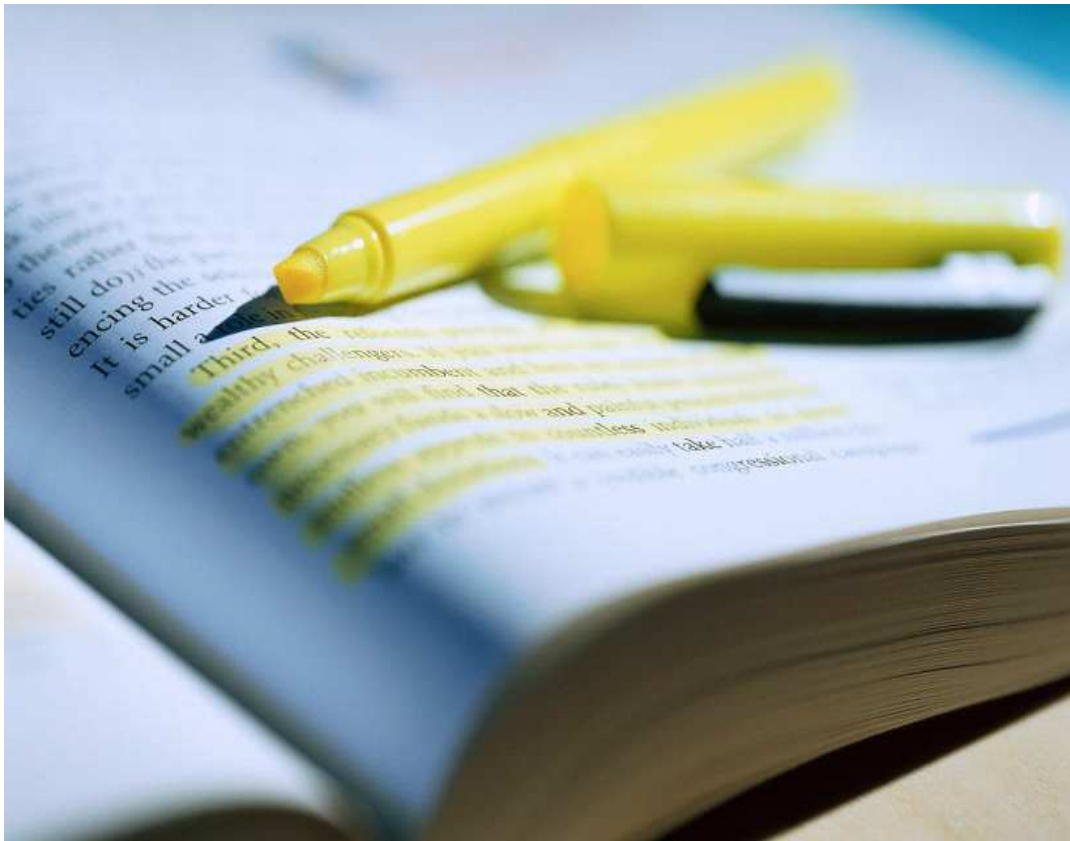


# How to be Successful in English

## Unit 1:



## Reading: How Writers Achieve Effects – Exam Practice

## ANALYSING LINGUISTIC AND PRESENTATIONAL DEVICES: EXAM PRACTICE

### The Exam

At some stage in the examination, it is highly likely that you will be asked to compare the linguistic and/or use of presentational devices in the texts you are presented with in the exam. You need to be able to look across **two texts** and be ready to identify how the writers of the texts have adopted certain features of language and presentation to engage their audiences.

**Equally, when you write about the texts, you need to remember that you need to do so COMPARATIVELY. You should draw on the skills of written comparison that you have used in preparation for English Paper 2 – on the *Poems from Different Cultures*- and the English Literature paper.**

**The principle is EXACTLY the same whether you are comparing poems or non-fiction texts!**

### PRACTICE TEXTS

On the following pages are two different texts written about film violence and its impact on young people.

You need to read both texts carefully in the same way that you will in the examination. You need to pay close attention to both the subject matter **and** the way that the writer has chosen to use **language** and **graphology** to present their ideas.

**You should make careful annotations on the texts.**

### PRACTICE QUESTIONS

After you have read both texts you will find a set of questions asking you to think about the linguistic and graphological choices in one or both texts. You need to apply to those questions the ideas that you have learned thus far.

**When you are writing your answers to the questions about both texts remember to do so in a comparative style**

TEXT A – feature article from a national newspaper

## **BLOOD, GUTS & GORE: FILM VIOLENCE AND ITS EFFECT ON YOUNG PEOPLE**

It is a Friday night in the Cameron household. Henry Cameron, father of Cassie, Grace and Illie ushers his children into the living room to watch television. Henry maintains control of the remote at all times and is highly vigilant about what his young daughters see on television. Indeed, he has taken his concern to new heights investing in one of Canada's most successful exports of recent years: the V-Chip. The V-Chip allows Henry – and millions of concerned parents like him – to micro manage his children's viewing habits. Henry has programmed the chip to 'block' television programmes that contain content of a sexual or violent nature.

The Cameron family are not alone in their growing concern over the diet of gratuitous violence that is broadcast on our TVs and shown in our cinemas each year. A recent survey by *New Scientist* found that by the time the average American child begins the equivalent of primary education, they have witnessed 8,000 murders and 10,000 acts of violence just by watching television.

### **A root cause of brutality**

Many observers point – with growing support – to the increasing amount of simulated violence as a root cause of the explosion of brutality across society as a whole. Last week saw the publication of the Byron Review by leading child psychologist Tanya Byron. In her wide-ranging report, Dr Byron pointed to the hugely detrimental effects that violence has on young people. Her startling findings focused on the immediate reaction of children after exposure to violent material. Many she noted engaged in acts of mild violence – throwing objects, speaking aggressively – which point to the potentially harmful effect violent films and television programmes can have.

However, one group who appear unconcerned are the film makers themselves. In recent years, the amount of



*The Departed: Scorsese's acclaimed tale of brutality and gratuitous violence*

violence in Hollywood blockbusters has increased at an exponential rate.

Some of Hollywood's finest directors have been acclaimed for films in which excessive violence is an integral part. Last year, for example, Martin Scorsese won the Academy Award for his film *The Departed*, in which a man is hurled from a building and a couple are gratuitously executed while the killer cracks a joke.

### **Increasing body counts**

It is this seeming relish that causes the most concern. In the mid-1990s Oliver Stone's *Natural Born Killers* changed the direction of violent representations on film. Stone's 'Bonnie and Clyde' saga clocked up a body count of no less than fifty two in just under two hours. Alarming, Stone himself describes the film as a 'comedy'.

As the decade wore on body counts were to increase until it was no longer about the number of the deaths, but the brutality of the killing that became the preoccupation of Hollywood filmmakers. Steven Spielberg's *Saving Private Ryan* – acclaimed for its brutal, if realistic, re-enactment of the D-Day landings – broke new ground in cinematic violence. Embracing new technology, Spielberg subjected his audience to a blood

drenched twenty minutes of the most horrific violence ever seen on film.

### **Sado-Masochistic Pleasure**

It appears even sacred pillars of morality are fair game. In 2004 Mel Gibson unleashed a firestorm of criticism with his extremely graphic depiction of the last twelve hours of Jesus' life in *The Passion of the Christ*. While many of a holy persuasion claimed to have had the light of religious faith reaffirmed, some critics pointed to Gibson's apparent sado-masochistic pleasure in depicting the horrendous and agonising destruction of the male body.

If these tensions are so abundantly obvious to adults, and the outrage is one provoked by disgust and unease at the barbarity on screen, the impact on young people is surely greater still.

Indeed so according to child psychologists. They argue that each representation of violence on screen is – in the minds of some young people – a vindication of the behaviour. Where the young person is particularly disposed to acts of violence, what they see on screen can form a source of 'education' from which the child gleans new ways of enacting their violent tendencies.

However, the BBFC, the organisation charged with censoring material in Britain, argues that the current system of film certification is robust and judicious enough to prevent excessively violent material becoming available in the first instance, and ending up in the hands of young people in the second. Instead, they point to the unwillingness of parents to manage and censor what they allow their children to see.

This is a responsibility that Henry Cameron takes very seriously. He points to his 'absolute responsibility' to safeguard the 'moral health' of his children and 'preserve them from the horrors of the filmmaker's disturbed imaginations.'

### **'This is barbaric stuff'**

However, Gibson – like Spielberg and Stone before him – points to what he identifies as a broader responsibility: the truth. In one of only a handful of interviews Gibson used to promote *The Passion*, he acknowledged the brutality of his film saying, 'it's unbearable at times, even in the editing suite I was looking for the fire escape, this is barbaric stuff.'



*Gibson's Passion: even Jesus is a target for film makers and their bloodlust*

Gibson added one telling footnote at the end of the interview however, acknowledging that though the film contained violence on a previous unprecedented scale, 'so too did the Crucifixion.'

Aside from Gibson's well-documented religious orthodoxy, there remains a validity to his argument, one to which many other filmmakers subscribe. It is not their responsibility, they say, to censor the past, or, indeed the brutality of our own time. Instead, they argue, they are creating representations of human nature.

In turn, the question of film violence and young people becomes very much of the 'chicken' and 'egg' variety. However, those involved with young people argue vehemently against the Hollywood elite. Jim Eagleton of the Family Alliance argues that filmmakers point to the past as 'mitigation for their bloodlust' and that they perpetuate excessive violence because the adverse publicity is 'the gold dust on which the box office thrives'. Eagleton is demanding even tougher legislation; he wants a moratorium on *all* film violence.

While the V-Chip might be protecting the young and impressionable minds of Henry Cameron's children, there are arguably more young people taking relish in the horrors that they see each night on their screens. Many of whom the psychologists tell us will go on to perpetuate violence themselves. Equally, there are many others who will just switch off the television as the credits role and become educated, successful and law abiding members of society.

TEXT B: leaflet from a children's charity



Are ***you*** watching what ***they're***  
watching?



Young People and Violence in the Media

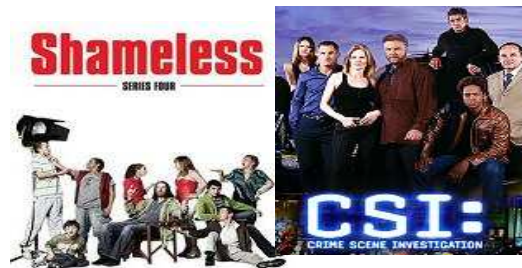


## The NSPCC's Campaign for Responsible Viewing



### The Facts

- The average child watches between two and three hours of television per day.
- By the time they leave Secondary Education, the average child will have spent more time in front of the television than in the classroom.
- Children are imitators, they learn behaviours from television that might not be appropriate in reality.
- Television is a powerful force in shaping the behaviour and morality of our children.



*A recent survey of young people in regard to their viewing habits said that they regularly watched programmes like Shameless and CSI;*

### The NSPCC's Campaign for Responsible Viewing

The NSPCC is urging parents with young children to take an active interest in the viewing habits of their children. Recent research has shown that the impact of excessive and inappropriate television viewing can be potentially harmful to our young people.

Not all television is harmful, some of it can be informative and enlightening to our children. However, much of what our children are exposed to encourages them to behave in ways that are dangerous, aggressive and even violent.

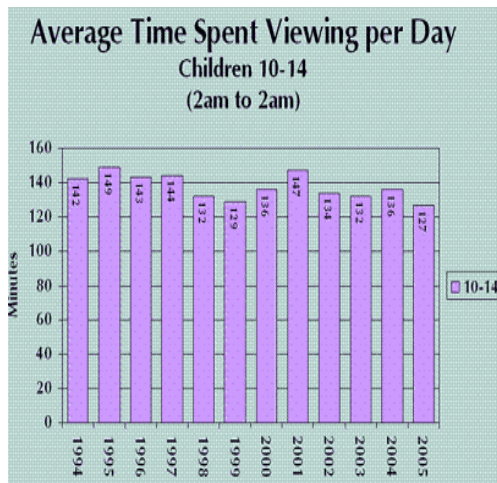
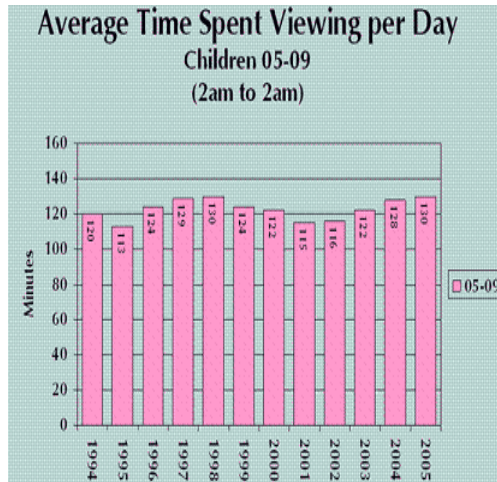
We are asking parents a simple question:

**Are *YOU* watching what *they're* watching?**

***If not, your children could be learning behaviours and attitudes that YOU***

### What you can I do to make sure MY child's is safe?

- ✓ **Set Limits** - ration the amount of television that your child can watch.
- ✓ **Co-Watch** - take the time to sit with your child so that you can suggest why some of the attitudes and behaviours that they see are inappropriate.
- ✓ **Monitor** - encourage your child to watch programmes that promote positive moral values, and avoid those that present excessive sex and violence.
- ✓ **Analyse TV** - help your child to understand why certain actions shown on TV are unacceptable.
- ✓ **Model Positive Viewing Habits** - children imitate the behaviour of their parents, so avoid watching programmes which contain adult content when your child is in the room.



### Where can I get more Information?

- **British Board of Film Classification** offer guidance on film certificates.  
Website: <http://www.bbfc.co.uk>
- **National Cable & Television Association** offers information on how parents can monitor the viewing of their children,  
Website: <http://www.ncta.com>
- **Parentstv.org** is a pressure group that runs campaigns by parents to improve standards in television.  
Website: <http://www.parentstv.org>

# Are *you* watching what *they're* watching?



The NSPCC promotes positive and responsible viewing habits in the interest of our childrens' well being and moral development. For further information about our campaign, or for more guidance on how you can become a responsible viewer, log on to our website

[www.nspcc.org.uk/areyouwatchingwhatthey'rewatching](http://www.nspcc.org.uk/areyouwatchingwhatthey'rewatching)

## ANALYSING LINGUISTIC AND PRESENTATIONAL DEVICES: EXAM PRACTICE

---

### Planning a Response to a Question about Language in a Text

At some stage on English Paper 1, you are going to be asked to consider the linguistic choices that a writer has made in their text. It is important that you adopt a very systematic and logical approach to this kind of question.

**The first thing you need to think about is** the kinds of choices that are open to writers. In other words, think about all of the different techniques that you have covered in this booklet so far. You should try to observe patterns of language use that correspond with those ideas.

**You will do this by annotating** the text as you read it for the first time. If you are thoroughly prepared, the types of techniques that the writer is using will become very clear to you.

**You should not 'feature-spot' however.** This is unhelpful. Questions about language are not asking you to identify as many examples of emotive adjectives as you can.

**Instead you should** look at where there are **patterns of particular language use** that are designed to help the **writer achieve their purpose.**

### Structuring your Response

**In the exam you will have limited time.**

**It is therefore important to logically and systematically structure** your response to a question about language. You should aim to make **very clear and precise** points about the language that has been used in the text.

**You should also give examples of the language use that you are discussing** in your answer. This is important because it shows the examiner that your ideas are based on careful, sustainable reading of the text.

**Having given an example you should then clearly explain how that language use links to what the question is asking you.** This way, you will ensure that your linguistic analysis is gaining you marks. That is the name of the game: every minute that you are in the exam you want to be sure that you are collecting marks ultimately. If you adopt this approach you won't just be collecting marks; but you'll be doing so in an efficient way.

### Clear, Effective and Efficient Prose

**As always it is crucial to write in a style that is clear, effective and efficient. Do not commit stylistic suicide by over-complicating your style.**

# Structuring a Response

## INTRODUCTION

ADDRESS THE TERMS OF THE QUESTION VERY BRIEFLY TO INDICATE TO THE EXAMINAR THAT YOU KNOW WHAT THE QUESTION IS ASKING.

YOU COULD USE PHRASES LIKE:

*'The text [title] employs a range of linguistic techniques in order to achieve [TERMS OF QUESTION].*

*'Equally the writer aims to engage their audience by developing a [adjective] tone.*

PHRASES LIKE THIS SHOW YOU HAVE A CLEAR GENERAL UNDERSTANDING OF AUDIENCE, PURPOSE AND TONE, AND A GOOD OVERVIEW OF THE TEXT.

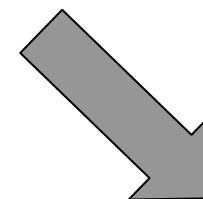
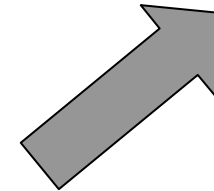


## BODY PARAGRAPHS

THIS IS WHERE YOU TACKLE THE CLOSE LINGUISTIC ANALYSIS.

YOU SHOULD EXPLAIN EACH PATTERN OF LANGUAGE USE THAT YOU HAVE FOUND IN THE TEXT.

USE THE BOXES TO THE LEFT TO SEE HOW YOU SHOULD STRUCTURE A BODY PARAGRAPH.



## MAKE A POINT

- Identify a feature of the language.
- Explain how it relates to the term of the question.

## GIVE AN EXAMPLE

- Embed a carefully chosen quotation.
- Explain with close reference to the language why this is important.

## LINK BACK TO THE QUESTION

- Conclude by showing how what you have written is RELEVANT to what the question asks.

YOU SHOULD USE THIS FORMAT WHEN WRITING ABOUT PRESENTATIONAL DEVICES TO; WHERE YOU WRITE ABOUT LANGUAGE FEATURES CHANGE TO INCLUDE PRESENTATIONAL DEVICES.





































---

---

---

---

---

---

---

# UNIT 1, SECTION A – KEY THINGS TO REMEMBER

## Key Points of an Argument

- ✓ Identify the topic sentences
- ✓ Locate the qualifying sentences
- ✓ Give consideration to how the argument is concluded
- ✓ Make sure that you cover the entire argument and not just one or two paragraphs.

**ANSWER THE QUESTION THAT IS ASKED!**

## Fact & Opinion

- ✓ A fact is information that can be proven to be true.
- ✓ A false fact is information presented in a factual way but cannot be proven to be true.
- ✓ An opinion is a person's subjective viewpoint and cannot be proven to be true.
- ✓ Substantiation is information used to support an opinion.
- ✓ Facts are used to give the impression that a writer's opinion has a basis in quantifiable fact.

## **GENERAL REMINDERS**

- 1. ANSWER THE QUESTION**
- 2. WRITE IN A CLEAR AND EFFICIENT WAY**
- 3. MAKE SURE YOU KEEP TO TIME!**

## How Writers Achieve Effects

### Language

- ✓ Look at vocabulary & word choice.
- ✓ Consider the impact of the writer's syntactical style.
- ✓ How do the writer's linguistic choices help them to engage their audience and achieve their purpose?

### Presentational Devices

- ✓ Consider the effect of the images & photographs
- ✓ How does the use of fonts and title design enhance meaning?
- ✓ How do the titles and sub-headings help to lead the reader through the argument?
- ✓ How do the writer's graphological choices help them to engage their



