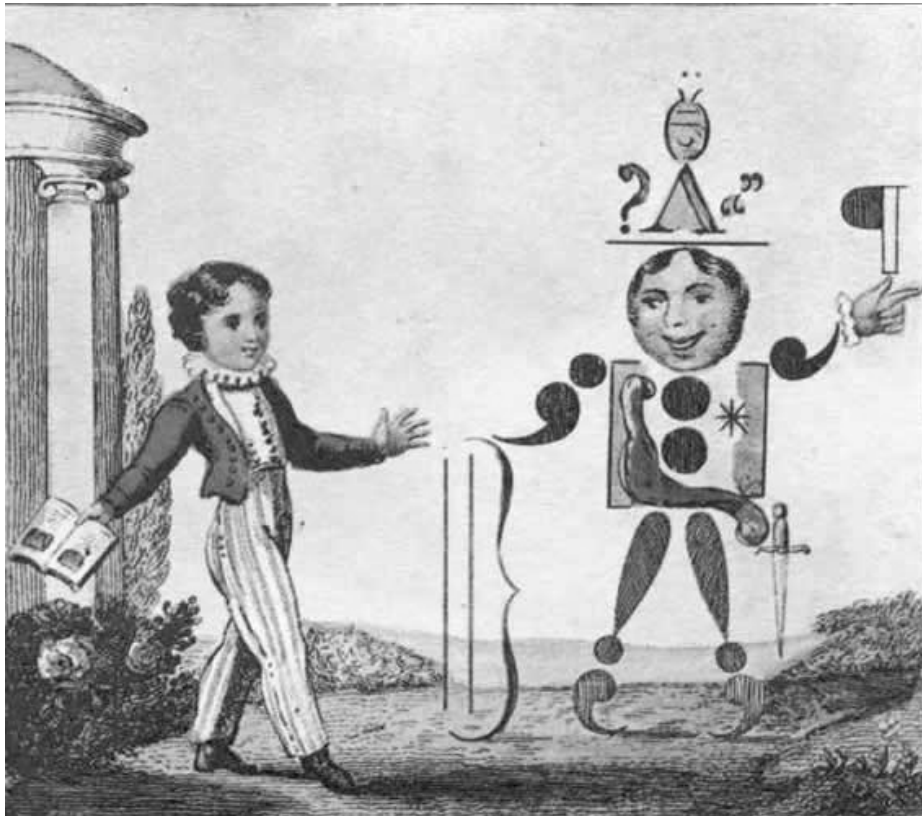# AS ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Unit 2

Language Issues and Original & Critical Writing

'Language Issues' essay: punctuation

Teachers' Notes

AS ENGLISH LANGUAGE

UNIT 2 part (a)

TEACHERS' NOTES

The notes here are to accompany the resources based on punctuation, which offer some suggestions about how to tackle the question in Unit 2 part (a). The suggested approach is not definitive—candidates could respond to the question effectively in many other ways.

The resources encourage learners to think about and discuss the concepts before tackling the question. There are printable copies of all the materials so that learners can work on the sample question individually or in groups. The printable resources include:

- a collection of extracts discussing the concepts and issues linked to the theme of punctuation (language and situation)
- a sample question + sample marking guidelines
- sample introductions
- sample essay extracts
- 'Tackling the Language Issues essay' guide
- advice on writing the commentary for part (c)
- two sample responses to SAMs (unannotated and annotated)

The guide can be used to make learners familiar with the demands of the issues essay question. It aims to encourage good practice, with learners developing close reading skills and applying them to the question and stimulus information.

Using the 'punctuation' resource pack

Each of the extracts has been chosen to demonstrate a particular point or feature about the use of punctuation. References to these extracts can be used to respond to the sample question, but may also be relevant in responses to other questions about written language.

The notes below highlight the main focus of each extract, but there are many other elements that could be discussed.

TEXT 1

- advisory text for students who may be second language users
- link between 'good punctuation' and an orderly mind
- the potential consequences of mistakes in punctuation.

TEXT 2

- nineteenth century text by 'amateur expert' (gender references all male: third person possessive determiner *his*)
- neutral definition
- emphasis on understanding and communication of ideas (meaning)
- prescriptive undertones (*more correctly*).

TEXT 3

- David Crystal: linguist with a reputation for making linguistics accessible for a wide audience
- punctuation is made up of a limited number of marks—frequently seen and used
- it 'seems' manageable (perhaps deceptive), and so people are prepared to criticise others.

TEXT 4

- advisory text targeting undergraduates (modal verb of obligation: *must*)
- focus on a particular punctuation mark (which is seen to cause problems)—emotive language e.g. *most abused* (superlative adjective); *abuse* (abstract noun)
- blame attached to misinformation spread by school teachers
- sets 'elocution information' vs 'grammatical information' (*to separate grammatical units … to indicate interruptions of syntax*).

TEXT 5

- eighteenth century advisory text by a grammarian and Anglican bishop—giving guidance for a growing middle class on how to use 'polite' or 'correct' English
- definition and function (to *assist* readers)
- (surprisingly) unprescriptive: *doctrine* described as *imperfect*; emphasis is on *the judgment and taste of the writer* (usage); rules to give *a general direction* with an awareness of *different occasions*.

TEXT 6

- language commentator (usually prescriptive)
- analogies (for non-specialist audience)
- punctuation: holds language together (sewing metaphor); orders language (traffic lights metaphor); takes account of readers' needs (door metaphor).

TEXT 7

- American academic, specialist target audience BUT personal style (opinion piece)
- underlying principles: *clarity and simplicity*; needs to be *as invisible as possible*
- personal comments on usage e.g. period (Americanism) and comma (*lovely/simple/honest*), colon (*smooth over a rough logical connection*), semicolon (*pretentious/overactive*), quotations marks for distancing i.e. 'scare marks' (*ugly/spurious impression of … sensibility*).

TEXT 8

- online news article ('broadsheet' newspaper—now Berliner): quotes expert (lecturer Exeter University) and professional (journalist/former culture secretary)
- best way to teach punctuation is to see practical examples in everyday life
- links to language change—electronic English (Twitter/branding on social media)
- potential for *confusion.*
  NB punctuation has grammatical function, BUT is not an example of *proper grammar*

TEXT 9

- David Crystal: linguist with a reputation for making linguistics accessible historical: early manuscripts (complicated system—disappeared with printing)
- function: *guide to phrasing* for reading aloud e.g. *literary and liturgical occasions.*

TEXT 10

- commentator (observing habits) and professional (journalist using language to communicate)
- emphasis on *many varieties* of punctuation which must be suited to *purpose*
- examples of different text types e.g. newspapers, instruction texts, learned article or book (*more elaborate punctuation* allowing *finer distinctions and greater flexibility*)
- BUT making mistakes will lead to *misunderstanding* (ambiguity/confused meaning) and *derision* (judgement).

TEXT 11

- linguists: experts writing for specialist 'beginners' audience
- historical overview: rhetorical vs grammatical function
- punctuation in period texts can seem *puzzling*/*apparently arbitrary* to PDE readers.

TEXT 12

- non-specialist commentator ('grumpy old man' opinions); colloquial style
- humour, but serious underlying point i.e. criticisms of the way people punctuate can be *a way of looking down and sneering*
- public correction of punctuation in signs is not *a public service.*

TEXT 13

- online article in culture section ('broadsheet' newspaper); professional
- use of punctuation to avoid semantic ambiguity
- terms make punctuation sound more difficult than it is
- focus on specific features e.g. Oxford comma (*exclusivity and complexity* vs *extremely easy to learn – and to teach*); non-restrictive comma
- examples to explain points made.

TEXT 14

- professional house-style guide for writers
- instructive text e.g. imperatives (*Use*)
- technical language (*en-dashes, em-dashes*) and explanations (space after full stop)
- examples
- reference to language change: effect of word processing software.

TEXT 15

http://www.nytimes.com/2015/03/01/style/when-your-punctuation-says-it-all.html?_r=2

- online article in 'Cultural Studies' section ('broadsheet' newspaper); professional
- link between punctuation and tone in electronic English
- *sans the mark* vs *too* many *marks* vs *additional punctuation … to soften the marks*
- language change; gender
- examples of language in use (herself, friends, 19-year-old student).

TEXT 16

- linguists; experts writing for specialist 'beginners' audience
- rules: *conventions … developed by printers and publishers* BUT also *an art*
- function: to establish *consistency* e.g. breaking text into *smaller components*; shaping appearance on page
- *obligatory* (can be 'wrong') vs *optional* elements (all about *choice*).

TEXT 17

http://www.telegraph.co.uk/education/12185164/Nonsense-Backlash-over-new-school-rules-on-exclamation-marks.html

- online news article in 'Education' section ('broadsheet' newspaper); professional
- educational assessment (Key Stage 1 and 2): rules about exclamation marks
- prescriptive—Government directives about what is acceptable (described by journalist as *restrictive*, and linked to nineteenth century)
- extracts cited from Department of Education document (authoritative)—subject specific e.g. technical terms + examples
- link to language change: text messaging and social media.
  NB how …!/what …! = <u>exclamatives</u>; other use of exclamations marks is <u>exclamatory</u>
  TEXT 18
- nineteenth century instructive text for children
- rhyming couplets (memorable)
- humorous (personified 'Mr Stops' made up of numerous punctuation marks) and interactive (riddle)
- focus on full stops as guide to meaning.

For a colour picture of the image accompanying this first rhyme, use the following link:
https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Punctuation_personfied.jpg

TEXT 19

- academic research by Debra Myhill et al (Exeter University)
- formal information + table summarising findings
- range/accuracy/ presence or absence of punctuation linked to GCSE grade
- punctuation usage: sentence boundaries/apostrophes.

TEXT 20

- examples of semantic ambiguity caused by misplaced or omitted punctuation (humour)
- vocatives vs objects (examples 2/6):
  - without comma, proper noun *Jack* becomes direct object of verb *eat*
  - with comma, noun phrase *baby seals* becomes vocative (i.e. imperative is addressed directly to the seals), and the semantic field of reference of the verbal noun *clubbing* is linked to nightclubs rather than to the act of culling
- omitted commas (examples 3/4/7):
  - without a comma after the initial position prepositional phrase *Most of the time*, the subject of the sentence appears to be the post-modified noun phrase *Most of the time travellers* (with the noun *time* as part of the compound noun 'time-travellers')
  - without commas separating the items of the list, the possessive noun phrases *their families and their pets* are related directly to the verbal noun *cooking* (as direct objects); with commas, each phrase would be a separate part of the prepositional post-modification of the abstract noun phrase *inspiration in …*
  - without an Oxford comma before the coordinating conjunction *and*, the proper noun phrases appear to function as parenthesis qualifying the noun phrase *my parents*
- full stops (examples 5/8):
  - as 2 clauses (*No! Don't stop!*), this represents a request to continue; as 3 clauses (*No! Don't! Stop!*), this represents an urgent request to cease
  - with the full stop after the pronoun *someone*, the object complement (the bare infinitive clause *(to) get a job*) becomes an imperative verb—and a polite compliment becomes a rather rude command
- colon (example 1)
  - without a colon following the simple noun phrase *A woman*, the subject of the sentence becomes the post-modified noun phrase *A woman without her man*; with the colon, the subject of the sentence is the simple noun phrase *man* preceded by the fronted prepositional phrase *without her*.

TASK: PUNCTUATION RESOURCES

Give small groups 3-4 of the extracts and ask them to identify:

- the contextual factors (place of publication, authors, target audience)
- the key information provided about punctuation
- the expression of any personal attitudes/opinions.

They should then be prepared to report their findings to the class.

The sections below make some suggestions about how to use the guide, taking the sample question on punctuation as an example. The notes offered under the headings are not definitive, but can be used as a starting point. The approach could then be adapted for other material.

GETTING STARTED: THE QUESTION

The choice of question is very important and candidates need to think carefully about which of the two suits them best. Encourage classroom discussion about different types of potential question, and about assessing the different parts of each question in terms of learners' strengths and weaknesses, linguistic likes and dislikes.

Candidates have to remember that they will not necessarily have the opportunity to choose between a literary and a non-literary original writing task. Both could be literary, both could be non-literary, or there could be one of each.

It is worth pointing out the following about the essay in part (a):

- any contextual information provided is an important part of understanding the stimulus material—having identified the key points, candidates should think about how this information will influence language use, and how it will underpin their readings of the material
- this sample question is focused on written language, but other questions may specify a particular mode, spoken **and** written modes, or may leave it open for candidates to choose the mode(s) they see as most appropriate to the question.
- candidates need to keep the bullet points in mind while reading the stimulus material and while writing their response.

TASK: SAMPLE QUESTION

Ask learners to identify:

- significant **contextual information**
  e.g. county council signs (public information, need for clarity/accuracy, authoritative status because produced for government); *Daily Mail* article (a middle-market tabloid newspaper with a reputation for strong opinions and attention grabbing headlines)
- the **focus of the question**
  e.g. how different writers use punctuation
- any **indication of mode**
  e.g. written
- **key terms/phrases in the bullet points**.
  e.g. language features; tenor and function; link between punctuation, grammar and meaning; context.

FIRST READ-THROUGH: UNPICKING THE STIMULUS MATERIAL

By getting a broad sense of the content, the register and the function of the stimulus material, learners will be able to make sensible points about the focus topic.

Talk through the guide, getting learners to think about the key areas listed (i.e. context, function, participants, target audience, distinctive features of the genre) and how these will help in interpreting the stimulus material provided.

TASK: SAMPLE QUESTION

Ask learners to make notes individually on the stimulus material in preparation for a class discussion. They should use the headings from the guide:

- context
- function
- writers
- target audience
- distinctive features.

The notes below are suggested responses, but there are other valid points that could come up in discussion.

Context

SIGNS	ARTICLE
• public • formal • authoritative	• public • formal • authoritative

Function

SIGNS	ARTICLE
• inform	• inform • communicate/shape opinions • entertain

Participants

SIGNS	ARTICLE
• council departments • sign producers • experts • professionals	• journalist • copy editor etc. • experts • professionals

Target audience

SIGNS	ARTICLE
• wide audience, including visitors whose first language is not English • distant • indirect (limited opportunity for feedback)	• target audience of readers with the same ideology • distant • indirect (limited opportunity for feedback)

Distinctive features

SIGNS	ARTICLE
• noun phrases • simple sentences • straightforward language • short, direct and unambiguous	• emotive language • quoting/quoted clauses (experts) • verifiable information • proper nouns

CLOSE READING: ANNOTATING THE STIMULUS MATERIAL

As they read the stimulus material, candidates need to become accustomed to text-marking interesting examples of language use and making marginal notes. Any features that they mark should have a relevance to the focus of the question.

TASK: SAMPLE QUESTION

Ask learners to annotate the stimulus material in preparation for a class discussion. They should use the headings from the guide to focus their annotations:

- key concepts
- information for arguing a case
- examples to support the argument
- distinctive point of view(s)
- key features of the genre.

The notes below are just suggestions, and learners may well think of other valid points.

Key concepts/issues: language and situation

SIGNS	ARTICLE
• standard vs non-standard • accuracy • readability	• attitudes • status (authoritative official institutions) • readability • language change • 'correct' usage/setting an example • 'slippery slope' argument

Information to argue a case

SIGNS	ARTICLE
• signs without punctuation (intentional) • signs with missing punctuation • signs with inaccurate punctuation • use of apostrophes • clarity	• juxtaposition of famous university town and removal of apostrophes • following guidelines (National Land & Property Gazetteer) • policy to affect documentation/signs • mistakes by emergency services • criticised by Good Grammar Company • public language as example for school students (language in use)

Examples to support argument (with terminology)

SIGNS	ARTICLE
• use of singular possessive inflection –*'s* with plural noun ending with a vowel (*camera's*) • use of plural possessive inflection –*s'* with irregular plural noun (*childrens'*) • unintentional omission of possessive inflection (*childrens*) • intentional omission of inflection for clarity and simplicity (*Andrews*)	• attitudes: *anger* (abstract noun), *dreadful* (predicative adjective—stressed position) • language change ('decay'): *slippery slope* (noun phrase—collocation) • judgement: *'s pandering* (progressive verb phrase—ongoing process)*, lowest common denominator* (noun phrase—emotive superlative) • context (Cambridge): *one of our major seats of learning* (noun phrase) • legal language: *bans* (verb), *abolishing* (verbal noun) • evidence not provided by council: *are said* (passive verb phrase—no agent) • director of GGC engages audience: *what kind of message …* (rhetorical question—implicit message will be recognised by *Daily Mail* readers)

Distinctive points of view

SIGNS	ARTICLE
• neutral language	• emotive repetition of *pandering* (*DM* sees this as a view that will be shared by readers?) • city council: apostrophes lead to mistakes • GGC: objecting to language change—apostrophes are not *superfluous*

Key features of the genre

SIGNS	ARTICLE
• short, direct style • minimal use of words • inform (name plates) • advisory (cameras; keep dog on lead)	• dramatic headline (including quoted clause) • providing information • implicit judgement • citing experts • quoting/quoted clauses

ADDING YOUR OWN KNOWLEDGE: DECIDING WHAT'S RELEVANT

This element of the question focuses on AO2. It allows candidates to broaden the argument with any **relevant** knowledge they have built up during their course. The bullet points in the guide suggest three key areas candidates might consider as they plan:

- information linked to the focus of the question
- theorists, linguists, commentators
- other contexts.

Under these headings candidates could consider:

INFORMATION

- specific genres/text types
- general language principles (e.g. spoken vs written language, descriptive vs prescriptive approaches, standard vs non-standard, language change etc.)

THEORISTS, LINGUISTS, COMMENTATORS.

- specific individuals
- specific opinions
- specific theories

CONTEXTS

- contextual factors and other relevant contexts
- their own language experiences (e.g. examples of their own usage, results from surveys, personal opinions based on linguistic knowledge).

All knowledge linked to the **focus of the question** will be credited, but candidates must remember to keep referring to the question when they are planning their response and deciding which knowledge to use.

Providing examples and using terminology to support the points made is also an important part of AO2.

TASK: SAMPLE QUESTION

Ask learners to list the wider knowledge they could use in response to the sample question under the bullet points from the guide:

- other relevant information
- appropriate theorists, linguists, commentators
- other contexts.

They should think about:

- useful facts
- relevant concepts
- points of view
- examples
- different text types.

Candidates can cite as direct quotation, or as a paraphrase of the key idea(s), but it is important to include a reference to the source of the information and the place of publication (e.g. author, title of book/newspaper, some indication of date if not PDE, name of website etc.)

In the sample question, candidates could cite any of the extracts from the punctuation resources or from their own wider knowledge about standard/non-standard English, attitudes, written English etc. They would also need to refer to some of the following contexts:

- legal language (restricted punctuation)
- newspaper headlines (minimal punctuation)
- fiction e.g. Molly Bloom's monologue, Cormac McCarthy's lack of speech marks, E.E. Cummings (creative punctuation)
- personal texts e.g. diaries (personal punctuation)
- formal letters (language change—punctuation often no longer used for addresses)
- texting and social media (language change—creative punctuation)
- public writing e.g. academic essays, reports (traditional punctuation)
- speeches e.g. political (punctuation used to mirror rhythms of spoken language).

ANSWERING THE QUESTION: FITTING THE PIECES TOGETHER

When the process of working through the stimulus material is complete, use the four structured sections (Planning, Style, Developing an Argument, Summing Up) to stimulate discussion about the importance of producing a well-structured, clearly argued essay.

It is important to emphasise that these are only broad suggestions. In the exam, candidates are free to tackle the essay in any way they wish. However, these key areas remind them of what they should be thinking about as they plan and write.

Having a formula/mnemonic to remind learners of the areas to include can be helpful (particularly for learners who need a little extra support). Where topic sentences are shaped by these, however, it can restrict the ability of more able students to produce a personalised and distinctive response. It is important that learners are able to demonstrate their personal engagement with the stimulus material/topic as well as their linguistic knowledge.

Making judgements

Use the 5 sample introductions so that learners can think about the most effective ways of analysing the stimulus material.

TASK: SAMPLE INTRODUCTIONS

Ask learners to assess the strengths and weaknesses of each response. They need to think about how effective each one is in exploring the stimulus material as an introduction to the question focus.

They should text mark the samples to draw attention to:

- evidence of understanding the topic
- references to the stimulus material
- wider knowledge
- examples
- use of terminology
- personal engagement
- writing style.

When they have finished assessing the examples, get them to write their own introduction.

The notes below suggest some of the strengths/weaknesses which could be discussed.

RESPONSE 1

Strengths: demonstrates some knowledge; basic link made to stimulus material; evidence of personal engagement; some awareness of 'judgements' based on linguistic usage; straightforward style, but technically accurate.

Weaknesses: no examples; limited use of terminology (a few broad terms e.g. 'context', 'standard'); points are rather broad; narrow range

RESPONSE 2

Strengths: clear understanding with an opening sentence to frame the topic; wider knowledge with clear source information; explicit references to stimulus material; using examples; relevant terminology to underpin points; confident awareness of key concepts

(e.g. language change, importance of meaning); effective use of stimulus material to support developing argument; strong engagement; coherent, academic style

RESPONSE 3

Strengths: basic indication of relevant text types (e.g. signs, newspapers); some very basic awareness of context ('public'), tenor ('formal') and opinions ('anger'); implicit links to stimulus material/question focus

Weaknesses: no need to explain what the essay will contain; no examples; no terminology; narrow range; technical inaccuracy ('its')

RESPONSE 4

Strengths: explicit links to stimulus material; purposeful sense of 'opinions'; using examples; accurate use of terminology; sound on meaning; effective use of wider knowledge to support argument; clear source information; coherent, academic style

Weaknesses: could be more analysis of stimulus material (e.g. more explicit reference to the signs and their specific features of punctuation); reference to 'longer written texts' could be supported with examples of specific text types; explanation needed about why apostrophes are not 'superfluous'; two sides of argument (apparently contradictory) need to be flagged up more clearly (i.e. 'possible to understand' council's position vs removing apostrophes from public signs 'sends the wrong kind of message')

RESPONSE 5

Strengths: demonstrates basic understanding of topic; some broad reference to stimulus material; proper noun identified correctly + example; some discussion of concepts (e.g. formality, prescriptivism), but simplistic; some attempt to engage

Weaknesses: limited wider references (no specific source information and refers to author by first name); lacks terms in places (use of 'word'); approach remains very general (e.g. 'subject mainly revolves around apostrophes'); technical inaccuracy (some lack of sentence control; non-agreement of subject and verb; spelling errors)

ASSESSMENT OBJECTIVES FOR part (a): HITTING THE TARGETS

This section is designed to develop familiarity with the criteria by which part (a) essays will be assessed. The guide includes a breakdown of the AOs for the essay, and candidates need to make sure they are meeting these requirement in their responses.

Once learners have a clear idea of the key constituents of each AO, they can consider the essay extracts and identify where the AOs are being fulfilled. Clearly these are extracts from longer essays, but they can be used to highlight different approaches to the sample question, and to the part (a) essay in general.

The notes below suggest points that could be raised about each response. References to bands only offer general guidance about quality since these are based on extracts rather than whole essays.

RESPONSE 1

AO1: CLEAR ENGAGEMENT WITH QUESTION

AO2: WIDER KNOWLEDGE

AO2: WIDER KNOWLEDGE

AO3: CONTEXT (HISTORICAL)

AO2: EXAMPLES

AO2: WIDER KNOWLEDGE

Writers at different times have used punctuation for completely different purposes so the function of the marks has changed over time. In 'Stories of English', David Crystal points out that the earliest punctuation marks were used when reading aloud was a common activity and the marks gave the reader information about where they should pause. These were a very complicated set of symbols, but after printing was established there was a process of simplification. The punctuation came to have a grammatical rather than a rhetorical purpose. It was used to break words on the page into units that were easier to read. Up to the Modern English period, texts sometimes used commas between the subject and verb if the subject was made up of a subordinate clause and if it was long (e.g. Those other things which I am …, are …') and capitilisation to show the importance of a common noun (e.g. 'Sunne'), but this would not be acceptable in PDE writing.

AO3: CONTEXT (HISTORICAL)

AO1: DEVELOPING ARGUMENT

AO1: TERMS

COMMENTARY

This response demonstrates qualities of borderline Bands 3/4. There is evidence of accurate linguistic knowledge used sensibly (subject/verb, subordinate clause) and supported by relevant examples. There is room for development of AO3 here with contextual reference to the source/text type of the quotation. Evidence of wider knowledge is sound with references to a specific linguist, to language change (simplification), and to acceptability (although the point here needs development). A clear argument is emerging, and the discussion of the topic is competent—range could be wider. There is, perhaps, room for the inclusion of additional examples. Other than the misspelling of 'capitalisation', the expression is accurate and clear, and the structure is effective.

RESPONSE 2

There is still a very clear veiwpoint on the use of punctuation and therefor 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 therefor 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 a far less likely to be used in essays as it portrays a lack of education and all the conotations surrounding that.

AO2: EXAMPLE

AO3: CONTEXT

AO2: WIDER KNOWLEDGE

AO2: EXAMPLE

COMMENTARY

This response demonstrates qualities of low Band 2. There is some evidence of basic linguistic knowledge (appropriateness, standard/non-standard), which shows that the student has followed a linguistic course and is able to apply what they have learnt. The approach to attitudes is rather simplistic, but there is some understanding of the issues of 'judgement'. References to supporting examples are very broad (letter/essay) and there is no linguistic terminology. There is, however, a clear attempt to engage with the focus of the question, and the whole paragraph does relate to punctuation. There is evidence of technical inaccuracy (lack of sentence control, spelling errors) and some lack of fluency.

RESPONSE 3

Punctuation is employed by different writers according to their context, audience and purpose. If a writer is producing a private and personal text like a diary or a letter to family or a close friend, punctuation is less important than the content. In this context, lack of paragraphs, technical inaccuracy and non-standard punctuation conventions will not be judged unlike in an exam essay where accuracy and clarity are just as important as the content. For example, in a diary you could put a full stop in front of a relative clause (e.g. 'I love iPhones. Which is good.') and omit initial capitals at the beginning of a sentence and full stops between main clauses 'you know the number for Sally give it to me tomorrow I need to get in touch'. In this example, there should be a capital on the second person pronoun 'you' and a full stop before the imperative verb 'give' and the first person pronoun 'I'. Texting is similar because the process of informalisation has influenced the way we use punctuation in electronic English. In some ways we use much more punctuation because the tenor is often exclamatory and there can be lots of exclamation marks to show emotion with interjections (e.g. 'Waaaahhh!!!'). But things like apostrophes are often omitted in verb contractions (e.g. 'didnt', Ive') and possessive nouns ('Bens coat is here').

COMMENTARY

This is a secure Band 4 response with some Band 5 features. There is a confident use of terms and a secure understanding of the topic. Analysis is effective and the points made are clearly focused on the demands of the question. Different contexts are considered (diary; texting) with confident selection of supporting examples. Wider knowledge is evident in places (evaluative judgements; informalisation), but this element could have been developed by references to linguists etc. A nice distinction is drawn between the relative values of punctuation vs content, but references to 'technical inaccuracy' and 'non-standard punctuation' need qualification. The style is coherent and accurate, the argument develops logically, and there is clear engagement.

RESPONSE 4

<table>
<tr>
<td>**AO2: WIDER KNOWLEDGE**</td>
<td>In a book called 'Examine Your English', the writers argue that punctuation should not be considered a 'nuisance' or a 'necessary evil' because it is essential to get your ideas down they say wrong punctuation is a reflection of a muddled mind. They could be seen as</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>**AO2: WIDER KNOWLEDGE**</td>
<td>strong prescriptivists because they suggest punctuation is what makes you successful because accurate punctuation makes sure any reader can understand and it is widely accepted as the</td>
<td>**AO1: ENGAGING WITH QUESTION**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>**AO2: WIDER KNOWLEDGE**</td>
<td>appropriate in education and in formal contexts like government and media. An example is a comma splice because many people write sentences with a comma instead of a full stop like in 'The journalist</td>
<td>**AO3: CONTEXT**
AO2: EXAMPLE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>**AO2: SPECIFIC EXAMPLE**</td>
<td>used a modifier like 'outrageous' to shock the reader, it makes it easy to see the opinion.' This mistake would not be acceptable in formal writing because you should impose the rules for clarity. In school writing needs to be accurate to get the best marks because this is also a formal context.</td>
<td>**AO1: TERM**

AO3: CONTEXT</td>
</tr>
</table>

COMMENTARY

This extract demonstrates the qualities of top Band 2. There is evidence of some linguistic knowledge (prescriptivism, appropriateness/acceptability, formality), a few basic terms (comma splice, modifier), and some attempt to provide supporting examples. Discussion is not wide-ranging, but there is a clear attempt to make linguistic points and answer the question. Wider knowledge includes reference to a valid text and particular point of view, with some attempt to explain it in relation to the question focus. While lacking development, there are clear references to relevant concepts such as 'clarity', and to different language contexts (government, media, school). The writing is technically accurate, but the style tends to be rather imprecise with loosely structured multi-clause sentences.

RESPONSE 5

   People who stand up for punctuation call themselves "Grammar Guerrillas". They go round changing punctuation that's wrong in public such as apostrophes in shop signs like "egg's" or posters such as "1980's music night" where they aren't needed. Lynne Truss proves it's an emotive topic because she uses dramatic analogies in "Eats Shoots and Leaves" to show inaccurate punctuation is like a traffic pile-up when the lights aren't working or a door shut in your face. It's definitely good for us to see punctuation used to learn from it because English lecturers say that the best way to learn is to see examples in everyday life, but this makes it seem as if using the wrong punctuation is life-threatening. In fact it doesn't usually effect understanding which is the important thing as writers have to make sure meaning is clear with no ambiguity. This can sometimes create humour "Let's eat Jack". There is no comma so the proper noun Jack looks like the object when really it's the vocative and should have a comma. When this is said, a pause would make the meaning obvious, but in writing it could be confusing. Sometimes no punctuation is needed such as in headlines. These are short/direct and often noun phrases (Celeb hoax horror) or simple sentences (Leak spells disaster) so don't punctuation to make the meaning clear.

COMMENTARY

This is a secure Band 3 response. The analysis is sensible and the discussion competent, with a reasonable demonstration of wider knowledge. There are places where the points lack precision (the reference to 'English lecturers') and grammatical descriptions could be developed (e.g. explaining the use of apostrophes in the examples). Discussion of different contexts also needs to go further. However, there is a sound use of terminology and examples are appropriate. Clear engagement with meaning, and some attempt to focus on the question. The style is straightforward, but accurate.

Writing the essay

This is an opportunity for learners to put into practice all the things they have considered so far. Writing the essay could be:

- a timed task
- a 'walking, talking' exam
- an individual homework assignment
- group work in which a class plan is created and groups work on different elements of the essay (the ultimate aim being to create a model answer by using class/teacher comments to improve the individual segments).

Where this is an individual task, feedback should aim to consider how well learners have assimilated the knowledge gained from working through the exercises, as well as their ability to meet the AOs.

Sample responses to the SAMs

Use the unannotated copies of the two SAMs responses so that learners can apply what they have learnt to complete essays. You may like to use Response 1 as a classroom discussion or small group exercise. Once learners have produced their own annotations, discuss the annotated version. The summative comments from each essay are reproduced below for convenience.

RESPONSE 1   Band 3

A competent response that demonstrates language study and the ability to apply knowledge. Generally sound use of terminology. Focus on question could be more precise at times.

AO1   Band 3 (mid)

Mostly accurate expression - some lack of sentence control. Clear attempt to organise response. Generally sound use of terminology - reasonable range. Competent discussion of topic. Basic methods of analysis.

AO2   Band 3 (low)
Some sensible discussion of concepts (turn-taking, modality, face theory) and issues (status, authority). Some points supported by examples. Discussion could be more focused in places.

AO3   Band 3 (mid)
Clear attempt to address different contexts. Comments are not developed, but show some sensible understanding. Engaging with meaning and making some clear points. Some relevant evaluation of effects.

RESPONSE 2   Band 5 (low)

A well-written response with clear demonstration of a range of relevant linguistic knowledge. Some discussion could be developed, but a secure focus on the question throughout. Confident analysis of the stimulus material with appropriate terminology. Less wide-ranging use of terms in the second half of the response, but secure understanding. Additional examples needed in places.

AO1   Band 5 (low)

Makes effective use of terminology to analyse stimulus material - room for development later in essay. Reasonable range. Effective methods of analysis and thorough discussion of topic. Coherent, academic style. Clear organisation.

AO2   Band 4/5 (borderline)

Consistent references to relevant experts. Some detailed discussion of concepts (turn-taking, modality) and issues (status, social distance). Gender discussion is less developed. Apt and concise examples - textual support could be developed in places.

AO3   Band 4

Considering language use in different contexts. Engaging with meaning and effect. Purposeful choices.