

UNIT 2: COMMENTARY

Recommended Prior Knowledge: A reasonable standard of written English at O/GCSE level will ensure some familiarity with appreciating different forms of written language and commenting on features of style and language

Context: This unit has as its subject matter the acquisition of skills for writing commentaries for set passages for Paper 1 and can be undertaken at any time during the course

Outline: This unit addresses the identification, understanding and appreciation of some features of style and language of different types of written material designed for different purposes and outcomes

Learning Outcomes	Suggested teaching/learning activities	Resources
Advertising material		
1	<u>Approaching the Text</u> Students should be encouraged to try to focus on the issue of audience and purpose to begin with	Students could be asked to gather and research a number of similar types of printed advertisements from a range of sources and publications. Looking at the types of publications they come from try to build up a picture of who might read them. Consider how advertisers might shape the text of their adverts bearing in mind they will have a clear profile of different publications' readers. Discuss how this might vary the approach and style of the language. Different types of magazines and newspapers, leaflets, public awareness campaigns and electioneering material are valid sources. As well as collating material linked to similar products, students could build up case studies where different types of products and the types of text associated with them are compared.

2	<p><u>Take in Sections</u></p> <p>Students should be advised, especially where they are less experienced in commenting on features of language, to break the text into shorter sections. This will encourage them to look for similarities and differences between the sections and allow them to appreciate the progression of the material in closer detail</p>	<p>Students could be asked to work in pairs or small groups and take a section or paragraph of the same advert and to work on it individually before comparing their findings with their partners or other members of the group. Ask them to consider what would happen if the order of the sections was altered. It may also be possible to give out sections of an advertisement without students having seen it beforehand. Ask them to consider the order in which the sections might go, why and with what effects.</p>	
3	<p><u>Mode of Address</u></p> <p>Students should be encouraged to examine the different ways in which they talk to other people depending on context, purpose and audience.</p> <p>This should lead on to a consideration of how different written texts may address the reader for different reasons and purposes.</p> <p>Students should also consider how there may be different types of address in the same text itself. There may be an informal or inclusive style, a personal or more impersonal style depending on the techniques the writers are using, particularly in advertisements which may flatter the reader one minute until the 'hard-sell' arrives.</p>	<p>This could involve some small role plays of situations relevant to them – informal, social meetings with peers compared to more formal situations such as interviews</p> <p>This could involve a consideration of how emails and text messaging use different styles of address and the conventions that grow up around them, leading on to an exploration of how some fictional texts address the reader – such as the authorial voice – in comparison with some non-fiction texts.</p>	<p>Students could use Passage for Comment 1 to consider the mode of address the advertiser uses and the tone that this lends to the text.</p> <p>By looking at the material they have collected, students could consider the mode of address in different types of advert for the same product in different contexts and publications as well as how they vary across a range of publications.</p>

4	<p><u>Techniques of Advertising</u></p> <p>Students should be introduced to some of the techniques that advertisers may use: for example, they should be aware of the ‘hard sell’ approach where issues like value for money and practicality are emphasised; they should be aware of the lifestyle of aspirational approach that can be used, offering promises and possibilities; there may be a particular image of the job, company or product conveyed.</p>	<p>Students could work in pairs and use <i>Passage for Comment 1</i> to highlight the more factual or informative data; they could discuss and highlight the words and phrases which seem to offer lifestyle or promise – for example the inclusion of specific French terms that highlight a particular culture and way of life; they could explore the descriptive language which gives a particular feeling of specific places in France.</p>	<p>Passage for Comment 1</p> <p>A useful overview of some advertising techniques can be found at: http://home.olemiss.edu/~egjbp/comp/ad-claims.html where links to sites concerned with grammar can be found such as www.andromeda.rutgers.edu/~jlynch</p>
5	<p><u>The Language of Advertising</u></p> <p>Students should be encouraged to consider the use of different language techniques in advertising. for example, the use of abstract nouns, adjectives, ‘buzz’ or jargon words, patterns of words, contrasting patterns of words and semantic fields; they should also consider some of the techniques that could be used in conjunction with these approaches and the effect they have; for instance, the use of repetition, puns, word-play, breaking the rules of grammar, the use of questions, reassurance and guarantees of various kind</p>	<p>Students could use the <i>Passage for Comment 1</i> to look at the use of adjectives and abstract nouns which seem to offer a particular nuance or promise; the use of highlighting or colour coding can make these techniques more visible and approachable. Students can also see the progression of the advertisement by doing this.</p>	<p>Passage for Comment 1</p> <p>Other sites linked to grammar can be found at www.c-span.org , www.eslpartyland.com and www.onestopenglish.com</p> <p>www.educate.co.uk has a very large directory, including (under Resources) The Internet Grammar of English</p>

Learning Outcomes	Suggested teaching/learning activities	Resources	
Speech material			
1	<p><u>Speech: Spontaneous versus Scripted</u></p> <p>Students should consider the differences between natural unscripted speech and prepared, written speech; a comparison of the two should help clarify the different strategies and techniques involved in using prepared speech for particular purposes</p>	<p>Students could be asked to produce brief transcripts of spontaneous speech drawn from different types of speakers and situations. For examples, they could record themselves talking to their friends, conduct interviews with relatives, record radio or television programmes; they should consider the ways in which spontaneous speech uses fillers, phatic communication, regional variations and particular kinds of vocabulary; in the same way they could follow this up by recording or studying prepared and scripted speeches from particular times and events; they should list the ways in which these speeches differ from spontaneous speech.</p>	<p>Websites with access to useful speech sources include:</p> <p>www.cnn.com/TRANSCRIPTS/index.html</p> <p>www.historyplace.com/speeches</p> <p>http://gos.sbc.edu/a.html</p>
2	<p><u>Audience and Purpose</u></p> <p>Students should be encouraged to consider the context and purpose of the speech and the possible persuasive strategies it is trying to adopt; for example, the speech could be a eulogy, an apology or defence, an attack, a desire to make people accept a particular viewpoint or idea.</p>	<p>Students could be asked to use <i>Passage for Comment 2</i> to explore the speaker's purpose and approach; highlighting key words and phrases should help to establish his beliefs and attitudes. A selection of other speeches could be used to practise the same approach; similarities and differences could be identified and compared.</p>	<p>Passage for Comment 2</p> <p><i>The Penguin Book of Twentieth Century Speeches</i>, ed Brian McMaster, is an invaluable source of a range of speeches for consideration. particularly apposite speeches include those by Nehru on the death of Ghandi and Martin Luther King's 'I Have A Dream' speech</p>

3	<p><u>Mode of Address</u></p> <p>Students should be encouraged to consider, just as they are when considering advertisements, the mode of address used by the speaker and to explore whether this changes as the speech unfolds; the effect of the mode of address could be considered.</p>	<p>Students could draw on work from other texts – such as advertisements – to see how the mode of address may differ depending on context and purpose. <i>Passage for Comment 2</i> could be considered in terms of how the speaker considers his own nation in relation to the terms he uses to describe the President and those in power.</p>	<p>Passage for Comment 2</p> <p>Nehru's speech on Ghandi's death noted above is a useful source for considering mode of address – the way he address the nation as 'children' compared to the way he describes the assassins</p>
4	<p><u>Techniques in Scripted Speech</u></p> <p>Students should be introduced to a range of techniques used in scripted speeches. They should consider the progression of the speech and how these techniques are brought into play. For example, the sense of a mission or a vision may also be combined with more personal information; the speaker may adopt a more humble or ordinary way of speaking drawing on personal memories and anecdotes; religion and patriotism may be included; the speaker may also use contrasts to compare a particular viewpoint with another.</p>	<p>Students could consider <i>Passage for Comment 2</i> and the ways in which the speaker uses contrast to reinforce his points; contrasts between past and present and the different ways of life his nation follows compared to that of the 'white man' and his generation. The speaker has a vision of the way things were and should be and adopts a personal, elegiac tone to lament the passing of things and the present situation.</p>	<p>Passage for Comment 2</p> <p>Students could use the speech given by Richard Nixon at the height of the Watergate scandal in 1973 to be found in <i>The Penguin Book of Twentieth Century Speeches</i>, ed Brian McMaster or attached to the unit which covers Directed Writing to explore some of these techniques</p>

5	<p><u>Language in Scripted Speech</u></p> <p>Students should explore some of the rhetorical devices found in scripted speech; these techniques may include repetition, lists of three, the use of abstract nouns to offer a vision, adjectives, imagery [which may draw on religious themes/ symbols], patterns of words, contrasting patterns of words, the use of cumulative phrases, the use of syntax, irony, humour.</p>	<p>Students could again draw on material from other relevant analyses –such as advertising – and compare how abstract nouns, patterns of words and imagery are used in those contexts; highlighting and colour coding will also draw out the persuasive and linguistic techniques being applied techniques</p> <p><i>Passage for Comment 2</i> is a useful starting point for exploring the use of descriptive language, especially adjectives and imagery.</p> <p>Ask students to locate other speeches where a range of techniques have been used.</p>	<p>The Martin Luther King and Nehru speeches mentioned above are useful sources for exploring the use of patterns of words [light/dark, hills/valleys] and the use of religious inferences.</p> <p>Passage for Comment 2</p>
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	Learning Outcomes	Suggested teaching/learning activities	Resources
	Literary material		
1	<p><u>Approaching the Text</u></p> <p>Students should be encouraged to think about the contextual information on passage and its purpose at this point in the story</p>	<p>Students could integrate work on fiction texts with work on Narrative, Imaginative and Descriptive Writing from Paper 2 and with units 4 and 5 linked to those activities. Students should divide the extract in to shorter sections so they can assess similarities and differences between them. Colour coding the sections could be used to highlight the different aspects for consideration.</p>	<p>There are some useful sites for acquiring etexts such as : www.eserver.org/fiction/short.html; www.americanliterature.com/SS/SSINDEX.HTML and a good site with links is www.ability.org.uk/electronic_text_archives.html</p>

2	<p><u>Mood and Setting</u></p> <p>Students should be made aware of how these contribute to our understanding and appreciation of the extract. They can provide clues and insights for the other sections below and are a good starting point for any critical analysis.</p>	<p>Students should highlight or colour code parts of the extract which convey the mood and setting; a consideration of their inferences could lead to an exploration of whether they tell us something about the characters or themes; they could also consider whether they tell us something about the narrator.</p>	<p>Passage for Comment 3 from <i>The Great Gatsby</i> is a starting point for an exploration of setting; does the cool mood reflect the characters or suggest something more artificial? Other useful texts may include descriptive passages from Hardy [for example, the opening chapter of <i>Return of the Native</i>] or Dickens [for example, the opening of <i>Bleak House</i>].</p>
3	<p><u>Physical Description</u></p> <p>Students should also examine any references to physical description and their relation to aspects of setting. Do the physical descriptions reflect those of the setting? Do they contrast with it? Do different characters contrast and, if so, with what effect?</p>	<p>In the same way, students should be encouraged to highlight or colour code any sections which offer insights into any of the characters in the passage, and to consider the ways in which they contribute to our understanding of their natures.</p>	
4	<p><u>Characterisation and Dialogue</u></p> <p>These aspects can lend insight into our understanding of the passage. Reading the passage aloud and saying dialogue in different tones can also offer help. Students also need to bear in mind the influence of Voice when considering these matters; for example, the author or narrator may have adapted a satirical or ironic tone to foreground our responses to the characters.</p>	<p>The way characters speak to each other – not only in terms of content but how [adverbs may give us clues] – and the question of whether one is more dominant than the other can provide clues to the nature of the extract. Students should be encouraged to explore the characters' vocabulary and use of particular expressions. Turning an extract into a drama script can provide students with some insights in these areas, especially if asked to comment on how they might direct their rewriting.</p>	

5	<p><u>Voice</u></p> <p>Students should assess the tone of the passage carefully. Is it an authorial voice? Is it an ironic or satirical tone? Is it a lyrical or descriptive tone? There is further work on this in Unit 4 (Narrative)</p>	<p>By dividing the passage into shorter sections students can consider whether the tone or voice changes as the passage progresses. Paired reading can allow students to interpret a given section in a particular way and discussion about the coherence of their interpretation help to inform judgements.</p>	
6	<p>Language and Style</p> <p>Students should be encouraged to explore descriptive language, especially the use of adjectives, colour, sensory words and phrases, patterns of imagery, contrasting patterns of imagery, issues of stillness and movement.</p>	<p>By highlighting or colour coding relevant aspects of the passage students should develop skills in appreciating these issues. Encourage students to annotate copies of the passage. An Overhead Projector [or an interactive whiteboard] can allow the teacher to annotate the text with students. Writing an appreciation with the class can also illuminate a number of issues.</p>	<p>Passage for Comment 3 from <i>The Great Gatsby</i> is a good starting point for some of these exercises.</p>