**Writing your response**

​

I normally recommend discussing the **contextual factors (function, field, mode, setting, relationship between participants** - from Study Design) and the register - possibly this is how some of the previous ACs have been structured?  The criteria has guided my suggestions...  
  
Look at the criteria - the key words and things that they are looking for are **purpose, discourse, context, register, metalanguage, analysis, tight structure**.  No matter what format you choose (there is no proscribed 'right' structure, as noted in previous assessor reports), ensure that you comment on these topics in detail.  
  
Criteria can be found here: <http://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/documents/exams/englishlanguage/eng-lang-criteria.pdf>

​

**Written examination – End of year Assessment criteria**

​

Examination responses will be assessed on the extent to which they demonstrate the ability to:

​

* use metalanguage to describe and analyse structures, features and functions of language in a range of contexts
* explain and analyse linguistic features of written and spoken English in a range of registers
* understand and analyse relationships between language and identities in society
* identify and analyse differing attitudes to varieties of Australian English
* draw on contemporary discussions and debates about language
* write clearly organised responses with controlled and effective use of language appropriate to the task.

Assessors mark holistically, relating student performance to the published criteria and ranking students over the full range of marks available. Determination of the mark is assisted by descriptors of ‘Expected qualities for the mark range’; these have been written to reflect the level of achievement expected at a particular mark or mark range. The descriptors are only a general guide: they do not necessarily match precisely the performance of an individual response. Both the criteria and the descriptors are fully explored and directly related to the range of student responses during the assessor training process.

​

Range

Expected qualities

high

Demonstrates detailed knowledge and is supported by relevant examples/evidence from the text. Metalanguage is used appropriately and effectively. Features of written discourse are consistently used.

medium

Demonstrates sound knowledge and is supported by some examples/evidence from the text. The metalanguage used is relevant. Features of written discourse are mostly evident.

low

Demonstrates limited knowledge and contains few examples from the text. The use of metalanguage is limited or absent. Few features of written discourse are evident.

**Steps for writing an analytical commentary**

​

**Step 1: Read the introductory blurb and annotate your text**

​

Be sure to read the introductory blurb at the top of your text – this will help you to understand the context. Then spend a few minutes annotating your text. Use different coloured pens and/or highlighters to note the language features that are immediately obvious.

​

**Step 2: Establish context, social purpose and register**

Once you’ve annotated your text, you should be in a better position to think about context (cultural and situational), social purpose(s) and register. Make a note of these in your working space.

Other language features might also be apparent to you: reflections or constructs of identity; covert and overt norms; Standard or non-Standard English; power and prestige; social and personal variation; national, regional or cultural variation. Be mindful of the topics covered in both Units 3 and 4 and look for opportunities to bring relevant language features into your discussion – just don’t wander off-topic.

​

**Step 3: Plan your analysis**

You should write your analytical commentary in the style that best suits you. Here are two ways in which you could approach your analysis.

• Method 1: Use the subsystems to organise your analysis

​

You could look at the subsystems individually and organise your analysis around them. The benefit of this method is that it’s easy to give structure and coherence to your analysis; the downside is that sometimes you might want to discuss several subsystems at the one time, or you might not be sure which subsystem a particular feature fits into. However, if you do choose this method, you can devote a paragraph to each subsystem and work your way systematically through the most obvious language features. Aim for at least two or three main paragraphs – you can write more if time permits.

​

There is no need for an introduction, but you might like to ‘set the scene’ by briefly outlining the situational context, as this will cement in your mind some of the basic contextual features which you can then expand in the course of your discussion. This is optional, however – if you prefer, you can begin your analysis with a particular subsystem and discuss contextual features as you go along.

Many students devote their first main paragraph to lexicology, simply because it is relevant to any text and is one of the easier subsystems to cover, but you can begin with the subsystem of your choice. If you wish, you can use subheadings, but this is not vital – it’s a matter of personal preference.

​

**Further notes**

Commentary structure

[http://www.englishworks.com.au/commentary-structure/​](http://www.englishworks.com.au/commentary-structure/)

​

T**he Analytical Commentary should cover:**

**​**

contextual factors affecting/surrounding the text

situational and cultural context

**Situational  Mode-**  Spoken or Written -Text type - Advertisement ; Sports commentary: Brochure ; Speech : Interview : Letter : Narrative

**Setting and medium** / Channel of communication - Radio or TV Broadcast to an Australian audience , Newspaper article  webpage, public lecture , private conversation on a bus, advertisement on a billboard

**Field or  Topic   -**Health, discussing plans for the weekend, road rules , cooking , politics, sport, law, school

**Function** To advise, persuade , entertain , instruct , inform ; or phatic, transactional

**Relationship between participants**close or distant, formal or informal

​

**Cultural  Context -  The values beliefs and attitudes**

**held  by    participants and    the wider community :**Australian references , luxemes , connotations inferences , face needs                       and politeness, euphemisms and taboo, political correctness, social mores/ expectations

social purpose and register of the text

stylistic and discourse features of the text

* ​

INTRODUCTION: give a short and concise introduction to the text type, purpose and audience.

Paragraph one:

Analyse (contextual) factors that are critical to the meaning of the text such as:

* + register and context; tone and background, point of view, purpose and message
  + degree of formality or informality and specific conventions
  + Register/ Context/ Coherence/ Cohesion; meaning; headings; structure;

discourse markers (which reflect the mode of communication); cohesive ties (pronouns referring to speaker and audience: address to reader)

inference and the referential nature of the text  (The article assumes /presupposes that the audience has prior knowledge / awareness of … Or Readers would infer from the context and the nature of the open letter that …

* ​

Paragraphs 2 and 3: social purpose/register

(Depending upon the type of text, you may organise the paragraphs around each speaker (if more than one); or two key points in the text/ or the turn-taking themes.)

Degree of formality/informality/purpose:  (lexicology)

(two) subject-specific words and lexical sets; which ensure the coherence of the text; social and cultural references

nouns; concrete (tangible, physical) and abstract nouns (concepts);

function of modifiers: visual, physical emotive, evaluative, psychological; state of mind;

use of jargon or slang

Degree of formality/informality/purpose: (syntactic patterning)

Syntactical patterning: (cohesion) sentence structure and types; conjunctions;

informal: ellipsis; declaratives; simple/short sentences/ coordination (identity/close social purpose) (minimise repetition/ degree of intimacy/ shared knowledge); interrogative tags and sentences

type of verbs; aspect and voice; passive/active; modality; embedded clauses ; syntactic features imitating conversational patterns; (repairs/ hedging expressions); direct speech quotes (spontaneity/directness/intimacy/freshness)

Information flow:

Information flow; Look for antithesis; parallelisms; listing etc.; anaphoric ; cataphoric; repetition; tripling;

[Cohesive ties](http://www.englishworks.com.au/cohesion-coherence-summary/" \t "_blank)– pronouns and referencing/ repetition

flow of adverbial phrases and clauses; left and right branching

* + ​

Paragraph 4: Stylistic and discourse features (written or spoken, formal or informal) (context/identity/theme/purpose)

idiosyncratic linguistic choices; code language; non-standard language such as dialect, prosodic features

pronoun references: a clue to the informality; and identity/ relationships)

cooperative turn-taking

informal: shortenings; reductions; contractions; idiomatic phrases; idiosyncratic features; slang/colloquialisms; slang/jargon; discourse markers; (identity/relationships/close social distance/ familiarity with topic/tone);

lexical ambiguity/ double meanings: semantic patterning; figurative language; irony, (extended) metaphor, simile, personification; colloquial/ clichés; idioms