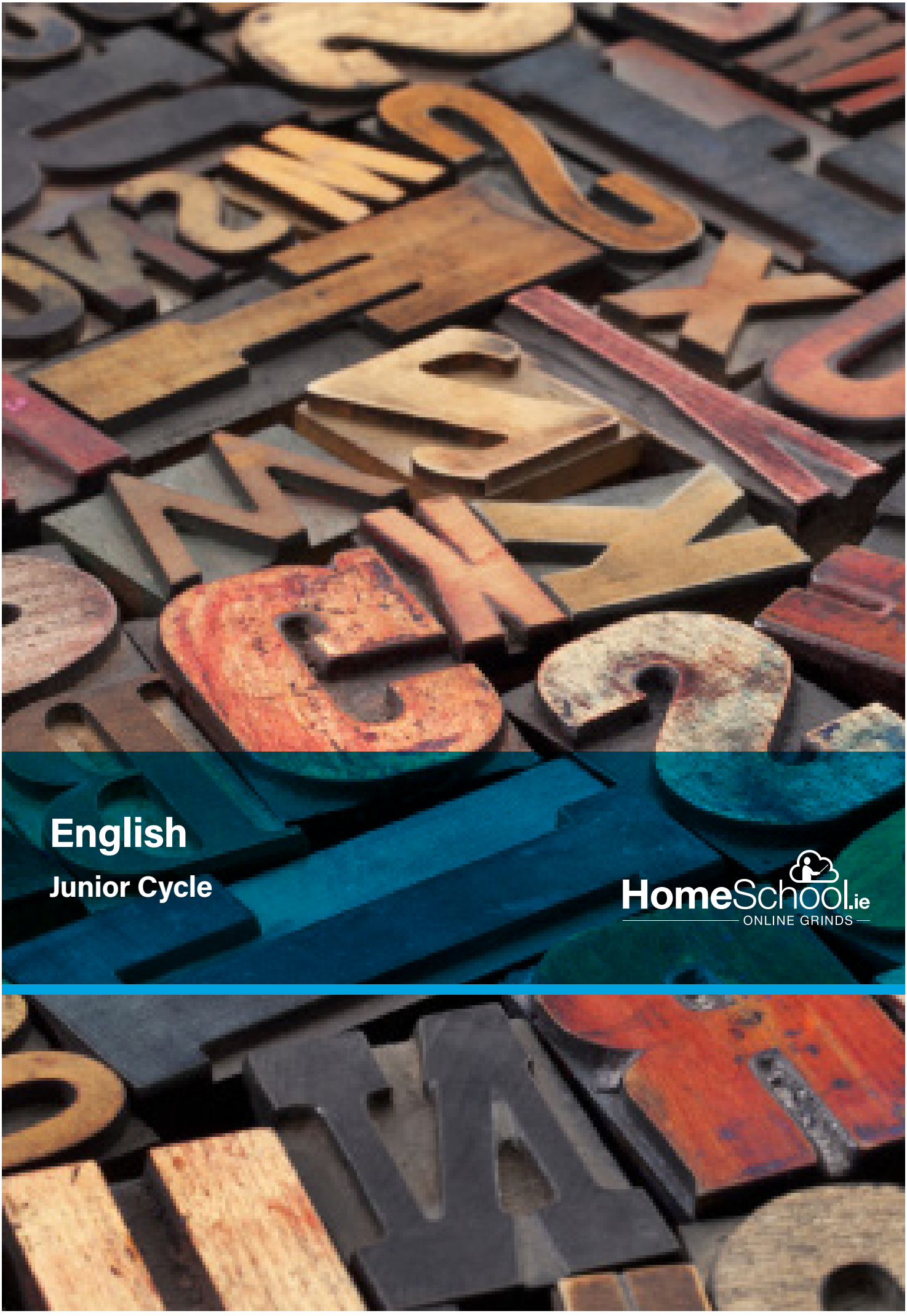

English

Junior Cycle

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Subject: Junior Cycle English

Lesson 1: Language & Comprehension

Learning Intentions

- To be able to use skills of comprehension.
- To understand language genres and how techniques used have different effects on a piece writing.
- To write clear answers, using appropriate supporting evidence.

Course Structure

CBA 1 - Oral Communication

CBA 2 – Collection of Texts

Assessment Task – 20 marks

Final Examination – 180 marks – 2 hours

> "Students will sit a two-hour written examination paper. They will be required to engage with, demonstrate comprehension of, and respond to stimulus material. The content and format of the examination papers may vary from year to year. In any year, the learning outcomes to be assessed will constitute a sample of the outcomes from the tables of learning outcomes."

From the list of prescribed texts students must study:

Two novels

Two drama texts

A film from the prescribed list of films

A variety of non-literary texts including texts in oral format

A selection of poetry (a minimum of 16 poems over the two years)

A number of short stories.

The texts we will be exploring are:

Of Mice and Men – John Steinbeck
The Outsiders – S.E Hinton

The Merchant of Venice – William Shakespeare
Blood Brothers – Willy Russell

Hunt for the Wilderpeople – directed by Taiki Waititi

Sing Street – directed by John Carney

The Chief Examiner's Report provide a review of the performance of candidates in the examinations and detailed analysis of the standards of answering. In terms of language and comprehension the following advice is helpful.

At all times candidates should be conscious of recognising register and appreciating audience; it is important to be conscious of the audience that a piece of writing is addressing. Every effort should be made to use language and register appropriate to a specific task.

"When answering questions on style or language techniques in any genre, candidates are encouraged to explore the relationship between technique and meaning. Recognising and identifying a feature of language in writing should be seen as only a starting point. A deeper exploration of the impact or effect or effectiveness of a writer's use of that technique should be the corollary."

Language Types

When writing it is important to keep in mind the purpose of the task.
Is your goal to inform the reader or are you trying to create vivid imagery in the mind of the reader? Depending on what our goal is, we use different types of language. However, there is also a lot of overlap when it comes to writing. An understanding of the styles of writing and the techniques used in each of the language types listed below will improve your ability to understand comprehension extracts and will also aid you in your own writing process.

Language of Information

- To inform the reader
- Information that is backed up.
- Use of facts and statistics
- Must be structured in a logical manner with information clear and concise.
- Objective

Language of Narration

- Setting
- Creation of memorable characters
- Dialogue – We learn about character from what they say and what others say about them.
- Conflict – Something needs to happen for the story to be interesting.
- Suspense/tension

Language of persuasion

- To persuade the reader through emotional manipulation.
- The reader is made feel a certain by the material presented.

Language of argument

- To persuade the reader in a logical and rational manner.
- Ideas follow in a logical order, each further strengthening your argument.

Language of description

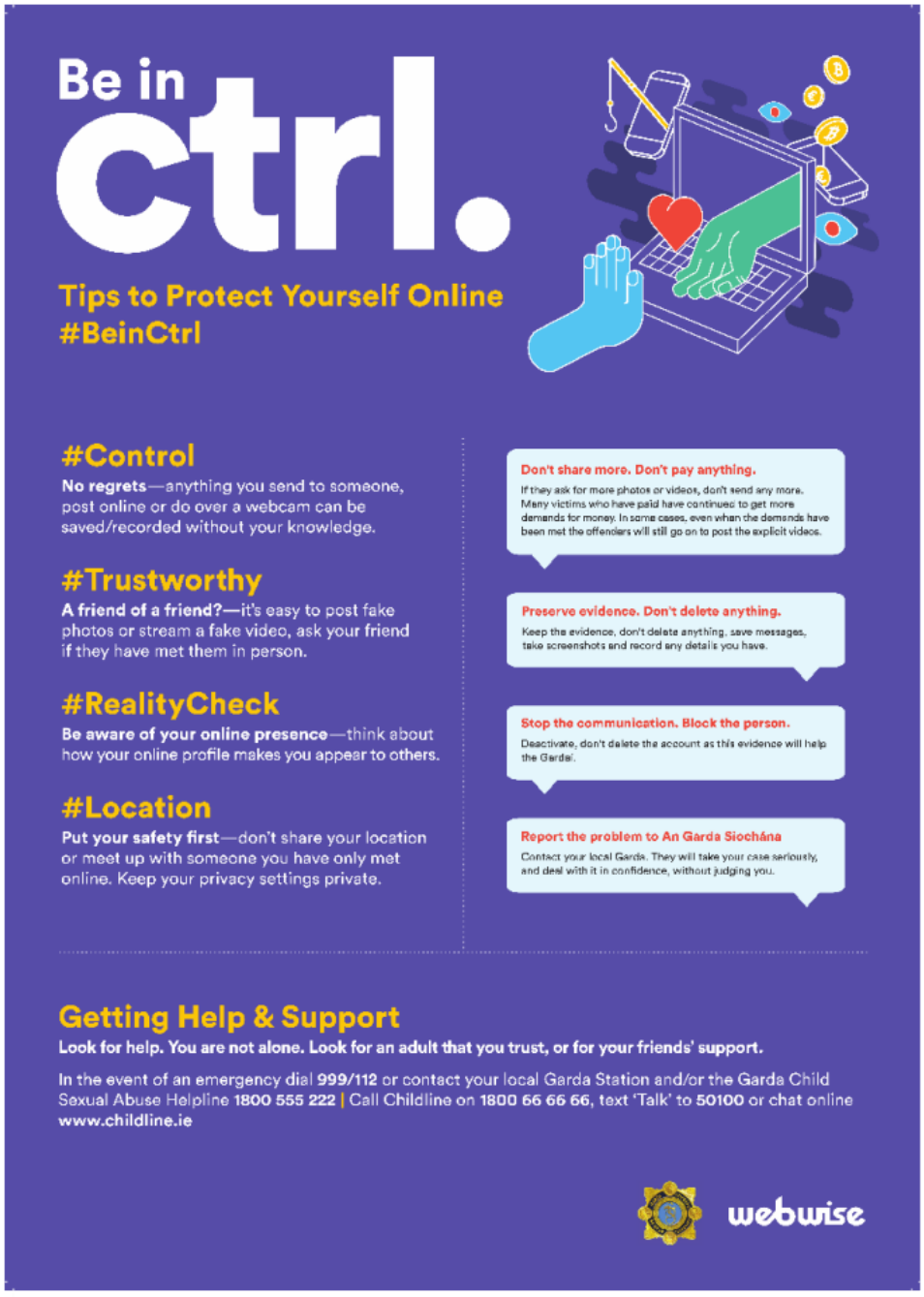
- Painting a picture with words.

Aesthetic language

- The use of language in a beautiful way, to evoke pleasure.

The following tasks are directly from the lesson. Use the notes to test yourself and sample answers will be provided in the lesson.

Task 1 - Read the following extract. Do you think this is a good example of the language of information?



Task 2 - Read the following extract. Do you think this is a good example of the language of argument?

In recognition of the fact that "Fortnite" has quickly become one of the most popular video games in the world – one played by more than 125 million players – I decided to play the game myself in an attempt to understand its widespread appeal.

As a parent and as a political theorist who focuses on education and its impact on democratic society, I couldn't help but notice how much the game seems to teach children the wrong lessons about how to function as an adult and interact with others. Society should think about the health consequences of having children play violent video games for long stretches of time. In 2011, researchers at the Indiana University School of Medicine performed an analysis of the brains of a group of men with low past exposure to violent video games.

Half the group then played a shooting video game for 10 hours in a week, while the control group did not. When the researchers did a brain analysis after two weeks, they discovered that the group that played violent video games showed less activation in the parts of the brain that control emotion and aggressive behaviour. According to the lead researcher, Yang Wang, "These findings indicate that violent video game play has a long-term effect on brain functioning.""Fortnite" may not be the only violent video game that emphasizes individualism and survival. But given its current popularity and appeal on the planet, it pays to examine its effect on the individuals who will make up society as a whole.

Task 3 - Read the following extract. Do you think this is a good example of the language of persuasion?

My message is that we'll be watching you.
This is all wrong. I shouldn't be up here. I should be back in school on the other side of the ocean. Yet you all come to us young people for hope. How dare you!

You have stolen my dreams and my childhood with your empty words. And yet I'm one of the lucky ones. People are suffering. People are dying. Entire ecosystems are collapsing. We are in the beginning of a mass extinction, and all you can talk about is money and fairy tales of eternal economic growth. How dare you!
For more than 30 years, the science has been crystal clear. How dare you continue to look away and come here saying that you're doing enough, when the politics and solutions needed are still nowhere in sight.
You say you hear us and that you understand the urgency. But no matter how sad and angry I am, I do not want to believe that. Because if you really understood the situation and still kept on failing to act, then you would be evil. And that I refuse to believe.

The popular idea of cutting our emissions in half in 10 years only gives us a 50% chance of staying below 1.5 degrees [Celsius], and the risk of setting off irreversible chain reactions beyond human control.

Task 4 - Read the following extract. Do you think this is a good example of the language of narration?

The dark came into the room from the little window that opened in the side of The Hill; the firelight flickered-it was April-and still they played on, while the shadow of Gandalf's beard wagged against the wall. The dark filled all the room, and the fire died down, and the shadows were lost, and still they played on. And suddenly first one and then another began to sing as they played, deep-throated singing of the dwarves in the deep places of their ancient homes.
Then something Tookish (adventurous) woke up inside him, and he wished to go and see the great mountains, and hear the pine-trees and the waterfalls, and explore the caves, and wear a sword instead of a walking-stick. He looked out of the window. The stars were out in a dark sky above the trees. He thought of the jewels of the dwarves shining in dark caverns. Suddenly in the wood beyond The Water a flame leapt up probably somebody lighting a wood-fire-and he thought of plundering dragons settling on his quiet Hill and kindling

it all to flames. He shuddered; and very quickly he was plain Mr. Baggins of Bag-End, Under-Hill, again.

Task 5 - Read the following extract. Do you think this is a good example of the aesthetic use of language?

A few miles south of Soledad, the Salinas River drops in close to the hillside bank and runs deep and green. The water is warm too, for it has slipped twinkling over the yellow sands in the sunlight before reaching the narrow pool. On one side of the river the golden foothill slopes curve up to the strong and rocky Gabilan Mountains, but on the valley side the water is lined with trees- willows fresh and green with every spring, carrying in their lower leaf junctures the debris of the winter's flooding; and sycamores with mottled, white, recumbent limbs and branches that arch over the pool. On the sandy bank under the trees the leaves lie deep and so crisp that a lizard makes a great skittering if he runs among them. Rabbits come out of the brush to sit on the sand in the evening, and the damp flats are covered with the night tracks of 'coons, and with the spread pads of dogs from the ranches, and with the split-wedge tracks of deer that come to drink in the dark.

Exam Question

Section A	Reading to Analyse and Evaluate	35 marks

The following promotional radio clip is based on the documentary, *Fantastic* Beasts and the People who Love Them, by Shane Dunphy. The full documentary was broadcast as part of the RTE Radio, Documentary on One series. Read the script and answer the question that follows.

Voice of Continuity Announcer: In tonight's Documentary on One series, Shane Dunphy explores the mysterious world of *Cryptozoology* and endeavours to find proof that Ireland's mythical monsters or mystery animals really exist. Here is just a flavour of what you will hear...

Voice of Shane Dunphy: Cryptozoology, for those who don't know, is the study of mystery creatures that may... or may not exist. The evidence about them is either legendary or anecdotal.

Sound Effect: *Haunting screech of an unidentifiable animal.*

Voice of Shane Dunphy: I've been interested in wildlife and nature my whole life. I've swum with seals and dolphins and I've even gone into the mountains to find wild boar. In 2010 however, I met a man called Sean Corcoran, a Waterford based artist who told me a fantastic story about an encounter he had on Omey Island in Connemara with what was — for want of a better word — a monster.

Voice of Sean Corcoran: ...and there was a bit of an explosion ...and to our absolute shock and horror, a creature of great scale like a giant otter came flying out of the lake turned its head and snarled viciously at us.

Voice of Shane Dunphy: The shove I needed to go in search of Sean's monster came years later and it was my daughter Mamie who gave me that shove...

Voice of Marnie: Why don't you make a documentary where you actually find something? I just hate the way there's never any stone-hard evidence ...and its always the same ...they are always like... 'What's out there? No one knows!'

Voice of Shane Dunphy: Let's get one thing clear, I'm sceptical. I'd love to believe these things exist but I reckon they are probably misrepresentations and exaggerations in most cases but I wasn't going to let my little girl down. Welcome to the strange world of Irish monster-hunting!

Background Sound Effect: Calming natural sounds, birdsong, waves crashing.

Voice of Shane Dunphy: I walk about the lake on Omey. I'm accompanied by birds, meadow pipit and pied wagtail, who follow me as I step from rock to rock. At my back is the constant boom of the sea. It is lonely and it is beautiful but no giant otter puts in an appearance.

Remember it is important to back up your point with specific reference to/quotation from the text.

Example

Q.
Based on what you have read in the above script, explain whether you would or you would not like to listen to the entire documentary, Fantastic Beasts and the People who Love Them. Refer to aspects of the script to support your response.

Yes I would like to listen to the entire documentary as I found the content very interesting. I enjoy the theme of fantasy and mythology. Shane Dunphy provides us with information about what he has done in the past, 'swum with seals and dolphins' and 'gone into the mountains to find wild boar' . He seems like a fascinating person that is very curious to learn about the world. When he speaks about the lake on Omey he creates beautiful imagery while creating sense of mystery. This arouses my curiosity and makes me want to listen to the documentary. The fact that the extract ends of a cliff hanger entices me further.

Clear statement
Making it clear that I am specifically referencing the text

Quotation
Specific reference to the text and the impact of it on the reader
Restating my initial point therefore fully addressing the question.

Exam Question

Section A	Using Personal Voice	40 marks

Suggested time for Section D: 20 minutes

The 'Sound Off' series of articles in The Irish Times, gives people an opportunity to air their own views, in their own unique way, on an issue that annoys them. Read the article below by Aoife Dooley and respond to the tasks that follow it.



Is there anything worse than the idiots you share the bus with in rush-hour traffic? No matter how many times you travel on public transport you never get used to it.

There's always that one person who sits beside you and opens a fresh pack of Mega Meanies pickled-onion crisps at half-seven in the morning and doesn't give a damn. Then there are the people who bring on hot food from the deli and the absolute bang stench of sausage rolls (they don't even smell like sausage rolls, they smell like some aul lad's feet.)

Then there are the ones who talk really loud on the phone when you're on the way home, it's dark out, the window is steamed up and you're trying to get a little nap in before you get home to watch a double Coronation Street, but no, "Oh it was great! You should have seen Saoirse last night she was s000 funny, OMG. Did you watch Stranger Things yet actually?" and then they proceed to spoil the series for every single poor unfortunate who forgot to bring their earphones to work that day.

Don't even get me started on the idiots who sit on the edge of their seat on a packed bus so you can't sit beside them — that wrecks my head. You can usually tell. They look at the ground or out the window and pretend that they have no idea that there are people getting on the bus. People have no consideration, I tell you, none at all.

Remember it is important to back up your point with specific reference to/quotation from the text.

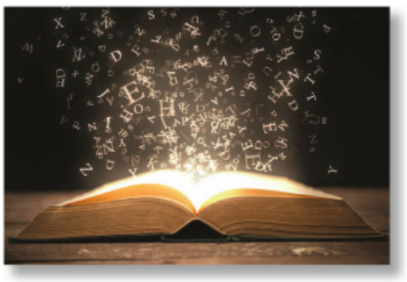
Example

Q.
Do you find Aoife Dooley's article entertaining? Explain your answer with reference to the text. You may refer to the article's content and/or its style.

Yes, I do find this article entertaining. Aoife Dooley's opening rhetorical question sets the humorous tone. Her depiction of the journey on the bus, describing the people who eat sausage rolls that 'smell like some auld lad's feed' is very entertaining. Although she might seem rude and she might be exaggerating, I think this only adds to the entertainment value of the extract. I can definitely relate to some of her experiences on public transport and the language she uses is colloquial, making it even more relatable. The frustration she feels about 'Mega Meanies pickled-onion crisps at half seven in the morning' is understandable and makes her rant in this extract is very amusing.

Homework Task

The following passage is an extract from Irish author Dave Rudden's debut novel, Knights of the Borrowed Dark. Read the extract and then answer the questions that follow.



The woman in white was eating light bulbs.

Simon couldn't take his eyes off her. It was horrible. She had found a cupboard on the third-floor corridor — six metres from the closet in which Simon was hiding — and had begun rifling through its contents.

Linens had been experimentally sniffed then idly tossed aside, forming lonely snowdrifts on the floor. A first-aid kit had been emptied out, its contents separated with a toe and methodically stamped apart. Now she was opening boxes of light bulbs, shaking the spheres out into her palm and peering into them before closing her teeth round their fragile domes.

Crunch.

It was dawning on Simon that she hadn't been searching the cupboard; she was just destroying whatever she found. There was no urgency in her movements and a strange look of amusement creased her skin. Unfortunately, that meant Simon had no idea how long she might stay there, blocking the corridor — his only access to the classroom wing.

It was pure luck she hadn't seen him. An unexplainable feeling of dread had made him seek refuge in a broom closet, cracking the door open a hair just in time to see her appear at the top of the stairs. Maybe he had heard her without realising it. Maybe he'd felt her presence or the air her movements had displaced. Maybe the animal part of his brain was taking over — all the prehistoric instincts you didn't use in the modern world.

Simon didn't know or care. All that mattered was that he hadn't been caught.
Suddenly the woman's head jerked to one side, as if she smelled his relief. She spat out a small shred of glass and carefully closed the cupboard door, head cocked like a hound's.

Simon froze, taking his hand off the door so it settled back against the jamb, hiding her from view. His heart pounded, louder and louder — Stop, stop, she'll hear it! — and the floor creaked as she took a step towards him.

Don't panic.

With the door closed, she was more a collection of sounds than a physical presence, sounds that Simon had to assemble in his head — a process that wasn't doing anything for his heart rate.

Periodic creaks. Steps. She doesn't care about being quiet — why would she? A drawling rasp —breathing, roughened by glass. A cascade of stiff mechanical pops that Simon realised in horror were her fingers clenching and unclenching. Had he not seen her with his own two eyes, he wouldn't have believed that it was a person out there at all — just a machine, gaunt and terrible, bearing down upon him.

More terrifying than that, though, were the silences. Silence meant he had no idea where the woman was.

a. There is a distinct sense of menace or threat in this extract. In your opinion, how does the author achieve this? Base your answer on both the content and the style of the extract.

b. The author of this extract makes extensive use of sensual language. Identify **two** examples of sensual language used in the extract and describe briefly how **each** example adds to your enjoyment of the text.