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Subsidiary

In English Language (WEN01)

Unit 1: Language: Context and Identity

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This unit introduces students to how language is used in data from a range of sources. Students explore how the contexts of production and reception affect language choices in spoken and written texts. Students also explore how language reflects and constructs the identity or identities of the user and varies depending on the contexts of production and reception. Students apply appropriate methods of language analysis to a range of written, spoken or multimodal data taken from 20th and 21st century sources using the key language frameworks and levels. They also demonstrate their understanding through the creation of a new text for a specified audience, purpose and context.

Unit 1 is assessed by examination of 1 hour 45 minute's duration. Candidates answer two questions: one question from Section A and one question from Section B. The paper is marked out of a total of 50 marks with 35 allocated to Section A and 15 to Section B.

Section A: Context and Identity
Question 1 (35 marks)

Candidates answer one question on two unseen extracts selected from 20th and 21st century sources. They are required to produce an extended comparative response showing how the presentation of identity is shaped by language and contextual factors in both unseen texts.

The task is assessed across AO1, 2, 3 and 4:

- AO1: Apply appropriate methods of language analysis, using associated terminology and coherent written expression.
- AO2: Demonstrate critical understanding of concepts and issues relevant to language use.
- AO3: Analyse and evaluate how contextual factors and language features are associated with the construction of meaning.
- AO4: Explore connections across texts, informed by linguistic concepts and methods.

In 2021 Text A presented extracts of the speeches made by three of the speakers at a rally held outside Congress in the USA. Brenna Levitan and Matt Post were students at Montgomery County High School and, as such, represented the body of students directly affected by the mass shootings there in February 2018. Levitan played a key role in organising the rally and the student walkout that was staged as a national protest after the shootings. She presents as a passionate individual who is fully aware of the political potential of the students she represents to change gun laws across the USA. Her identity as coordinator and motivator is clearly developed in her speech. Matt Post presents as eloquent, aggressive and determined to challenge those in power. His emphatic comments about the potential power of the youth vote make a forceful political statement. Pelosi's identity as a Democratic politician is clear, as is her stance on guns and gun control. The unity she expresses with the students, coupled with her repeated acknowledgement of their potentially transformative actions, presents her as a concerned individual and seasoned campaigner for change, but also as a politician seizing an opportunity to promote her cause.

Text B presents Rebecca Kadaga in her role as Chairperson of the CWP. Her identity as a Ugandan politician is developed through her specific references to the legislation regarding youth inclusion in politics in her home country, whereas her role in the Commonwealth organisation presents her as passionate about the issue on an international scale. She demonstrates detailed understanding of the process and data that underpin the issue and is sympathetic throughout to the young people whose cause she champions.

The question asked candidates to analyse and compare how the language of both texts conveys personal identity. Three bullet points offered additional prompts and guidance directly linked to the Assessment Objectives (and the mark scheme) for this component and reminding candidates of the specific areas of study they should apply to the task:

- relevant language frameworks and levels
- concepts and issues such as social, cultural and gender factors
- contextual factors such as mode, field, function and audience.

Centres are advised that the format and focus of the question will be consistent across the lifetime of the specification. Actual wording may, inevitably, change depending on the nature and content of the two unseen texts presented. However, the focus of assessment is clearly stated in the question stem with its prompt to consider and compare how personal identity is constructed and presented in the source materials. The bullet points remind candidates of the areas of study they should apply to this comparative exploration and are linked directly to the Assessment Objectives applied by examiners to their responses. **The mark scheme contains indicative content and may well provide centres with a useful resource when preparing their students for subsequent examinations.**

The texts were clearly linked by the issues of youth involvement in politics. Given the differing contexts of each, there was much opportunity for candidates to explore the links and contrasts between them. The focus of the question was the construction and presentation of **personal identity**, and the ability of candidates to incorporate this into their analysis proved something of a discriminator, with a significant minority struggling with this concept. Those that framed their analysis through this central focus were rewarded.

In **January 2021** responses to Section A covered a full range of achievement. Most candidates offered consideration of the genre and context of both texts and were able to draw links between them based on their central focus on the issue politics. They were also able to offer comparative consideration of the differing audience and context of each text and shape these – with varying success – through the differing perspectives and circumstances of the speakers/writer.

The source texts proved to be accessible to most candidates and the majority offered a balanced consideration of both and the theme of politics and youth activism that linked them. Most candidates could differentiate context well and most responses across the range could point to more complex/subtle aspects of each, such as the contrasts between the two student speakers and the politician Nancy Pelosi in Text A or the political and geographic context of the Kadaga letter. Successful answers often developed insightful contrast between the experiences of the writers/speakers and how these influenced their personal perspectives on politics and youth engagement in this sphere. There were also some very competent explorations of the cultural and societal attitudes towards gender, age and politics.

It was pleasing to see that many centres had made use of the support afforded by the Examiner Report and the indicative content in the mark scheme produced in previous series. This enabled many to meet more of the specific requirements of the Assessment Objectives. Some used these documents as a framework for their responses which ensured coverage and structure in the mid bands of achievement, **but** which sometimes led to repetition at the lower levels and, in some, less frequent, cases, restricted responses at the mid to upper levels. In these instances, candidates sometimes looked for direct points of comparison across frameworks that were not really evident in the texts themselves, and the subsequent analysis was, somewhat strained/forced as a result. Those that used the marks scheme framework to provide ‘subheadings’ sometimes generated repetitive and/or undeveloped responses. One candidate replicated the table itself, adopting an artificial

'column' format which restricted length and coherence significantly. Centres are advised that the mark scheme offers indicative content – it is **not** prescriptive, and given the nature of the specific frameworks considered, there is considerable overlap. Candidates need to be selective and only apply framework that relate directly to the task and which can be exemplified directly from the source materials.

Most candidates were able to describe method and effect but many at the mid-lower levels of achievement struggled to apply specific language terms to their consideration of how – and why – these effects were produced. A more systematic approach, whereby comments are supported by evidence drawn directly from the source materials would have provided candidates with the opportunity to explore the language from which this evidence was comprised (applying concepts, terms and frameworks) and would have enabled them to reach the requirement for higher levels of achievement provided in the mark scheme. Some responses used a range of impressive language terms to describe language features but did not go beyond a descriptive approach and marks had to be restricted because of failure to link to context/purposes. A list-like approach/feature spotting is not a successful way to tackle this question.

Some offered generalised comment on context whilst those that developed comment not only on the background context of the texts but also on key aspects of production and reception of each (including key generic conventions) were rewarded accordingly. A significant minority did not address **AO4** and the requirement to comment on the links between the two texts and this made an upward movement through the levels difficult.

Successful responses to **Text A** looked the context of the rally and the background to the protest there. They were comfortable with the conventions of public speaking. Many could articulate how the structure of each speech extract fulfilled both its informative/persuasive function and enabled the development and presentation of voice through reflection, information and observation. The best differentiated the voices of Letivan, Post and Pelosi and linked this to the perspective of each and/or their role in the rally itself. Many were able to articulate the argument each speaker presented regarding law reform and the role of young people as voices and catalysts for political change. These successful responses picked up on the shared values and concerns of all three speakers.

Responses that were placed in the highest bands of achievement supported comment and assertion with evidence directly drawn from the text which was used to explore the specific language choices made, applying terminology in good range at word, sentence and whole - text level. These linked comment to the concept of 'voice' and the devices used in its construction. They were able to comment on the crafting of each speech to develop a relationship with the audience and thus further its rhetorical and promotional function. **It is this link between form and function/effect that signals a successful response.**

Less successful were those responses that offered generalised comment on the context of the speeches and/or the rally and issues upon which they were based. These often adopted a very descriptive approach. Coverage of the actual speeches tended to be unbalanced and in a minority some extracts were not investigated at all. Some neglected the prompts in the question and produced a discursive essay on the issue of politics and youth activism. Those that offered limited exemplification and limited specific analysis of technique were anchored in the mid/lower bands of achievement.

Successful responses to **Text B** took cues from Kadaga's presentation of herself a female Ugandan politician to develop the more formal and (often) more complex nature the language choices she

made. These also linked her position within the CWP to the nature and the placement of her letter. These drew insightful links between her comments on national scale and the broader/global reach of the publication. The nature of the CWP publication and its primary and secondary audience were often used to develop comment of Kadaga's construction and presentation of 'voice'.

As with Text A, less successful responses offered generalised comment on the context and structure of the letter and adopted a very descriptive approach to its content. Those that offered limited exemplification and limited specific analysis of the language used were anchored in the mid/ lower bands of achievement. Limited consideration the personal identity of Kadaga and how this was constructed and presented also negatively impacted on the success of the response.

AO4 requires candidates to explore connections and contrasts between the source texts. Comparative work was usually helpful in lifting responses into Level 4 enabling candidates to demonstrate a more discriminating approach to the data. However, many lacked the confidence to deal with the texts in an integrated comparative approach and dealt with them in separate sections. The most successful responses seized the many opportunities for comparison and contrast – many adopting an integrated approach to this aspect of the task. Generic form and convention were clear points of contrast and comparison when considering aspects of voice. Many candidates explored the purpose of the texts and developed links through the persuasive function of each and the central link between them: the power of youth to effect transformative change. Most recognised that the texts were clearly linked by the issues of youth activism and politics but were differentiated by socio-geographical focus: the speakers in Text A were motivated to action by the single issue of gun violence and legislation whereas Kadaga's points related to a broader engagement embedded in process and policy. The best picked up on the fact that Text A tone and content was very much driven by the young people themselves, whereas in Text B the focus was on the need for engagement of youth by those currently in power. Many also picked up that both achieved a potential global reach through distribution on media platforms

Less successful responses outlined the links and contrasts between the two texts but failed to develop any but the more obvious or to explore the language which evidenced these. Such responses were characterised by an essentially descriptive approach. A significant number of candidates took a summary approach to the content of the texts which is not a useful approach to achieve marks. This proves reading ability but not 'analysis' of language features in use.

The following excerpts are taken from an answer that was awarded a mark of 26 for Question 1.

This mark is mid - Level 4. There is a degree of competence and system to the response which clearly meets all of the AO descriptors characterised by clarity and relevance at Level 3. There is also considerable, but not fully consistent, discrimination that marks a Level 4 response.

There is effective consideration of issues of production, distribution and reception:

As text A is an edited extract of 3 speeches, the the main mode of the extract is written, spoken, but as it was filmed and published on the internet 'Youtube' which is an online medium, Text A becomes multimodal.

In Text A the examples such as 'Please join me in welcoming' and 'Thank you all very much' point to a spoken mode but is only multimodal because of the medium of distribution.

It uses the framework of the mark scheme to afford some system to points of comparison and achieves a balance in terms of coverage of both texts as a result. The approach is reasonably successful but does lead to the occasional repetition and 'forced' comparison:

However ~~Text~~ Text B is not targeted at a particular nation, ~~but~~ in fact it is targeted to all nations, which gives it a wider target audience of governments, ~~govern~~ government bodies, Political parties, Youth wings of political parties, Youth around the world, politicians and leisure readers.

Analysis is systematic, with integrated points of comparison and links between form and function. There is relative security with word level analysis but less confidence at sentence level. Here, for example, lexical choices and linked and compared via function/purpose:

In Text A is about bringing about a change in gun laws, so the fields present are gun violence, gun violence, mass shootings, gun laws and even youth ~~empower~~ youth ~~empower~~ empowerment, which can be understood by the phrases 'Gun control', 'Shooting', 'Our voices matter', 'Violence', 'Background checks' and 'collateral'.

Terms are applied in reasonable, but not, full range – a fact that restricts upward movement through the Level. There is a worthy exploration of literary device, however:

In Text A there are a few metaphors are observed, one of them being 'adr. drumbeat', which in this case is used to represent a feeling of power.

Analysis is in reasonable range. There is slightly less security with sentence level analysis and this accounts largely for its placement in the middle of the Level.

The following extracts are taken from a script that was awarded a mark of 20 which places at the top of Level 3.

There is valid interpretation of both texts and some valid points of comparison and contrast. There is system in the investigation but and, although some comments lack depth and development the answer is consistently on task and affords the clarity and relevance of a secure Level 3 response.

There is a clear sense of audience which is linked to context and factors of production and reception:

The audience of the speeches in text A are those who are present at the rally, and also accessible and viewed by a global audience as the rally was filmed and distributed online via Youtube. The audience can also be those who are interested about the topic of gun violence and wish for the change in the laws as discussed and mentioned in the speech.

There is a recognition of rhetorical function of Text A, but features are generally defined as 'spoken' and terms are only sometimes specific:

Many spoken features are used in text A, such as repetition of phrases - 'We need to vote now' and many emotive languages such as 'enough is enough' - ~~this shows~~ the along with the usage of words such as 'want' and 'need' in 'We want to vote now' shows how importance the situation is and has

The three speakers in Text A are differentiated by content but the response lacks the analytical terminology to lift across the borderline into Level 4. For example, the thrust of Pelosi's contribution is sensed as is her closing imperative function:

The second speaker - Nancy Pelosi - also informs about the gun violence by stating her emotions, 'too much violence, too much heartbreak'. She also provides factual data, '97% of Americans...' to provide people with realistic information for persuasion, and concludes by directing to the listeners with 'Let's get the job done. We need

There is a reasonable investigation of generic form and attendant convention as here, with reference to Text B:

Furthermore, the effects of 'enabling youth-friendly legal frameworks, the engagement with political parties' and about the 'Electoral Period' is conveyed in the form of persuasion and evidence. The letter then ends with addressing the readers; 'Dear readers,' and persuading and encouraging them on to the path for 'future political leadership'. Repetition of words, under lexis consist of words such as youth, politics, political leadership, society, democracies and citizens.

Section B: The Creation of Voice

Question 2 (15 marks)

Section B of the examination is assessed against AO5: 'Demonstrate expertise and creativity in the use of English to communicate in different ways' with a total of 15 marks allocated for this component. As such the task assesses both the fluency and accuracy of written expression and the ability to generate an original and (hopefully) engaging text that meets the stated requirements of audience, purpose and context.

Centres are advised that although the paper is weighted across the two tasks (with 35 marks allocated for Q1) the 15 marks available for Q2 can be the difference between several final grades. Candidates are urged to set aside sufficient time to understand the specific requirements of the task in terms of genre, context, audience and purpose and to produce a meaningful and, hopefully, engaging response. They are also reminded that they **MUST** draw on the material from at least one of the source texts – there were some very engaging responses that failed to do this and were essentially self-penalising.

Candidates are expected to demonstrate their own expertise and creativity in the use of English. They are encouraged to incorporate personal and local references. Candidates were expected to draw upon the at least one of the source materials provided in Section A but reshape them to meet the requirements of the context.

In January 2021 candidates were asked to produce the text for an article linked to a school/college website aimed at promoting the involvement of young people in the political process. The question stem was carefully worded to provide candidates with a clear indication of expectation of context, function and audience. The second part of the question:

In addition to your own ideas you must refer to material from at least one of the texts in the Source Booklet

highlighted a key requirement of the task, that is the need to incorporate some material from one (or both) of the source texts into the report. This proved problematic to a significant minority of candidates but is a key requirement which must be taken into account. It is NOT necessary to incorporate every detail from the source; indeed, many that did produced lengthy and essentially pedestrian paraphrases that failed to engage. More successful were those that took only relevant information from the source materials and reworked this to a lively and engaging agenda better fitted to the prescribed context of delivery.

The format of the question will be relatively constant, but wording will, inevitably, change according to the nature of the creative task set. As this is a creative response, examiners will accept any approach that concedes to the prompts provided.

There were some pleasing responses in the upper bands of achievement this series with many achieving marks in Level 4 and some (the most successful) in Level 5. This is encouraging as the 15 marks available for this component can make a huge difference to the final grade awarded. Unfortunately, this improvement was not fully evident in the mid and lower Levels. Here responses were often very brief which severely restricted links to the source materials or failed to fully engage the reader. Others appeared to be very rushed and undeveloped, indicating that candidates did not manage their time effectively, A significant minority failed to even attempt Q2.

Successful responses effectively applied the interactive conventions of a web-based article and

showed awareness of the youth audience. These produced clear, well- structured responses and demonstrated an understanding of writing for an audience, experimenting with register. They demonstrated clear awareness of audience and function, conceding clearly to the context and the persuasive/informative function of the article. There were some very fluently written and convincing new texts. The best adapted the source material fluidly – for example, drawing upon the rhetorical ‘voice’ of the speakers in Text A, or the political imperatives of Kadaga in Text B to target their audience.

Many, in the mid-range of achievement could adopt a tone or ‘voice’ which was convincing even if the technical accuracy in written English was lacking.

The following extracts are taken from a script which was awarded a mark of 11 which places it mid-Level 4.

It is consistently on task and, although there are occasional slips in expression and minor inconsistencies with register/tone, it is well structured and expressed. This response fulfils the rhetorical function appropriately and concedes to the web/article context. The decision to adopt the American context of Text A is acceptable and affords interesting reference to this source:

Tomorrow's Leaders

The traumatic incident where 17 people were killed from mass shooting at the a high school in Parkland has left all of us shaken and in fear. It is has now been proven that the Government that we voted for has turned its back. The Government has failed us. It is time, that we take matters to our own hands. We are the future.

Rhetorical features are gainfully employed:

Let us start fresh. Let us start today. Today,

And:

Enrole. Enrole to make a difference in our lives. Enrole to be the changes. Enrole to start the change. This ~~is~~ course shall be a stepping stone to the great tomorrow.

Some sections have minor struggles with tone/register:

There is a popular saying regarding
Politics. ^{and by the people} From the people and For the people. The next
Government that shall take the throne shall be from us.
The next government that shall take the throne shall work
for us, but not for itself. The next government that
shall take the throne shall be the one approved by us
unanimously.

but the overall thrust of the piece is on task, and consistently so.

The following extracts are drawn from a response which was awarded a mark of 6, which places it at the top of Level 2.

This placement at the top of the Level indicates that there are instances of the Level 3 characteristics of clarity/relevance but understanding in, on balance, 'General'. The response is brief and undeveloped although there is general understanding of the source material, and the task that relates to it.

It starts reasonably, with evident understanding of audience and context, but this relative success is not sustained.

There is a reasonable clear, if essentially straightforward, sense of the given audience, purpose and context:

If you are interested and like to sign up, feel free to email me or Mr. Blake, click on the link below, or meet me in class 010 on Tuesday for more information and guidelines.

The attempt at assimilation of Text B is evident and worthy but is also awkward and presents something of a struggle with content:

We are not formally represented in national political institutions and we are only involved in informal, politically relevant processes, such as activism. I think we as the youth ~~carry and are~~ ^{are} able to strengthen and enhance ~~the~~ democratic processes, as well as carry social responsibility. As a group we will have a long way of work in order to reach our goal. As a team, we will have to deal with a lot of legal framework and engage with political parties, that will be either

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