

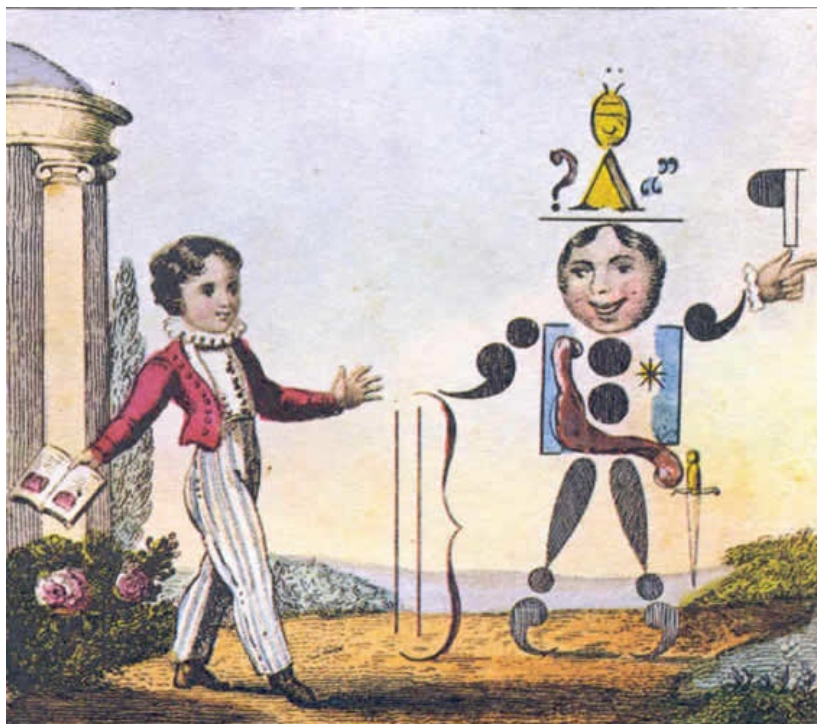
## A level ENGLISH LANGUAGE

### Component 1 Section B

#### Language Issues

#### Punctuation

#### Sample essay extracts: meeting the AOs



## Sample essay extracts

**Read through the following extracts from responses to the sample question and identify places where the candidates are meeting the different elements of the AOs.**

You should look for evidence that each candidate has:

- AO1
  - analysed the stimulus material and explored the effects created
  - used terminology
  - written accurately, fluently and logically in an appropriate style
- AO2
  - applied knowledge of concepts, using relevant terminology
  - explored issues related to language use
  - discussed appropriate examples
- AO3
  - analysed and evaluated key language features using relevant terminology
  - considered the effects of contextual factors
  - explored meaning and the effects created.

### RESPONSE 1

There is still a very clear view point on the use of punctuation and therefore the person using it. Of course the judgement is widely based on context but this is very much based on our perceptions of the use of punctuation. An example of this would be that the right punctuation is “appropriate” in formal situations such as letters this is based on the implication that wrong punctuation was a depiction of a person’s lack of education and that has therefore influenced the appropriateness of punctuation in contexts, that rely on our education ability it is thought standard punctuation is far more sophisticated than non-standard punctuation, and judgements about it being inferior to have mistakes in writing is quite medieval on the subject. However mistakes like apostrophes are far less likely to be used in essays as it portrays a lack of education and all the connotations surrounding that. This is associated with the immediacy of texting and social media and that is far quicker to miss out apostrophes and commas but still communicate clearly, such as using ‘good to know I’ll have to watch’ instead of with punctuation ‘that’s good to know, I’ll have to watch’. The instantaneousness of technology, has meant non-standard punctuation is far more common, as it takes less time and therefore benefits us in that way. Non-standard punctuation can also be thought as more appropriate in particular contexts such as private writing because it is a comfortable and informal atmosphere this could be a consequence of the lack of negative. In the particular context of a letter like a complaint the aim is to gain respect, be taken seriously and have an authority approach. All these things are part of standard punctuation demonstrating how stigmatised mistakes are and you won’t be taken seriously by using non-standard punctuation.

## RESPONSE 2

In a book called 'Examine Your English', the writers argue that punctuation should not be considered 'a mere nuisance' or a 'necessary' evil because it is essential to get your ideas down correctly. For them, muddled punctuation is a reflection of a muddled mind. They could be seen as strong prescriptivists because they suggest punctuation is critical to success: accurate punctuation makes sure written language can be understood by any reader and it is widely accepted as the appropriate in education and in formal contexts like government and the media. Non-standard punctuation, however, differs from the conventions established by the eighteenth and nineteenth century grammar writers who saw any deviation as wrong and wrote rhyming picture books like 'Punctuation personified' with a character called Mr Stops to help young children learn the rules of where to put full stops. Now attitudes are a bit more flexible. The linguists Greenbaum and Nelson state that some of the rules are 'obligatory' making you wrong if you do not follow them, but that some are 'optional' because writers can make choices depending on the effect they wish to create. For example, commas can change the meaning of a sentence. David Crystal uses this example: 'Snakes, which are poisonous, should be avoided' and 'Snakes which are poisonous should be avoided.' Commas around the relative clause make it parenthetical and therefore not an essential part of the meaning. This nonrestrictive clause suggests that all snakes should be avoided because they are all poisonous. The sentence without commas is described as restrictive because it says only some snakes are poisonous.

In fact, non-standard punctuation can depend on the context and in certain situations it may be acceptable. Novelists can use non-standard punctuation to create effects. The poet E.E. Cummings often completely ignored the rules of punctuation and capitalisation and the novelist James Joyce finished his novel 'Ulysses' with a chapter where there were only 2 full stops. This is a stream of conscious monologue and the loose sentence structure is meant to reflect the character of Molly Bloom because the reader is experiencing her thoughts. A PDE writer like Cormac McCarthy chooses not to use speech marks in his novels because he believes that they are not necessary if you write your dialogue very well. The effect is dramatic because it makes the conversation seem more spontaneous. This reflects the fact that both Robert Lowth in 1762 and Greenbaum and Nelson in the twenty-first century call punctuation an 'art' which suggests writers can experiment.

## RESPONSE 3

Writers use different punctuation for the kind of text they are writing, the target audience and the purpose. In an informal context where writer and receiver know each other, there is not so much need to use conventions. This is really clear in texting because the message is more important than the technical issues. This is partly to do with speed and communicating on the move and partly to do with no judgements being made. Because the context is shared for both people the message can be less precise for example 'mine randomly turned itself off earlier when it turned back on battery wasnt even empty'. This message sent by a teenager to his mum uses no punctuation, the pronoun references (mine/it) are vague and it is elliptical (no determiner before noun 'battery'), but will still be understandable. It has no initial capital, no full stops after the first main clause ('mine ... turned ... off earlier'), no apostrophe for the contracted negative verb 'wasnt' and no full stops but the message is clear. In a letter of complaint about a faulty phone battery the style and punctuation would have to be more formal for a more public context e.g. punctuation between clauses, a capital for the possessive determiner 'My' and a comma after the adverbial 'when ...'