



DELIVERING HIGH QUALITY ENGLISH ORAL PRESENTATIONS

A GUIDE FOR VCE STUDENTS

VCE ENGLISH ORAL PRESENTATIONS

WHEN AND WHAT ARE THEY WORTH?

Year 12, 2019

Unit 3, Area of Study 1: Reading and Creating Texts

30 marks

A creative response to a selected text in written or oral form with a written explanation of decisions made in the writing process and how these demonstrate understanding of the text.
Note: this is an optional oral assessment.

Unit 4, Area of Study 2: Presenting Argument

30 marks
(plus 10 marks for
a written statement
of intention)

Students use their understanding of argument and language as the basis for the development of an oral presentation of their points of view. Students draw on their knowledge to express their viewpoints through arguments and persuasive language selected specifically to position an audience.

Note this change:

The point of view should relate to an issue that has appeared in the media since 1 September of the previous year. This means that your issue does not have to have appeared in the Australian press.

Mark Range

Very high
25 – 30
Thorough and detailed understanding of the issue through the meticulous selection and synthesis of appropriately acknowledged information and evidence used to support particular positions.
Sophisticated and insightful understanding of argument demonstrated through the development of reasoned and convincing arguments that position the audience to support the points of view presented.
Highly persuasive, fluent and coherent oral language that employs the skilful use of appropriate conventions to position an audience.

All assessments at Units 1 and 2 are school-based. Procedures for assessment of levels of achievement in Units 1 and 2 are a matter for school decision.

Unit 1

One assessment task, but no more than one task, in Unit 1 must be in oral or multimodal form.

Reading and Creating Texts

OR

Analysing and Presenting Argument

FINDING A GOOD ORAL PRESENTATION TOPIC

- ✗ Don't start with an issue and then go looking for a newspaper article that has it in it. You will waste a lot of time and it isn't really the point of the exercise.
- ✗ Don't chose something that is so complex that you can't possibly do it justice in a limited amount of time.
- ✓ Find something that you have a strong opinion about (a newspaper article that annoys you is a good starting place. Think about why it annoys you, why you disagree with it and what you think instead.)
- ✓ Get three or four good articles to give you the background information that you need and then start shaping your own ideas. Wider research can come later when you discover that you are looking for a fact or a name to support your speech.
- ✓ Use reliable and easy-to-search websites like:
 - <http://www.abc.net.au/4corners/>
 - <http://www.abc.net.au/foreign/>
 - <http://www.abc.net.au/news/>
 - <http://www.huffingtonpost.com/news/australia/>
- ✓ Use your school library – your school will have a subscription to websites with paywalls and also to sites that catalogue issues to make your research easier.
- ✓ Be able to summarise your opinion in one or two sentences. If you can't, your argument is probably too complex for a short VCE presentation.

RESEARCH FRAMEWORK FOR ORAL PRESENTATION (FLAME)

Issue	
Contention	
	Research Notes
Future (Introduction) How will the issue effect your audience in the future? Make the issue relevant.	
Losers/Winners As it stands, who is winning from the issue? As it stands, who is losing from the issue?	
Answers What is the solution? Moving forward, what should be done about the issue?	
Money How is money influencing the issue? Who has vested interest in it?	
Ethics (Conclusion) How is your answer for the greater good? How is it ethically and morally sound?	

PLANNING YOUR ARGUMENT



Before you start planning your argument, you need to work at gathering your ideas.

You should refer to all of the material that you collected on your issue. It is important to remember that you may use texts other than media texts to support your argument, and that the resources that you use do not have to have been published since September 1 of the previous year.

Gathering your ideas:

The following is a process that you could use to assist you in determining what it is that you want to argue.

1. Re-read all of your resource material.
2. Write a list of all of the different points of view that are presented on this issue.
3. Try to write a statement of your own point of view on the issue.
4. Re-read a sample of articles on your issue, and using two different highlighters, identify arguments that support your position, and arguments that oppose your position.
5. Write your contention at the top of a page. Underneath this draw a table, and write a list of all of the arguments for your position, and all of the arguments against your position. The points that have been listed in the 'For' column will become the arguments supporting your contention, and the points listed in the 'Against' column are the counter arguments that you will need to rebut.
6. Rank the 'For' arguments in order of strength and importance. Each of the first three or four points will become the focus of paragraphs in your essay. Other less important points may be grouped together in one paragraph.

For example, on the topic 'That marijuana should be legalised', some sub arguments deserving of a discussion in a paragraph of their own might be:

- Current penalties are not working.
- Many claim that it is a harmless, non-addictive drug.
- People should not be stigmatised as criminals for such a harmless action as smoking pot.

STRUCTURING YOUR ORAL PRESENTATION

Introduction

- Your introduction has three functions. Firstly, the introduction should outline the issue being argued. Secondly, it should indicate what the main line of argument will be. Thirdly, it should engage and involve the reader.
- An introduction indicates what will be argued. It does not come to a definite conclusion. This is the task of the conclusion. Therefore, an introduction might state that 'It appears that there are many strong reasons as to why marijuana should be legalised...' while a conclusion would say 'Therefore, it is clear that marijuana should be legalised.'

Suggestions:

Open with a hook. For example:

- Tell a captivating story.

Stories draw people in, hold their attention and remind them of their own lives.

- Use a powerful quote.

Use a quote from a well-regarded, well known person as the name allows you to tap into their credibility, notoriety and likeability. Note that the quote must be relevant and have meaning.

- Show a gripping photo.

A compelling photo engages the audience's imagination and makes your message more memorable.

- Play a short video.

Videos evoke emotional responses. They allow you to reel in the audience, add drama, and communicate the point of your message quickly.

- Use a prop or visual aid.

Take a risk – Wear a costume if appropriate or involve a “prepared” audience.

- State a shocking statistic or headline or fact.

Choose something that will persuade the audience to listen and respond positively to what you're about to say.



- Ask a rhetorical, thought provoking question.

Well crafted rhetorical questions get people thinking and influence the audience to believe in the position of the speaker.

- You could also start with a story, a misdirect, a metaphor, a joke or a shocking and provocative statement.

BODY OF THE SPEECH

Explain and substantiate your argument, and use persuasive techniques.

- Paragraph one: This is where the first argument supporting the contention is presented. You could organise the paragraph as follows:
 - (a) Outline argument, and link paragraph to introduction.
 - (b) Explain argument in detail.
 - (c) Give an example to support the point.
 - (d) Consider any possible objections.
 - (e) Conclude with a sentence that leads into the next paragraph.
- Paragraphs two, three and four should be constructed using a similar process.
- The last paragraph of your argument might include a few points that are not strong enough to warrant a paragraph of their own.
- The last paragraph before the conclusion should deal with rebutting the opposing arguments, if this has not been fully done throughout the body of the essay.

For example:

Outline an opposing argument: *“Some people say X”*

Explain why it is incorrect: *“This is wrong because of Y”*

Explain why your approach/position is better: *“A far better approach is Z”*

- State at least one counter-argument. Rebut this argument by identifying flaws in logic, relevance, evidence or proportionality.

Common justifications why an argument is wrong:

There is a flaw in the logic of the argument. For example, there may be no clear link between the cause and consequences outlined, or too many assumptions may have been made.

The argument may lack relevance to the current circumstances.

The argument may be factually inaccurate. For example, the evidence may have once supported the argument but now has been disproven.

The argument results in unintended consequences.

The argument, while valid, is of marginal significance in the grand scheme of things and is outweighed by other considerations.

Conclusion

- The conclusion should summarise the main points that have been made in support of the contention, and strongly reinforce the argument.
- Restate your conclusion forcefully.
- Include an eloquent quote that supports your contention.
- Use a rhetorical question to prompt the audience to consider what they would do now.
- State what needs to happen next and what will happen if we do it/don't do it.
- Specific arguments should not be included in the conclusion.
- No new arguments should be introduced in the conclusion.
- Include a powerful ending.

Consider how you started your speech. Use the end of your speech to RETURN to this opening, but in a different way that reflects the journey that we have now undertaken.

For example:

If you began with an anecdote, provide a different ending, or add another chapter.

If you had a shocking fact, statement or twist, return to it and reference it.

If you used a metaphor, reference it, or use it in a new way.

This will give your speech a strong sense of symmetry and structure, and will really give your audience something to think about.

PERSUASIVE TECHNIQUES

You must use a range of persuasive techniques and these must be used effectively.

Persuasive techniques can include:

- Rhetorical questions
- Expert opinions
- Emotive language
- Repetition
- Humour
- Attacks
- Anecdotes
- Inclusive/exclusive language
- Statistics
- Appeals to...
- Metaphors
- Similes



	Emotive	Moderate	Rational
Appropriate Tones	Passionate Zealous Álarmed Outraged Hostile Scathing Arrogant	Amused Apologetic Diplomatic Approving Disappointed Sympathetic Friendly	Calm Rational Authoritative Conservative Formal Modest Educated
Particularly Useful Persuasive Techniques	Anecdotes Emotive language Exclusive language Hyperbolae Attacks Appeals to fear etc	Rhetorical questions Inclusive language Humour Appeals to family values etc	Statistical evidence Expert opinion Logic and reason Appeals to economic concerns etc

PERSUASIVE WRITING CHECKLIST

Contention

- Is my contention clear and well worded?
- Does it explicitly outline my point of view?

Introduction

- Does my introduction give an overview of the issue?
- Does my introduction indicate my line of argument?
- Have I made sure not to include any specific arguments in the introduction?



Body

- Is each of my arguments presented in a well organised paragraph?
- Have I logically ordered my paragraphs from the most important to the least important point?
- Have I supported each point with a logical explanation and example?
- Is each paragraph coherently linked to the preceding and the following paragraph?

Conclusion

- Have I effectively summarised my arguments?
- Have I restated the contention?
- Have I proven, in the end, what I said I was setting out to prove?

General

Did I use a range of persuasive techniques?

SAMPLE

SAMPLE POINT OF VIEW – SPEECH

(As a Year 12 Student, you have been asked to address the Youth for Human Rights Forum and give your opinion on the use of the death penalty. Write the speech you would deliver.)

I was in Grade Three. The date was Monday 14 April, and over the previous weekend, 202 innocent people had become the victims of one of the most chilling suicide plots in history. In retrospect, the explosive bombardment of haunting images, news reports, video footage and radio specials was perhaps too much for a nine year-old boy to handle. On came the sleepless nights, the chills and shaking ... the inherent fear, much like the agonising reaction I had had the previous year during similar attacks on the United States. Years went by. I was now a Year Nine student, and the Bali bombings had finally caught up with me. Once again, I watched the news as it slowly became infiltrated and finally saturated with reports that would bring my part of the world to a standstill. The Bali Bombers had finally been executed.

My fellow Youth Ambassadors, the death penalty is never justifiable. I ask of you today, What good is achieved by taking a life for a life? I exhort you to think deeply about the implications of such conduct. Are we in control of who lives and dies? Do we give ourselves the right to play God and take the lives of others whenever we deem it appropriate? I subscribe firmly to the belief that administering the death sentence only entraps a society in an infected, cyclical pattern of behaviour – one that sees killing after killing after killing, much like the senselessness of a cat chasing its tail. This forum in which I speak to you today has its roots planted firmly in a commitment to justice for all humanity. I therefore ask you this: What kind of justice can ever be served by allowing the death sentence to be used?

Our great country prides itself on eschewing the death penalty, and on having abolished it over forty years ago. What is central to our beliefs as Australians is that capital punishment is just about as inhumane as the actions of those subject to the death sentence themselves. As far as the Bali bombings and the execution of those murderous thugs are concerned, what gain, if any, can come from taking the lives of these three people, or any such convicted criminals wherever in the world they may be found? In his Letter to the Editor published in The Age Newspaper (October 11, 2008), local citizen Lawry Mahon argued with simple eloquence that, “it didn’t make the lives of the victims of the outrageous crimes in Bali any better either. They are still injured and suffering. It bandaged no wounds, offered no reassuring words, and made no positive changes to the world.” Mr Mahon so correctly identifies the crux of the issue – that there is no emotional or psychological gain or change from enforcing punishment, other than the possibility of more bloodshed, more grief and more hatred. Capital punishment does not bring closure; it is the enemy of justice; and it offers no lasting balm for the deep, personal wounds of grief and loss.

A much more frightening concern for me, however, is that the permanence of the death penalty may very well establish a cycle of slaughter. The very act itself begets more violence and terrorism, most especially from retaliators who find it necessary to speak out against this already unjust practice of capital punishment. The death penalty does not make lives better; it does not bring healing; and it certainly does not bring back the dead – it only adds to their number! It also incites new anger and aggression in those speaking out against such deaths. In an Editorial published in The Australian newspaper (November 10, 2008), the writer asserted that the fear of possible “reprisal attacks” was alive and real, now that the three infamous Bali Bombers had been executed. For those who persist in the desire to uphold the

death penalty only one thing can be certain: that the world will be stuck in a never-ending, vicious cycle of homicide, violence, protests and discontent. What starts out as a so-called “justice-seeking exercise” must end in an orgy of carnage.

The close family and friends of the perpetrators’ victims often claim that they death penalty is sought in order to gain a sense of relief and closure. With all due respect to these deeply affected people, how mistaken they are! The victims of the Bali bombings are still dead, injured and psychologically scarred; and friends and loved ones are still suffering from the impact of this inhumane act of terrorism. Moreover, the shootings of these three ‘barbarian fools’ did not restore life to their victims, nor undo their evil work. So, how can retribution in the form of even more deaths bring closure of relief? By taking their lives, are matters really settled once and for all? An Editorial in the Australian newspaper (cited above) stated, “six years on, and victims’ families continue to grieve”. Furthermore, Mr Trent Thompson, who lost his brother along with five fellow football club mates, asserted that the perpetrators’ deaths haven’t brought anyone back, “Everyone is still dead”. Why, then, is capital punishment still tolerated around the world, when nothing can be done to fill this painful void of loss and grief?

My fellow ambassadors, the death sentence is never justifiable. In spiteful retribution, nothing is gained. All this achieves is to expose human insecurity, vengefulness and immaturity. Even as a nine year-old boy, I had my misgivings about the taking of lives under any circumstances. Now my misgivings have solidified into a certainty that to allow such an aberration of justice is it is to our grave detriment as a civilised society. You yourselves have such a significant interest and involvement in the matters I have raised that I’m sure you cannot sit unmoved at such a transgression of the natural order. You know so well that the human person was made to love, create and propagate in a just and ordered society: not to kill and destroy in a world of licentiousness and lynch law. Though the debate may continue to rage around us, one simple thing is for certain: that taking an eye for an eye makes the whole world blind!

TIPS FOR A GREAT ORAL PRESENTATION

- Prepare and rehearse your material thoroughly. Familiarity increases control.

Avoid simply reading the script over and over again to yourself. Rehearse the presentation the way you'll deliver it i.e. standing, aloud, with the passion, pacing, and movement you'll actually use.

Practice in front of a mirror and then an audience. Get your audience to give you feedback.

Recording yourself and review your performance.

Look at high-quality examples of delivery that you can emulate.

Practice enough so that you will end on time.

- Try to memorise as much of your speech as possible.
- Your introduction is the most important part. Know it off by heart.
- Do NOT read any part of your speech.
- Use cue cards or palm cards – but use dot points and keywords only. These items are meant to act as prompts – not scripts.
- Make your presentation more like a conversation (try to imagine having a conversation with a friend).
- Signal your structure i.e. let the audience know what to expect in your speech. Identify when you are moving to a new point. You can use an explicit statement such as:
“Another argument is...”
“A further consequence is seen in...”

Alternatively, use a rhetorical question which you then proceed to answer. For example:
“So why do we need to...? That answer is simple. It is because we need...”
- Recognise and acknowledge your audience as appropriate. This may come after an anecdote or creative introduction.
- Adjust your presentation based on audience feedback.
- Use hooks to maintain the attention of your audience, especially gripping photos, shocking fact/statistics, short videos.
- Keep visuals simple, clear and relevant.
- Acknowledge your sources.



- Use eye contact with the audience, as if you're telling each of us, one by one, the "story" you are presenting. (Don't look at the teacher/s.)



Eye contact is the first step to creating meaningful engagement with your audience.

Looking at your audience allows you to react to them and modify your pace, tone and volume.

- Keep your eyes on the audience if using visuals. Don't block your audience.
- Relieve nerves by breathing deeply from the diaphragm.
- Smile genuinely and move around a bit – but not excessively. Try to avoid unnecessary movement of your feet eg. Up and down motions.
- Make sure you're aware of your STANCE. Stand up straight and be open and confident.
- Smile genuinely and use gestures naturally to communicate confidence and warmth.
- Keep your hands at your sides, naturally.
- Build some GESTURES into your speech. For example, numbering off points or statistics, pointing at the audience when making a point, open palms when asking a question, and so on.
- Use everyday language rather than jargon. Words should be simple, ideas complex.
- Repetition and metaphors work well in speeches.
- Be passionate about your topic. From your head and heart to the audience's.
- Use humour if relevant and confident.
- Always make sure you PAUSE between points. Pauses are absolutely essential as they signal the end of a point. Pauses also add emphasis and drama to key moments, and helps you to control the pace of your speech.



Pause for slightly longer than what feels natural.

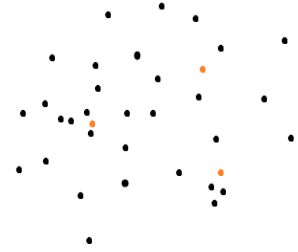
- Pause for important ideas you want your audience to pay special attention to. Silence can be an effective punctuation.
- Make sure you VARY the TONE and VOLUME of your speech. Read quotes in a different register.

- The sound of words is important. Stress and dwell on key words.
- It's ok to pause or say "umm". Look at TedTalks to reassure yourself.
- Don't be afraid to correct yourself.
- Speak clearly, confidently, concisely and not too fast. Give the audience enough time to think about what you're saying.
- Keep the pace constant and keep the energy constant too. If you start flagging, so will your audience.
- Your pace should be at approximately 120 words per minute.
- Don't go over time: Less is more.
- Handle questions from the audience politely and professionally.
- It's normal to feel nervous. Preparation and practice will, however, reduce nerves.



ADDITIONAL POINTS

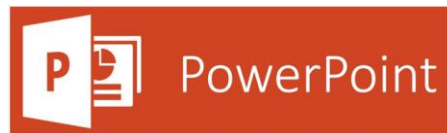
- Don't forget to introduce yourself.
- Have strategies for gaining attention and explaining your ideas clearly and effectively.
- Make an effective use of analogies and anecdotes.
- Use visuals to help clarify ideas or to make an impact.
- Deliver information in a logical order. You need to show that you can present complex ideas in a sustained, coherent and logical argument.
- Stick to the point.
- Don't try to know and explain everything – make the focus of your talk limited and don't get caught up in explaining complex details about minor issues that the audience doesn't need to know about.
- Keep the use of statistics and facts manageable. Don't overwhelm your audience with information that is so complex that they can't make sense of it or see the relevance of it.
- Be selective with what you use and how you use it. Make sure that you acknowledge sources too – a fact from a reliable source is more powerful than one from a random internet site.
- Keep your contention at the forefront of your mind and make sure that you bring your audience back to what you are arguing. Those facts or anecdotes should always be encouraging your audience to draw the inevitable conclusion that you are right and that they should agree with you.
- Have a clear conclusion that you make and give as much effort to the final impression that you make as you do to the first impression.



Note:

- Always respond to the opposition. Don't try to pretend there is no opposing point of view. Your essay will be stronger if you can rebut opposing arguments.
- Never make vague or unsupported points.

TO SLIDE OR NOT TO SLIDE



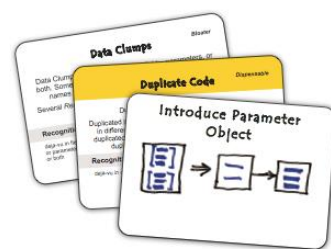
Using PowerPoint slides is not always something that you should use in a presentation. Some schools expressly forbid students from using them and others actively discourage the use of them. Many professional speakers think that PowerPoint is actually a terrible thing to use, so if you do use slides, you really must use them judiciously.

- ✗ Keep slides clean and simple. Don't have lots of text on each slide.
- ✗ Don't read aloud what is on a slide – any words should be a short summary of what you are saying. Some professional speakers suggest a maximum of six words on a slide.
- ✗ Don't use distracting graphics or fonts.
- ✗ Don't let the slides distract from your words (think about transitions).
- ✓ Have a backup plan in case the technology fails (this is always happening in schools).
- ✓ Use powerful images or words only if they support or illuminate what you say.
- ✓ Interact with the slides and make reference to them.
- ✓ Think about body language and where you will stand in relation to the screen.

If you are wondering about how slides can be used effectively or not at all, have a look though some of the presentations on Ted Talks – www.ted.com/



HINTS FOR USING CUE CARDS



Be strategic about how you use them. Try these tips:

- ✓ Number the cards in the same place (top corner).
- ✓ Write on one side of the card only.
- ✓ Each card should have an opening statement to link to the idea that you are expressing.
- ✓ Use trigger words that will help you to remember the different parts of your argument.
- ✓ Write any facts/names/quotations in different colours – your eye will then pick out the facts that you need (numerical or otherwise) more easily.
- ✓ Use phonetic spelling for words that you find hard to pronounce but need to say.
- ✓ Find a comfortable way of holding the cards and think about incorporating them into your gestures.
- ✓ Write in point form.
- ✓ Use headings to organise points.
- ✓ Type notes so you can read them easily.
- ✓ Use double spacing.
- ✓ Include directions like 'slow down', 'visual', or 'pause here'.
- ✓ 2 or 3 points per card.
- ✓ Palm size cards.

COMMON MISTAKES

1. Speaking too fast or mumbling.
2. Unprepared.
3. Can't read own notes.
4. Head down, avoids eye contact.
5. Gets the shakes.
6. Drops cards or gets them out of order.
7. Doesn't answer questions asked.
8. Runs out of ideas.
9. Unenthusiastic.
10. Using incorrect sentence structure and slang.



THE STATEMENT OF INTENTION (WRITTEN COMPONENT)

In the statement of intention you need to articulate the intention of decisions made in the planning process, and how these demonstrate understanding of argument and persuasive language.

There is a separate criterion in the performance descriptors that will allow teachers to assess the quality of the written statement of intention.



SAMPLE STATEMENT OF INTENTION

Sample topical issue: Compulsory childhood vaccinations

The topic of compulsory childhood vaccinations will be the focus of my oral presentation. This issue has received a great deal of attention in the media over the past six months as the result of data released by the Department of Health that revealed the number of parents who have not had their children immunised has doubled in the past decade. This means that around 40,000 Australian children have not been vaccinated against largely preventable diseases such as: hepatitis, pneumococcal, whooping cough, polio, measles, mumps and rubella. According to a recent poll, 86 per cent of all Australians now believe that childhood vaccinations should be compulsory and this is the position that I would like to adopt.

Some of the language and persuasive strategies that I will employ in my oral presentation include the use of accessible medical terminology, the integration of key quotations taken from reliable sources and expert opinion as well as the incorporation of inclusive language such as 'we', 'us' and 'our' children. I will also use a range of evidence, including statistics, research and facts that support the introduction of mandatory childhood immunisation. A variety of appeals will also be included to help to persuade my audience to adopt a pro-childhood immunisation stance. These will be comprised of appeals to common sense to show how children who are not immunised compromise the overall immunity of the population, as well as appeals to the hip-pocket nerve to show how parents of unvaccinated children may be prevented from accessing welfare payments and childcare subsidies. I will also make an emotional appeal to my audience by using the real life case study of four-week-old Riley Hughes who died from whooping cough, a largely preventable disease.

Throughout my presentation, I hope to employ a range of public speaking techniques to enhance my performance. I will use pauses to add emphasis to the key points of my argument, and I aim to speak steadily and clearly, so that the audience is able to hear each of my supporting arguments. I have a tendency to rush through presentations when I am nervous, so I would like focus on my pitch and pace. As a result, I hope to convince my audience that immunisations should be compulsory for all Australian children aged 0–7.