

**YEAR 12 *Trial Exam Paper***

**2015**

**ENGLISH**

**Written examination**

*Sample responses to Section C  
with assessor comments*

**This book contains:**

- three graded sample responses for Section C
- annotated assessor comments for each response including mark range, understanding of ideas, analysis of language and visual features, and awareness and control of language

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## SECTION C – Analysis of language use

How is written and visual language used in the blog post and the comment to attempt to persuade readers to share the points of view presented in them?

### SAMPLE RESPONSES

#### High-range response (Mark range: 8–10)

Olivia Oakley’s blog post ‘Is one too many?’ advocates for the introduction of women-only train carriages on Victorian trains. She appeals to her reader’s sense of community values and the commonly held belief that everyone deserves to feel safe by asserting that all women feel some form of threat from men. The piece uses frequent repetition to reinforce the sense of danger, and forceful figurative language to emphasise the seriousness of the issue. Her primary argument, however, is that the level of threat to women is irrelevant; she argues that we should act simply because women perceive a threat. In contrast, Dan from Croydon’s comment ‘Safety in Numbers’ suggests that Oakley is overreacting and that gender segregation will make the perceived threat even worse. His response is written to position him as a rational person whose direct and clear language appeals to readers’ common sense by reminding them that the presence of men in a carriage could help to keep women safe. **(1)**

Oakley creates the perception that there is a significant division between the genders. She begins with a direct address: ‘Men: have you ever noticed’, which both grabs attention and sets up the idea that men do not understand how women think. This is intended to make men curious, as the language is quite confrontational, yet by asking a question Oakley gives the impression of inviting men into a dialogue. **(2)** It also creates a sense of unity among women, as though Oakley is speaking to all men on their behalf. To further this division, **(3)** Oakley uses quite militaristic language to describe the ‘display of dominance’ that puts women in the ‘firing line’ of ‘misogyny missiles’. **(4)** Women are portrayed as feeling under attack from ‘regular leering, grabbing and catcalling’, and we are repeatedly told that they just ‘want to feel safe’. This is presented as a reasonable and simple request in the face of what Oakley makes seem like a daily, relentless threat. This sense of ‘combat’ is intended to make female readers feel that they have something to fear, and make male readers feel anxious that they may unintentionally be intimidating women. **(5)** This language also positions Oakley’s readers, those interested in ‘social issues’, to not want to be one of the ill-mannered and thoughtless ‘vocal objectors’ who are too ‘quick to tell you’ how bad the idea is.

Oakley repeatedly asserts her understanding of the ‘great arguments’ against her view before dismissing them without explanation and restating that women’s fear on public transport ‘might not seem rational, but it’s real’. These repeated assertions make Oakley appear both informed and steadfast in her view, giving the impression that opposing views are tedious and irrelevant because they have already been examined and shown to be deficient. **(6)** She rejects opposing viewpoints in more forceful language, describing those who don’t recognise the problem as ignorant (‘head-in-the-sand’) or even as insensitive to others (‘thoughtless “manspread” as a display of dominance’). Readers are positioned to see Oakley’s point of view as balanced and level-headed, in contrast to the repetitive and self-interested attitudes of those who would disagree with her.

Throughout the article, Oakley uses the repetition of individual words to reinforce the idea that hers is the only solution. **(7)** She repeats ‘I know ...’ before listing each argument against the proposal, leaving no room for readers to think it might be a legitimate argument. This repetition strongly suggests that her opponents are insensitive to the feelings of crime victims, reminding readers that

the effects of one seemingly insignificant thing — ‘one leer’ or ‘one guy, one journey, one woman, one time’ — can be devastating.

Oakley’s amusing colloquial phrases and examples, such as ‘For those playing at home’ and ‘manspread’, help to keep the tone conversational and accessible and soften the sometimes forceful tone of her argument. **(8)** This is intended to make her seem personable, balanced and easy-going, and therefore to lead readers to feel more inclined to accept her viewpoint. This tone also works with her assertion that her argument is not a ‘man-hating thing’ and that ‘men are lovely, generally speaking’ to position readers to see her as fair-minded and inclusive despite what she is arguing.

The graphics and statistical information highlight gender divisions and give additional validity to the sense of fear Oakley describes. The large icon of a lone woman with a capitalised heading ‘WOMEN ONLY’, accompanied by a much smaller image of a crossed out man, conveys the idea that this is a ‘women’s issue’ only. The graphic does two things: it accentuates the visibility and vulnerability of a lone woman and it marginalises men by visually rendering them insignificant. **(9)** The table of recent transport crime figures from Victoria Police gives credibility to Oakley’s claim that there is something to fear as it makes the probability of experiencing violence seem alarmingly high. Oakley accentuates this with the rhetorical question: ‘And who hasn’t had their car broken into at one time or another?’ implying that experiencing violence on public transport is just as inevitable. **(10)**

While Dan from Croydon takes the opposing view to Oakley, he uses a number of similar language techniques. **(11)** He appeals to readers’ sense of justice, implying that they should not immediately consider men a threat, quoting Oakley’s description of ‘the vast majority of men’; he uses repetition of both Oakley’s and his own key ideas to assert that men can ‘make it safe’ on trains; he maintains a conversational tone and appeals to our community values by suggesting a ‘healthier’ approach to the issue. He also presents himself as calm and socially responsible. By directly addressing Oakley and mimicking her assertive and at times sarcastic tone with his ‘motto to live by’, he establishes his own approachability: ‘please just ask’ and ‘inadvertently’. This positions readers to see him as more approachable and reasonable than Oakley, and suggests that she is irrationally misinterpreting not just the ‘manspread’ but a whole range of men’s actions. **(12)**

Both Olivia Oakley and Dan from Croydon use similar language techniques in order to convince their readers – even though their arguments are completely conflicting. They both try to appeal to our sense justice in a style that is conversational and witty on the surface but has an underlying assertive and biting tone. Both writers construct their arguments to make their viewpoints seem the obvious solution to the problem and discount their opposition as ridiculous. **(13)**

**General assessor comments for high-range response**

- (1). This introduction provides an effective overview of each writer's main argument and a brief explanation of the way in which their main persuasive techniques are used. It also offers a brief insight into the main similarities/differences.
- (2). Pointing out the subtle and multi-layered ways in which some of the techniques in this article work not only shows a good understanding of how individual language techniques work, but it demonstrates an understanding of how a single phrase or technique can be used to position a reader on a number of levels.
- (3). Often writers will use different techniques at different times in an article to build on an impression that they are trying to create. Pinpointing and explaining the effects of these connected techniques shows that the student is thinking about the ways in which the whole article is constructed.
- (4). This smoothly integrates short and to-the-point quotes into the sentence as evidence.
- (5). This discusses the impact of the language on the different sections of the audience. This shows a good understanding that the ways in which an argument is presented can affect different people in different ways.
- (6). This is an interesting and well-layered discussion of how the repetition of assertions works that avoids the easy trap of countering the assertion rather than explaining the effects it has on readers.
- (7). The student has considered the way that a technique, in this case repetition, can be used in different ways and with varying degrees of subtlety throughout a piece of writing.
- (8). This sentence provides a good overview of how tone is used and how it is created through other techniques.
- (9). This shows sophisticated consideration of the visual icon, what it represents and how this ties in to the argument.
- (10). The table is tied to the persuasive techniques very well, particularly explaining the way in which readers bring their own experience to an issue.

- (11).** When there are two articles, it is vital to address both. This opening provides a brief comparison between the techniques and points of view expressed in each article and their similarities and differences as a transition.
- (12).** This discussion of how the second writer responds to and uses the techniques of the first writer shows a strong understanding of the context for the comment, and of the persuasive techniques each writer is using.
- (13).** This is a short conclusion, but the previous paragraph also works to draw the discussion to an end by comparing the effects of each article.

***Understanding of the ideas and points of view presented***

The student's response shows a strong understanding of the writers' main ideas and the way in which the writers combine a range of techniques to present their point of view. It also shows a strong sense of the more subtle aspects of both writers' language use, including the way in which they take context, tone and the different segments of their audience into account in constructing their arguments.

***Analysis of ways in which language and visual features are used to present a point of view and to persuade readers***

The student provides a strong analysis of both language and images. They explain how persuasive devices work together to persuade readers and to develop an overall argument and viewpoint. There is also a strong sense of how the use of techniques changes throughout the longer piece, and how the comment draws on the techniques of the longer opinion piece.

***Controlled and effective use of language appropriate to the task***

Sentences are varied and well constructed; punctuation is also varied to give clarity and precision. The writing is fluent and paragraphing is used effectively to identify various elements for discussion. Some metalanguage is used (e.g. 'colloquial phrases', 'rhetorical question') but the student avoids simple listing or identification of techniques.

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### Mid-range response (Mark range: 5–7)

Olivia Oakley in her blog post ‘Is one too many?’ argues that there should be women-only train carriages on Victorian trains. Using a mostly conversational tone but also sometimes being very critical of male behaviour, Oakley stresses the fear that women experience on trains. **(1)** She uses a range of language techniques, including appeals to authority, rhetorical questions, repetition, statistical evidence and emotive language, to try to convince the reader to agree with her. In his online comment, Dan from Croydon is serious and formal in stating his opposing viewpoint. His language sometimes mocks Oakley in order to cast doubt on her viewpoint and make the reader feel that a combination of men and women on carriages is the best for all. **(2)**

Oakley engages both male and female readers from the start. She addresses her question to male readers, so they feel included in the issue. Women are also included through the reference to ‘all women who step onto a train or bus. Inclusive language in ‘we need women-only carriages’ also makes all readers feel the issue relates to them. **(3)** ‘We all want to feel safe’ combines writer and readers in a shared desire for safety and also appeals to community values. Rhetorical questions such as the final ‘It’s not too much to ask, is it?’ also make the reader reflect on the issue and to answer by agreeing with the writer. **(4)**

On the other hand, Oakley describes a big gap and even conflict between men and women. ‘We’re assessing whether you’re a threat’ suggests it’s an ‘us-versus-them’ situation. **(5)** The idea of such a big difference between men and women makes the idea of women-only carriages seem more logical and easier to accept. The difference sometimes sounds like outright war in phrases like ‘combat’ and ‘firing line’. Oakley gives the reader the feeling of how frightening it can be for a woman to be on a train with men.

Feelings of fear are increased by strongly negative emotive language such as ‘downright scary boozy bucks night’, ‘leering, grabbing and catcalling’ and ‘appallingly high and/or rising numbers of women experiencing sexual assault’. The statistics quoted make these feelings of fear seem legitimate and based on the real likelihood of something bad happening to female passengers. Presenting them in a table also creates the appearance of a report, adding to the sense of objectivity. Appeals to authority figures and organisations, such as Claire Perry in the UK and the NSW public transport union, also give more weight to the issue. These suggest that because this issue has been considered seriously in other states and overseas it is also worth serious consideration in Victoria, bolstering Oakley’s argument. **(6)**

The graphic supports Oakley’s argument that there is a clear division between men and women. It also places women, especially single women, front and centre of the reader’s attention because the figure of the single woman is much larger than the figure of the man, which also has a cross through it. **(7)** The words ‘WOMEN ONLY’ in large capital letters as well as the two figures send a firm message to both men and women, that in this carriage men are excluded and women are in charge. The image would appeal especially to female readers who see men as a threat, as it will help them to imagine seeing this sign on a train and feeling safe in this carriage. **(8)**

In his comment, Dan of Croydon uses strong language and a firm tone to reject Oakley’s argument. He uses sarcasm in ‘for future reference’ and ‘I am, after all, “lovely”’ to dismiss her viewpoint and make her feelings of fear seem trivial. **(9)** He uses her own words to present men in a more positive way, which undermines her argument. Dan’s comment encourages the reader to see Oakley’s solution as an over-reaction and as possibly even making things worse. His firm tone conveys confidence and certainty, which also help to sway the reader. Both writers clearly state their beliefs and combine reason and strong feeling to try to persuade the reader to agree with their views. **(10)**



### General assessor comments for mid-range response

- (1). The introduction begins with a clear statement of the writer's point of view. The broader issue could be explained in more detail to show understanding of the wider ideas.
- (2). The comment is also addressed in the introduction, which effectively sets up the discussion.
- (3). The discussion of ways in which the reader is made to feel included is clear and supported by well-chosen quotations. The analysis would be improved here by explaining how this strategy helps to persuade the reader to agree with the writer's viewpoint.
- (4). The discussion continues to focus on how language is working, while not going into much depth. Each of the quotations in this paragraph could have been further explored with another sentence or two.
- (5). An effective quotation and good observations of how this positions the reader.
- (6). This paragraph contains much good material for analysis and some effective discussion, without going quite far enough. It veers towards a simple listing of techniques or strategies without clearly explaining how the reader might be persuaded. Phrases such as 'bolstering Oakley's argument' are more effective when followed by explanation of *how* the argument is bolstered.
- (7). Understanding of the use of visual language (a requirement of the task) is demonstrated through a brief discussion of the graphic, and also the reference in the previous paragraph to the table giving the appearance of a report. The observations regarding the relative sizes of the figures, the line through the male figure and the use of large capital letters are all effective.
- (8). The final sentence links the discussion of the image with the likely effect on readers.
- (9). The online comment is discussed briefly, in line with the task requirement. The impact of language choices on the reader could have been more fully explored, although the discussion is sound and shows an appreciation of the effects of language on a reader.
- (10). The final sentence concludes the discussion; it is rather general and more detail and precision would have made it a more effective conclusion.

***Understanding of the ideas and points of view presented***

This response shows a good understanding of the ideas and viewpoints in the blog post. The writer has grasped the central importance of fear in the writer's argument, as well as the underlying factors that give rise to this fear. The discussion of the ideas in the online comment is more superficial, but still sound.

***Analysis of ways in which language and visual features are used to present a point of view and to persuade readers***

Although there is a sustained focus on language features in this discussion, the writer does not always go further and clearly explain how language is being used to persuade the reader to agree. The effects of various words and phrases, as well as of the visual elements, are considered, but these are not often linked strongly back to the writer's point of view or their persuasive intention. The analysis is clear and logical; it just lacks the depth and insight of a high-range response. At times the discussion veers towards a listing of techniques without engaging in an analysis of how they are impacting on the reader, or how they might be working together.

***Controlled and effective use of language appropriate to the task***

This response shows a good control of language, with well-constructed sentences and paragraphs. A wider vocabulary might have enabled more precision in the analysis; phrases such as 'best for all' and 'something bad happening' are too vague and general.

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**Low-range response (Mark range: 3–4)**

The article 'Is one too many?' was published on a blog and it argues how men should be banned from some parts of trains to keep women safe when they travel. **(1)** It is highly emotional and uses anecdotes, inclusive language, appeal to fear, appeal to justice, attacks against men, inclusive language, evidence, repetition, rhetorical questions and exaggeration. **(2)** She also uses tone to make us believe her opinion and show that she is not uptight. **(3)** The comment 'Safety in Numbers' by Dan from Croydon argues that men always keep women safe on trains.

The first technique in the article is anecdotes. An example of this is 'Men: have you ever noticed as your train or bus pulls in to a stop and the doors slide open that the women who step on board all do the very same thing? It's subtle, but if you watch for the pattern it's there. They step in, pause and make a split-second assessment.' **(4)** She makes men feel bad by the way she starts the story 'Men' so that they know they are the problem. Also, by stating that 'I know because I do it myself' shows that she is a very open and honest person but she is also afraid of men. This is inclusive language and is supposed to prove that all men need to wake up to what is going on around them, but it is sexist to say that no men are aware of how women feel on trains and that all women are just scared all the time which isn't true. **(5) (6)**

The second main technique is evidence. Examples of this are 'They already operate in a range of countries: India, Brazil, Indonesia, Thailand and Japan', '21% increase in reports of sex offences' and the use of the table about crime. These make it sound like lots of other countries have the carriages and that there is lots of sex crimes but the thing she doesn't point out is that Australia isn't like any of those places. The table also doesn't say how many of the assaults were against women or how many of them were sex assaults so it doesn't really help her argument that much. **(7)**

The main technique in this article is appeal to fear. She constantly talks about how she is scared and that other women are scared. Examples of this include: 'I've felt 100% safe on public transport', **(8)** 'intimidation of women on public transport takes all kinds of forms' and 'And there it is again: the fear'. By doing this all through the article she is trying to scare other women. She is also trying to make it seem like men behave in a sexist way even if they don't mean too. Her repeating of the technique of appeal to fear and the technique of repetition is also effective. **(9)**

Dan from Croydon's comment about Oakley's article is totally different in how it uses language. He uses polite and calm tone to show that not all men are sex criminals and that Oakley is just afraid of things she shouldn't be. He seems like he is being very reasonable about the issue as well as quoting her argument back at her and pointing out why she doesn't have anything to be scared of. He says things like 'Please just ask me' and 'I'll happily oblige' to show that he is not a bad person and to point out that Oakley doesn't have any reason to be afraid and so her whole argument is wrong. **(10)**

I think that Dan from Croydon is more persuasive. Unlike Oakley, he isn't sexist and points out the truth that having women-only carriages won't fix anything. **(11)**

### General assessor comments for low-range response

- (1). The description of the contention here does not accurately describe what Oakley is arguing. It's always important to pay close attention to the more subtle aspects of an argument. She isn't arguing women would *be* safer, she's arguing they would *feel* safer. Dan's contention is not accurately described either.
- (2). Students should avoid just including a long list of all the techniques. The articles students will be given for this part of the assessment will use many different techniques; their task is to analyse how language and visuals are used in an article to persuade a reader, not to find and list every single technique in an article.
- (3). Students should always be as specific as possible about tone: describe what kind and why it might have been used. Explain how this positions readers (or helps to set up our point of view) if she is a relaxed kind of person. Why might a writer who is arguing for women-only carriages want us to think she is friendly and relaxed about the issue?
- (4). This is a very long quote; short, precise quotes as examples of techniques are more effective. If students are referring to a longer passage, such as an anecdote, they can just refer to it as 'an anecdote about what women do when they board a train'.
- (5). The structure of the essay is not always clear and is very repetitive. For example the topic sentence of this paragraph doesn't really relate to everything in the paragraph. Almost every paragraph starts in exactly the same way.
- (6). This point is engaging with the argument and not the language. Instead, try to explain how the writer might have intended the language to work – it's hard, but students have to put their own opinions aside. The language here also needs a little work: to say '... is supposed to persuade us that all men need to *wake up to what is going on around them*, but it is not effective *because it is sexist to say that ...*' is too casual for an analytical essay.
- (7). This paragraph falls into a common trap. The student engages with the argument and not the way the language works. Instead, explain how the examples are supposed to make readers think or feel a particular way. This essay starts to do this by pointing out that the evidence provided makes it sound like lots of countries do have these women-only carriages, but then it argues against the evidence rather than explaining why it has been included by the writer. Students should also be careful when talking about evidence. The second example given here is not a statistic used to support why we need the carriages in Australia.
- (8). Students should be as precise as they can with their language. When preparing for this task, learn some interesting and clear vocabulary and practise how to use the language technique terminology effectively. Students should also work on varying their sentence length so that their writing is more interesting and easier to read. This includes being precise with quotes too; only one word has been accidentally left out of this quote but it changes the meaning entirely.

- (9).** It is important not to forget the last part of the analysis: *what* is the writer saying, *how* are they saying it and *why* is it persuasive (what it is supposed to make the reader think or feel).
- (10).** The point about using a polite and calm tone is a good thing to highlight, but students need to explain why using such calm and cool language helps to make Dan persuasive. Also look for shifts in tone, or tone that might be very polite on the surface but is actually quite critical. This paragraph selects some useful quotes but does not explain how the language and structure helps to position us as readers.
- (11).** The conclusion does not really conclude the piece. Give a summary of the main similarities and differences or explain why Dan might be more effective. Students should not engage with the argument!

***Understanding of the ideas and points of view presented***

The student shows a limited understanding of the ideas and points of view presented. Some ideas are misrepresented. At times particular points or examples are described without the larger idea or argument being grasped. There is little evidence to suggest the student has understood the layers of argument that are presented.

Some of the basic factual information, such as statistical evidence, is misinterpreted.

***Analysis of ways in which language and visual features are used to present a point of view and to persuade readers***

The discussion is overly descriptive and rarely considers ways in which language and images are used to persuade and at times misrepresents how language devices are used. Sometimes the student shows a basic understanding of language features and attempts to discuss how the reader is being positioned to respond in particular ways, but these are not clearly identified or explained.

The readership and their likely preconceptions and feelings about the issue are not addressed, nor is the importance of the background information taken into account by acknowledging the form and audience of the article.

The student engages with the writers' arguments on several occasions, rather than the ways the arguments are presented.

Some of the persuasive techniques discussed are only minor features of the article, whereas some of the more significant ways of positioning a reader (such as appeals to justice) are not addressed except in the list in the introduction.

The student doesn't acknowledge the supporting table or the image.

Students should also note from this sample that writing a lot does not mean a higher grade. (This response is approximately 620 words.) Writing of this quality, that doesn't meet the criteria, can't be awarded marks.

***Controlled and effective use of language appropriate to the task***

While the student's language is relatively clear, it lacks the variety of vocabulary, precise use of analytical terms and fluency we would expect of a good response. The language is too casual ('show she is not uptight', 'and so her whole argument is wrong', 'not all men are sex criminals').

The paragraphs are repetitive, both in terms of structure and the language used. Appropriate connectors could be used more frequently to join ideas and show the connections between ideas. A range of spelling and grammatical errors recur throughout the piece.

**END OF SAMPLE RESPONSES**