



# YEAR 12 *Trial Exam*

## 2021

# ENGLISH

### *Sample responses to Section C with annotations*

**This book contains:**

- three graded sample responses for Section C
- annotations providing assessor feedback for each response, including a mark range.

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## SECTION C – Argument and persuasive language

### Task

Write an analysis of the ways in which argument and written and visual language are used in the material on pages 14 and 15 of the task book to try to persuade others to share the points of view presented.

### SAMPLE RESPONSES

#### High-range response (Mark range: 8–10)

Speaking at a state-wide conference, experienced English teacher Margaret Lee presents a passionate argument encouraging teachers to adopt video games as a legitimate form of text. **(1)** Appealing to her audience’s concern for their students’ development, Lee argues that video games are not only a valid and engaging text type; they also offer students who struggle with literacy an engaging way into narrative texts. **(2)** Throughout her presentation Lee speaks of the modern advances in video games, using images to underline her main points and emphasising her own teaching experience as a way of offering empathetic understanding to teachers who may be reluctant to offer video games as texts. **(3)**

Lee begins by establishing video games as a modern and exciting opportunity for students, arguing that the format has evolved over time, beyond typical negative perceptions. **(4)** Opening with a heartfelt ‘thank you’ to her ‘fellow English teachers’, Lee aims to establish a rapport with her potentially reluctant audience. She readily acknowledges that many teachers ‘might never have thought’ of games as text but appeals to a sense of modernity through the words and phrases ‘new opportunity’, ‘exciting’, and ‘modern universe’. **(5)** Underpinning this exciting technology, Lee also uses the tricolon ‘to learn, to analyse and to study’ to emphasise that games are not just for entertainment, and in fact have academic applications. **(6)** Aware that her audience is likely unfamiliar with these applications, she states that some ‘might even believe video games lead to aggression’, the ‘even’ in that sentence serving to highlight the apparent absurdity of the belief, thus positioning her audience to want to distance themselves from it. **(7)**

Lee’s argument shifts focus to account for some of these negative perceptions of video games, and to offer her opinion on the academic benefits. The image that serves as a backdrop for this part of her speech – an expansive open world with a lone horserider – is a far cry from the ‘violent, repetitive games’ and ‘days of punching sticky buttons’ that may be the stereotypes associated with gaming. This loaded language, with its antisocial connotations, develops a dichotomy between outdated understandings of video games and the new style of game she promotes, which the audience is encouraged to feel excited about. **(8)** Lee claims that the games she is proposing for the classroom are ‘more sophisticated’, selecting her words carefully to appeal to this experienced and knowledgeable audience. She normalises using games as texts, comparing video games with the films that experienced teachers are ‘so used to analysing’. The first image supports this, with the horserider at the top of a hill surveying a vast natural expanse, suggesting new worlds to be explored. The use of natural imagery helps to present video games as healthy and stimulating, while the detail and realism of the picture emulates a film, the already commonly studied text type that Lee likens video games to, encouraging the audience to view video games as equally ‘rich’ and worthy texts. **(9)**

Lee also uses vocabulary that the English-teaching audience would be familiar with, targeting typical text features such as ‘narrative structure’, ‘historical context’ and ‘genre’ to address concerns that video games are meant for entertainment rather than study. Video games that present ‘historically accurate worlds’, Lee argues, also give students an ‘advantage’ in their

learning. Lee cites the findings of studies by ‘cognitive scientists’ to further support her argument as to the benefits of video games, including improving specific skills such as ‘decision-making’ and ‘coordination’ that go beyond the traditional novel text type. Drawing on expert evidence in this way is intended to reassure the audience that her opinion is based on research and that the benefits she claims can be relied on. **(10)**

Continuing to address the potential reluctance of her audience, Lee empathises with teachers who may struggle with the concept of games as text, but highlights the value to students. **(11)** Her informal and frank admission when she states, ‘I won’t lie to you – I hated the idea’ of introducing games, is intended to build a sense of shared concern with her audience and encourages them to share her journey of discovery with regard to the benefits of video games. She targets valid concerns such as losing the ‘only opportunity’ to study classics if novels and poems are removed from the curriculum. However, Lee then projects an image of happy, engaged students using a tablet, to underscore her counterpoint: the interests of the students should be put ahead of the interests of the teacher. **(12)** The students in the image are laughing and apparently engaged in what they are viewing; their physical closeness suggests collaboration and teamwork. The attractive classroom background evokes a stimulating, modern learning environment, reinforcing the idea of video games as important elements in the future of English studies. Lee punctuates her presentation at this point with a short sentence aimed at emphasising a fundamental point: ‘Then I considered my students’. **(13)** The implication is that a teacher who remains inflexible on text choices is inconsiderate, whereas a teacher who can ‘set aside [her] own preferences’ is more focused on ‘help[ing]’ students, a position her audience of educated teachers is likely to want to identify with. **(14)** The empathetic nature of her argument shifts from teachers to students, as Lee encourages the audience to think of the ‘struggling’ students who find it ‘arduous’ to read a whole novel, emotive language with connotations of physical labour and exhaustion that draw on the audience’s natural sympathy for their students and concern for their welfare. Her final question even suggests that students might feel ‘more confident’ about picking up a novel once they have developed the skills to ‘analyse and interpret’ through video games, a suggestion that draws on the shared desire of her audience to see their students embrace English studies.

In closing, Lee reiterates her empathetic stance that she ‘understand[s]’ some in the audience may be ‘feeling reluctant’ to introduce video games, an approach she depends on throughout the presentation in order to present herself as relatable and informed about the challenges faced by English teachers. Ultimately, however, Lee ends on a positive call to action, challenging English teachers to explore the ‘rich texts’ of video games. **(15)**

**Annotations**

- (1) Opening sentence establishes the audience, context, and the speaker's main argument.
- (2) Identifies a key persuasive strategy used by the speaker.
- (3) Identifies another important persuasive strategy that will be analysed in the body of the essay.
- (4) Introduces the main arguments of the first section of the presentation.
- (5) Uses short quotes effectively to identify the language used to build a relationship with the audience, and to create a feeling of excitement about the topic.
- (6) Mentions a specific persuasive technique – tricolon – in the context of the overall argument.
- (7) Nuanced identification of a specific word choice and the intended effect on the audience.
- (8) Another identification of word choice and the impact of the language on the audience – this is a more sophisticated approach than one that only identifies persuasive techniques and appeals.
- (9) Analyses the first image and its intended effects, linking these with the intended impact of specific arguments in the speech.
- (10) Identifies a specific persuasive technique and its likely impact on the audience.
- (11) Refers to a strategy developed throughout the speech – an appeal to empathy.
- (12) Brings in the second image and again explains how specific elements work to support the speaker's argument and persuasive techniques.
- (13) Mentions a specific language feature – the use of a short sentence – and its purpose.
- (14) Explores the implications of the specific language choices and argument strategies.
- (15) Effectively closes the response by summarising a key persuasive element of the presentation and acknowledging a final persuasive technique – the call to action.

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### Mid-range response (Mark range: 5–6)

In a positive tone and using images in a slide show to support her arguments, Margaret Lee tries to convince English teachers that they should use video games in their lessons. Margaret tries to persuade English teachers that they should use video games because they are modern and exciting, and that the negative stereotypes about video games are not true anymore. She uses an excited tone to convince her audience that video games will be particularly engaging for students who cannot handle long novels. (1)

Margaret has been teaching for many years and has been experimenting with using video games in classes. (2) She uses inclusive language like ‘my fellow English teachers’ to make the audience feel like they are a part of the speech. (3) Lee says that video games ‘offer them an exciting new way to learn, to analyse and to study English’ which will make the students excited about doing English. (4) All the way through the beginning of the speech she goes on about how video games are ‘exciting’ and ‘modern’, using an appeal to modernity to make it seem as though if teachers do not use games they will be behind the times. (5)

Margaret then talks about all of the negatives that people think of with video games, such as them being ‘violent’ and leading to ‘aggression and laziness’. (6) The negatives of games are things like ‘punching sticky buttons’, ‘pointlessly trying to beat your high score’ and ‘zoning out’ and trying to ‘master an impossible level’. (7) However, the games that Margaret is talking about are better than this and have ‘engaging storylines, stunning animation and moving music scores’. This is more like the image that she shows to back up her argument where the audience can see a cowboy looking over a very detailed world which looks more like a film than a video game. (8) Margaret then goes on to talk about even more advantages of games, to persuade her audience to believe that games are a good option for their classes.

She talks about ‘choices’ and ‘narrative structure’ to keep her audience thinking of the positives instead of the negatives of games. Utilising a list of positives, she points out that students can ‘empathise with characters’ and she backs this up with a quote from a figure of authority when she says ‘cognitive scientists have carried out several studies’ that prove video games have many positives. (9) These positives are not just skills which are good for video games, they are also good for normal English classes like ‘helping students retain a clear visual relevant to the text they are studying’ which will appeal to the audience of teachers. (10)

Margaret then shows that she is just like the other teachers in the room by pointing out how she was also opposed to using games. (11) The next picture shows several happy smiling students playing video games, and Margaret uses this to show that, even though using games might be scary, it is important because the students enjoy it. She attempts to make the audience feel guilty for not using games because it is selfish and not respectful of students’ needs, especially when for some students their English class is the ‘worst part of their day’. (12) By pointing out that some students find novels boring and hard to read, Margaret makes it seem obvious that video games are a much more sensible choice. She uses a rhetorical question which points out that some students will feel more confident if they get good skills from video games, again likely to appeal to her audience of fellow teachers concerned about their students’ learning.

Overall, Margaret Lee is very clear that English teachers should use video games even if they are ‘feeling reluctant’. Through her techniques like inclusive language, anecdotes and rhetorical questions, (13) Margaret successfully points out that video games are just as good as novels. (14)

## Annotations

- (1) The introduction is a little repetitive and focuses mainly on tone – to improve, the response could mention the images or main arguments used in the presentation, or give more detail on the relationship between the speaker and the audience.
- (2) The student repeatedly refers to the speaker as ‘Margaret’ but should instead use her surname, ‘Lee’, which is more appropriately formal. This opening sentence is descriptive but does not include any analysis.
- (3) Identifies the persuasive technique of inclusive language but the analysis is fairly superficial; this point could have been improved by discussing the way in which Lee emphasises her shared experiences with her audience throughout the speech.
- (4) The quote is very long; more in-depth discussion of the intended effect of these words on the audience would be helpful here.
- (5) An effective point; however, the language used here is too informal (e.g. ‘goes on about’).
- (6) Opening sentence of this paragraph gives examples but does not clearly outline an argument or persuasive strategy.
- (7) This is just a list of quotes; it should be accompanied by an analysis of the language and its intended effects.
- (8) The analysis of the first image is brief (and the phrase ‘is more like’ is awkward and too general), but the impact of the image is appropriately linked to the content of the speech.
- (9) Mentions a couple of important techniques – listing positives and referring to an authoritative source – but the analysis would work better if there was greater focus on the intended impact on the audience, or a discussion of how these techniques support the speaker’s argument.
- (10) Although the quote is longer than necessary, there is a reasonable attempt at analysing the intended effect on the specific target audience.
- (11) This paragraph, like the previous two, is a little too descriptive. It would be improved by a closer focus on specific arguments and persuasive strategies.
- (12) Identifies an emotion the speaker aims to evoke in the audience – guilt.
- (13) Lists techniques used, but does not provide a summary or concluding point about the arguments in the text.
- (14) Evaluative comments about the success or failure of the text should be avoided.

### Low-range response (Mark range: 3–4)

Margaret Lee is an English teacher who is giving a speech trying to convince other English teachers that video games would be a good addition to modern English classrooms. (1) Her audience is clearly pretty old as she says they have been ‘teaching English for decades’, that they go to ‘arcades’ and that they don’t understand ‘the modern universe of video games’. (2)

To introduce the audience to her topic, she uses words like ‘new opportunity’ and ‘exciting’, which will make the teachers curious and excited about what she has to say. She then says she is ‘talking, of course, about video games’, making it seem like an obvious tool that teachers should be using. (3)

She says that some teachers might think that video games make kids ‘lazy and aggressive’, but I disagree with this because I have been playing Grand Theft Auto for years and have never hit anyone. (4) Even though she thinks some video games can be ‘violent’ and ‘repetitive’, Lee still thinks that students should play video games in class. She defends her argument by assuring the audience that current video games aren’t like the ones they remember from their childhood, where you were ‘pointlessly trying to beat your high score’. Today’s games, she says, are ‘sophisticated’ and ‘include engaging storylines, stunning animation and moving music scores, much like some of the films that we’re already so used to analysing in English classrooms’. (5)

To support her argument, Lee draws on scientific research that says video games ‘improve decision-making skills and increase coordination’. (6) She also uses repetition of the phrase ‘I considered ...’ to show how much thought she has put into her argument and to encourage her listeners to also consider her point of view. (7)

While she is speaking, Lee projects an image in the background of kids in a classroom looking at iPads. This supports her argument by showing that even though old people prefer to ‘curl up with a book’, today’s students don’t like reading. (8) She also uses an image from a cowboy Western video game to show the teachers what she’s talking about and back up her claim about modern video games having great visuals. (9)

To get the other teachers on side, Lee uses the inclusive phrase ‘we’re English teachers’ and assures her audience that she understands they may be reluctant to use video games in their teaching. She says that she too once ‘hated the idea of replacing even one of the texts on my list with a video game’. This persuasive technique will make the teachers listening feel like they’re all on the same team and they will be more likely to agree with what Lee is saying. (10)

Lee believes there is no point in students ‘merely reading a novel’ when ‘video games give them a chance to really engage with a text in a more relaxed and fun way, while still learning how to analyse and interpret’. (11) This is a very convincing argument, and overall I agree with Lee because kids these days grow up with technology and don’t read as much. I like that she acknowledges that some kids don’t enjoy English class and that it’s hard to ‘relate to characters and situations from hundreds of years ago’. (12)



## Annotations

- (1) The contention is identified, but the expression is somewhat clumsy and repetitive.
- (2) The quotations used here are accurate and integrated well into the sentence. However, the target audience is oversimplified and misrepresented and the language is too informal (e.g. 'pretty old'). Contractions such as 'don't' should be avoided in a formal piece of writing.
- (3) Some relevant persuasive techniques are identified and explained in this paragraph, but the analysis could be improved with use of more specific and sophisticated language: for example, 'she uses an animated tone ...' rather than 'she uses words like ...'
- (4) The student has given their own opinion on the argument presented. The task is to analyse the use of persuasive and visual language; responses should not evaluate the persuasiveness of the text nor present the student's own view on the topic.
- (5) The use of quotations in this paragraph is mostly effective. However, use of overly long quotes should be avoided.
- (6) This persuasive technique warrants further analysis: *how* does citing scientific research support her argument and *why* is the audience more likely to agree with an argument that is supported by such evidence?
- (7) Here the student identifies a technique (repetition) and briefly discusses how it is used to persuade. However, this sentence does not relate the previous one. The two points raised in this paragraph should have been fleshed out and presented separately.
- (8) The analysis of this image is very brief, and the image is misinterpreted. The image does not necessarily suggest that young people do not like reading. It supports Lee's argument that young people, as 'digital natives', may learn differently from previous generations.
- (9) Again, the analysis of the image is very brief, and this point would perhaps have been better made in the third paragraph along with the quotation discussing the 'stunning animation' in modern video games.
- (10) Although the persuasive techniques identified in this paragraph are relevant and the student has gone some way to explain how they have been used to position the audience, the analysis is somewhat undermined by the student's colloquial use of language: for example, 'to get the other teachers on side' and 'they're all on the same team'.
- (11) Another lengthy quote is used here. It is a good idea to break up longer quotes or paraphrase them. Additionally, the conclusion (if one is included) should provide a comment on or summary of the overall persuasive approach; it is not enough to simply reiterate Lee's contention.
- (12) Again, the student has offered an evaluation of the persuasiveness of the text and offered their own personal opinion. This is not appropriate for argument and language analysis.

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