VCE ENGLISH LANGUAGE

2017 Units 3&4 Practice Paper 1

ANSWER GUIDE

Section A – Short Answer Questions
Text 1 (15 marks)

1. What are the social purposes of Text 1? Provide examples with line numbers.   3 marks
The text is written to help publicise and promote the new Health Star rating which "provides a simple way to compare similar packaged foods" (line 2) and to inform the public about how it works, e.g. "the more stars, the healthier the choice. Simple" (line 5). The text encourages people to use the rating system to help them buy and eat nutritious healthy food e.g. "improving our health can start with the choices we make in the shopping aisles" (lines 11-12).

2. Discuss the effect of the format of the text.   2 marks
The format of the text is designed to add to its coherence, presenting information using visual and verbal language. The pictures and photos illustrate the content being discussed, supporting the informative function, and make the document more appealing and eye-catching. The bolded headings in larger font break up the text into clear sections and allow readers to easily navigate their way to most relevant parts.

3. Identify two different modal verbs in Text 1 and explain their function.   2 marks

Modal verbs
Can (lines 11, 13, 25 ..)
Should (line 15.)
May ((line 23)

"Can" has low modality and suggest that it is a possibility.

"should has low modality and suggests a low level of obligation

"may" has low modality and suggests low level of obligation

These low modality auxiliaries reflect the non imperative style of the text. It aims to educate rather than direct consumers.

4. Identify two of the following language features in Text 1 and explain their functions.   4 marks

      i.   passive clause construction with agent
      ii.   two different comparatives
      iii.   clefting

i Passive clause construction with agent
Lines 6-7 "The Health Star rating system was developed by … and consumer groups."

By indicating who the agents are, the text aims to give credibility and authority to the initiative by showing that it has comprehensive support from powerful interests such as governments, "the industry, public health and consumer groups".

Lines 9-10 "it is being gradually introduced… over 5 years."
This statement acknowledges the food industry's role in introducing the new rating.

Ii Two different comparatives
Line 5, "more"
Line 5, "healthier"

The initiative is designed to help consumers compare the nutritional values of similar packaged foods and these words express these comparisons.

Iii Clefting
lines 8-9 "It is a voluntary front of pack labelling scheme that scores…foods."
The cleft structure results in two clauses "It is a voluntary front of pack labelling scheme" and "that…foods." and all of the meaningful content is placed in the 'new information' position, and thus given end focus.

5. Analyse how lexical choices establish one of the semantic fields in Text 1. Provide 3 examples.

4 marks

The semantic field of nutrition/health is established through the use of lexical items that are commonly used in everyday discourse, but which are slightly technical, e.g., "energy" (line 17), "kilojoules" (line 17), "nutrients" (line 18). This is in keeping with the social purpose of informing the general public about this program directed at improving the health of the community, in a way that is accessible and comprehensible.

The medical domain includes words such as: "obesity and chronic disease… cardiovascular disease and …diabetes" lines 18 - 19. These are all fairly commonly used terms but only in relation to medical issues, so they are only slightly technical. This is in keeping with the social purpose of informing the general public about this program in a way that is accessible and comprehensible.

Section B — Analytical Commentary
Text 2 (30 marks)

The conversation between J and D reinforces their friendship by enabling them to chat about a topic of mutual interest. They are relaxed and enjoying each other's company, so the social purpose is to maintain their relationship and to pass some time together.

The setting is private and casual, i.e., J's home, which is no doubt familiar to them both as they are friends. They are attentive to each other's positive face, reinforcing what the other speaker says. J begins by prompting D with a recap on what he has previously said and slowly repeating the start of the story, "Your

old man had a sparrow, rescued a baby sparrow down the street" (lines 3-4) in order to get him to continue. Omission of the subject "your old man" allows J to succinctly summarise what she already knows. J repeatedly encourages D by asking questions that indicate her interest in what he is saying, e.g., "How did he feed it?" line 10. D seems reluctant at the start, e.g., the silence in line 2, and this may indicate that J is threatening his negative face by insisting that he tell her about Sparrer. However, D responds to J's questions and then volunteers further information without being asked, e.g., line 34: "I know how it got killed too". In this way he affirms J's positive face by showing that he is happy to participate in the interaction with her.

The pauses in lines 19-20 show that D is considering his responses, while the silences in lines 56 and 79 indicate the speakers are comfortable with each other and are thinking about what to say next. In each instance, the silence is followed by a topic shift that extends the conversation while remaining in the same general topic area, e.g., line 57 "We know someone who had a baby lamb", and line 80 "I always clap all my dogs". J's intonation shows enthusiasm for what D says, with exclamations in lines 16, 21 and 76, reinforcing that she is fully engaged in the conversation. Her sharp intake of breath (line 41) and sympathetic vocal effects "n=o" (line 14) and "o=h" (line 45) further indicate that she is emotionally affected by D's story. The speakers share laughter in a companionable way, e.g., lines 60, 66, 72. There is overlap when J is eager to get more information from D (lines 9-10), when she interrupts what he is saying with a minimal response "oh wow" (line 26) and again in lines 32-33, when D has not finished speaking. These overlaps are not conflictual; their function is to keep the conversation going. Between lines 6-49 J uses questioning intonation nine times to encourage D to tell her more. He responds by repeating the question (line 47), which functions to give him thinking time, or with the information requested by J, e.g., lines 9, 11, 14 etc. The turn taking is quite orderly aside from the few overlaps mentioned, with the interlocutors forming adjacency pairs throughout the interaction.

D is the speaker with the greater authority in the interaction, since he is the one who can tell the story about Sparrer, and also because he knows about training dogs, which he describes in lines 80-91. J does not question his authority, accepting what he says with reinforcing comments such as "It's a good way to train a dog I suppose" (line 89). However, each speaker has a turn at directing the topic. J establishes the topic in lines 1-4, then shifts it in line 57 to talk about amusing names for animals. D shifts the topic in lines 34 to talk about butcher birds, and in line 80 when he introduces the idea of training dogs.

D's lexicon and pronunciation are at times non-standard English and reflect his Australian identity, e.g., "bloke" (lines 55, 64), and Broad pronunciation of words such as "Sparrer" (lines 48, 50), "dunno" (line 30). Non-standard grammar includes omission of the adverbial suffix 'ly' e.g., "real good ring" (line 75), "real quick" (line 90) and non-standard pronouns, e.g., "them butcher birds" (lines 38, 42). In line 42 the right dislocation of "them butcher birds" illustrates the spontaneous nature of D's speech, where the information does not come out in the expected order. J's style is more General, except for two Australianisms "racka" (line 54) and "softie" (line 58).

The register of the interaction is casual. The speakers use non-standard forms of grammar, pronunciation and lexicon, and they interact in a familiar, friendly, relaxed manner. The overlaps do not disrupt the conversation flow and function to support and maintain the relationship between the speakers. The mutual laughter further reinforces the friendly, informal register of the conversation.

Section C – Essay
(30 Marks)

7. The changes to language use as a result of social media will not last."
Discuss.

The topic provides students with an opportunity to discuss the nature and features of language change due to the spread of social media and online communication more generally.

Stimulus a suggests that a particular form of etiquette is now required when emailing, if the writer wishes to achieve a successful outcome. Signing off on an email is different from the traditional letter.

Stimulus b shows examples of how spelling has changed due to the influence of online communication. These phonetic representations of syllables, as well as initialisms and acronyms are widely understood and used, not only in writing but also in spoken language.

Stimulus c provides statistics to show how widespread the use of social media is, supporting the idea that people rely on this for social interaction. Social media language takes a variety of forms, from writing to photographs and other images, to the sort of abbreviated language as illustrated in stimulus b.

Stimulus d asserts that individuals are more likely to disclose personal information about themselves, often to unknown others, when interacting online. The research suggests that this tendency is not found in face-to-face conversations.

Students could include discussion about the following:

Social media enable individuals to construct written texts, sometimes jointly, that also incorporate visual language

Social media provide access to interaction with a vast range of interlocutors with multiple ethnicities who use a variety of Englishes.

Individuals connect on social media in ways they may not otherwise be able to do. One example is a journalist who has been able to develop a virtual friendship group for times when she is alone on assignment in a foreign location. She reports that the support and fellowship she experiences through the interaction she has with the others in the group.

Use of Twitter to announce important events and decisions instead of via more traditional channels, e.g., President Trump's predilection for tweeting news of his policy decisions (firing his Press Secretary) or for commenting on global issues (criticism of Germany's approach to accepting refugees).

Critics of social media say that there is too much talking and not enough listening on social media, citing examples of shouting matches rather than debates.

Trolling is a serious issue, sometimes with dire consequences such as suicide. This sort of language, abusive, threatening, provoking, is now commonplace in online contexts. There are regular calls for social media sties

to regulate language and the views expressed, while others say that this is censorship and cannot be allowed.

Generational differences in the adoption of social media – younger groups move on to newer applications as older generations catch up and appropriate forms such as email and Facebook.

Voice recognition technology is developed according to the perceptions users have of the sort of tone, accent, register (the degree of formality or familiarity in the voice) and gender. Developers say that we need computers to relate to us and put us at ease when performing a task.

App developers have to achieve the correct balance for the purpose of the app – e.g., a banking app requires a friendly female voice that is reliable, approachable but not invasive.

Subsystems and other metalanguage that can be referred to using the above points include:

Discourse, spoken and written modes, morphology, lexicon, prestige, standard and non-standard English.

8. Correct language is simply a choice between written and planned or spoken and spontaneous discourse.
Do you agree?

Students should address all aspects of the topic: the modes (spoken and written including online) and the register (planned and spontaneous speech).

Stimulus a suggests that in planned written language there are community expectations about correctness, and that failure to adhere to conventions can be damaging for one's reputation or authority. The candidate offers an alternative view point, asserting that lack of correctness is not a barrier to communication, and that it is more acceptable in current times where writers can rely on spelling programs for help.

Stimulus b explores the idea that spontaneous speech has conventions that are, in some respects, planned. Greetings and conversational openings are formulaic but allow interlocutors to establish a connection before moving into more spontaneous, unscripted interactions. Critics of small talk fail to understand its important social role.

Stimulus c makes a link between having an extensive vocabulary and language repertoire that can be drawn upon in both formal and informal situations to facilitate successful communication with a range of other people. The example provided is in the business environment, where being able to communicate with specialists as well as the general public is equally important.

Stimulus d provides an example of how in some instances spontaneous speech can have unintended consequences if the speaker does not adhere to expectations of politeness or take account of face needs.

Students could include discussion about the following:

Correctness is a highly subjective concept, which descriptivists argue is outdated and not helpful in understanding how human communication works.

There is a continuum from formal to informal language, and each situation determines what is appropriate, given the social purposes and the participants.

Written language is not the same as spoken, except in formal or scripted situations, such as making a speech or giving a eulogy.

Critics, such as prescriptivists, deplore the informalisation of language but this is a process that cannot be halted or reversed.

The non-fluency features of spontaneous spoken language are integral to successful communication, and should not be seen as evidence of poor language skills.

Discourse particles such as 'like' are acceptable and desirable in speech because they facilitate conversation. They are generally less acceptable in written language.

Written language increasingly contains speech-like features, and this is particularly true in e-communication and jointly constructed digital texts which share many features with spoken conversation.

Understanding context is crucial for determining what is appropriate and acceptable. In that sense, language 'correctness' can be understood.

Subsystems and other metalanguage that can be referred to using the above points include:
Audience, social purpose, context, discourse, lexicon, mode, politeness, face, standard English, register, style, prescriptivism/descriptivism.

9. "You can't judge me on what I say and write, or how I express myself."
Discuss.

The topic covers aspects of identity, language, public discourse, free speech and face. Students should aim to discuss how language and identity are inextricably linked. When used effectively it can enhance a person's reputation, while language that transgresses social expectations and norms can reflect poorly on an individual's identity. This is true for both spoken and written language.

Stimulus a illustrates how perceptions of a public figure are largely determined by that individual's ability to communicate appropriately in a given context. The writer in this extract praises the impressive range of registers that Nicola Sturgeon is able to access, and comments on how positively she is regarded and how effective a politician she is, at least in the view of the writer.

Stimulus b states that people who have a good vocabulary are in a good position to impress others, and to achieve their objectives, using the business domain as an example. This statement supports the idea that one's language reflects on one's identity and reputation.

Stimulus c refers to the episode where President Trump misspelled a word in one of his late night tweets, and the scorn that followed in the public domain when he tried to turn it into a joke or challenge. This extract provides an example of how the misuse of language reflects badly on an individual's reputation, and also how attempting to dismiss such a transgression diminishes that person's standing in the eyes of others.

Stimulus d deals with the issues of inclusive language and the idea that standard English is required to successfully persuade others to agree with a point of view. The writer deplores the use of sexist language, but goes on to suggest that in order to effect change one must adopt a register that appeals to the men ("chairman") in charge. In her view, informal or non-standard language in this context damages the individual's status or reputation.

Students could include discussion about the following:

Public figures, personalities and others in positions of leadership or influence who speak or write using language that is considered unacceptable are condemned and their reputations damaged, e.g., the incident where a coach of a girls football team verbally abused them at a game and was suspended for 14 matches.

Examples of parliamentarians who have spoken in ways that have damaged their reputations or attracted derision and scorn, e.g., Pauline Hanson's statement that Australians needed to be vaccinated against Islam, Barnaby Joyce's response that Hanson is "bat poo crazy".

In 2016 Bill Shorten engaged a speech coach to help him develop a more authoritative style of speaking, because of the public's perception that he did not speak like a leader and was prone to 'zingers'.

The incident in June 2017 in which radio personality Red Symons' interview with a Taiwanese-Canadian radio presenter was found to be racist, attracting a deluge of criticism, forcing Symons to apologise and the ABC to remove the podcast from its website.

There are different perceptions of politeness depending one's cultural background and expectations. Involvement politeness and restraint politeness have been discussed in recent media articles. Knowing how to react and interact in an acceptable manner in a particular context influences other's perceptions.

Subsystems and other metalanguage that can be referred to using the above points include:
Discourse, context, abusive or '–ist' language, face, politeness, standard English, register.