary detail. This is particularly important as he is providing the description within a parenthetical aside (‘stopping every 10 minutes ...’ (lines 24-25)); lengthier descriptions would detract from the core message of his piece, his love for Melbourne and his partner. Katz also uses creative word formation through affixation, such as on line 48 with ‘Love-iversary’ and ‘Bonk-iversary’. These creative words are presented in parallel as a humorous acknowledgement of his 30th anniversary with his partner.

Syntactic features of the text help to create an evocative description of some suburbs of Melbourne, such as when Katz describes Caulfield South between lines 41 and 43. The use of listing and parallelism in ‘a suburb filled with pharmacies and florists and funeral parlours ... pick up your prescription, buy a floral wreath, and drop down dead’, coupled with the alliteration of the /f/ phoneme in ‘pharmacies’, ‘florists’ and ‘funeral’ and the /p/ phoneme in ‘pick’ and ‘prescription’ work together to create a rhythmic description of Caulfield South that allows a reader to infer that while it may be bustling, busy and filled with myriad amenities, these amenities are less than exciting and more suited to the elderly. Caulfield South’s staid reputation is therefore reinforced, increasing readers’ engagement with the text.

Dominant throughout the text is the use of declarative sentences. As Katz’s piece is primarily anecdotal, he is required to present many of his personal experiences as statements of fact. Declaratives such as ‘Melbourne’s been good to me’ (line 5), ‘I knew I’d be staying for good’ (line 14) and ‘We planned a life in St Kilda but the plan never panned out’ (line 38) all demonstrate this. Katz also employs sentence fragments for dramatic effect, particularly in his closing paragraph: ‘Thirty years together. Thirty years in Melbourne. Thirty years of love.’ (line 47). The repetition of the noun phrase ‘thirty years’ in these fragments, when also surrounded by the simple sentence (‘The only thing missing is Tim Allen and a live studio audience’(line 46)) and the complex sentence (‘So I guess it’s our 30th Love-iversary’ (lines 47-48)) allows Katz to make clearer the point of his piece – his long-enduring love for his wife.

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Features of coherence are used not only to provide for a meaningful text, but also to aid Katz’s social purpose. The use of formatting with the all-caps in lines 35-37 ‘OH WHEN THE SAINTS...’ is the textual representation of the prosodic feature of volume. Typically, the lyrics of the club theme songs for AFL teams such as the St Kilda football team are sung with great fervour and high volume, making it ironic that he introduces the song with the noun phrase ‘a gentle traditional lullaby’; cultural inference makes it clear that a football theme song would by
no means be classified as a lullaby. Similarly, Katz uses adverbs such as ‘daintily’ to describe how he avoided ‘smashed beer bottles’ and ‘upright syringes’ during ‘romantic strolls’ between lines 25 and 26 as a form of irony; many Melbournians would understand the irony as St Kilda beach is not known for its cleanliness. These ironic juxtapositions are humorous to the reader.

Much of the text, in fact, relies on cultural knowledge for coherence to be achieved. This can be seen with his mocking mimicry of a car mechanic in the parenthetical aside on lines 20 to 21 ‘Oiii Brayden ... numbnut!’, with the dialogue presenting the persona of a typical uncouth and uncultured Australian, likely speaking with a Broad Australian accent. References to the actions of someone who is middle-class come through with commentary such as arriving ‘on the back seat of a Firefly all-night coach’ (lines 11-12), a cheaper alternative to travelling from Sydney to Melbourne than flying. Age-related cultural references can also be seen when he alludes to the 90s television sitcom *Home Improvement* by referring to ‘Tim Allen and a live studio audience’ on line 46. This allusion would only be understood by those who were regular sitcom watchers during those times. Katz is clearly writing for an audience of middle-class, middle-aged Melbournians with his choice of language features.

As the text is written for online publication, there are features of the text that are standard across many online articles, which also aids coherence. The publication date and time on line 3 is one such example, ‘March 1, 2019 – 11.38pm’. The formatting on line 2 that highlights the author’s name allows a reader to infer that they can click on his name to be taken to a page that either describes who Katz is in more detail, or lists his other publications. On line 4, well-known symbols such as the stylised ‘f’ and the small bird can be inferred by readers to mean the social media sites Facebook and Twitter, respectively, while the symbol of an envelope is understood to mean email. Conventionally, these would also be clickable links that readers could select to share the article with others. These symbols are repeated at the end of the article on line 51, likely for ease of accessibility for readers – they may wish to share the article immediately after reading it, and are more likely to do so if they do not need to scroll back up the page. This repetition is cohesive as it reinforces to the reader that they are encouraged to share the article with others, thus aiding coherence and also helping achieve a secondary social purpose in this context: to increase readership of the article itself.

Also aiding coherence is the use of increasing font sizes immediately to the right of the symbols on line 4, where there are three instances of the capital letter ‘A’ in increasing sizes. The first capital ‘A’ is the smallest and is black and underlined, whereas the next two increase in size. Readers can infer that the size of the font can be increased by selecting either of the two letter ‘As’ and that the current font size is the smallest. This is also a convention on many websites that require readers to read a lot of text.

Finally, bolded fonts are used strategically in the text in both the opening and the closing. The title of the article, ‘Thirty years in Melbourne. Thirty years of love’, on line 1, is bolded so that the fragmented sentences stand
out as setting the topic of the piece; at a minimum, readers are immediately aware that Katz will be discussing Melbourne across time. On line 50, the bolding of the declarative ‘Danny Katz is a regular columnist’ stands out almost as a concluding statement for the piece itself. As the style of Katz’s writing is somewhat conversational, the bolded statement makes it clear to all readers that his piece has concluded.