



ENGLISH HL

18 May 2024

GRADE 12 LANGUAGE NOTES: Paper 1 - Comprehension Preparation

November 2015 - MEDIA – THE GAME-CHANGER IN EVERY HOUSEHOLD

1.1 Account for the **repetition** of 'and' in the opening sentence of the passage (lines 1–2).

We've all seen the toys and the clothes and the movies ... and the adverts for those toys and clothes and movies. Pink versus blue; passive versus aggressive; sedentary versus active; pretty versus smart. Girls versus boys.

The repetition of 'and' reinforces the view that we are constantly bombarded./There is a dreary disparagement of the stereotypes./It gives a list of items.

1.3 Suggest why the writer uses the phrase, 'breathtaking act of psychological vandalism against our children' (line 13).

Parents will then dole out double the money buying separate products for their sons and daughters, ensuring that the retailers and marketers double their profits and cash in on the stereotyped messaging. And why wouldn't they? It's brilliant. It's lucrative. It's also a **breathtaking act of psychological vandalism against our children.** The media shape perception and perception becomes reality.

The phrase 'breathtaking act of psychological vandalism' strongly emphasises the notion that damage is caused by gender stereotyping. The writer suggests that the media are guilty of a criminal/violent/harmful act.

The word 'breathtaking' conveys a sense of powerful impact.

(3)

1.4 Discuss the effectiveness of paragraph 3 in the context of the passage.

How has the influence of the media grown? How has parenting become harder?

The (rhetorical) questions invite the reader to consider the issues under discussion. The questions draw attention to how the media have adverse effects on parenting./ The short paragraph serves as a link between the introduction and the discussion. It reinforces the writer's view that the media have adverse effects on parenting.

1.5 Why does the writer invite the reader to 'time-travel' (line 17) with him/her? (2)

Time-travel with me for a moment. Let's go back to an era when media played a minimal role in people's lives. How about the year 1900? The telephone had been invented but was not yet commonplace in the average home. Television would not arrive for decades. No Internet, smartphones, computer games, blogging or social media existed anywhere but in the creative imaginations of inventors, scientists and authors. What kind of media did exist?

The writer invites the reader to consider the radical transformation the media have undergone and recognise the significant influence of the media on people's lives.

1.6 Refer to paragraph 6.

Comment on the effectiveness of the **diction** used in discussing the media. (3)

Fast-forward 100 years to the year 2000 and beyond. What communication technologies can currently be found in the average home? Does anyone think this is not the single biggest game-changer in the lives of adults and especially today's children, who are spending all of their formative years in a digital world, saturated by every manner of screen and dead-tree advertisement our capitalistic society can shove in front of their faces? The media are the greatest source of information, and perhaps the greatest untamed beast, the world has ever known.

The diction is emotive; for example, 'untamed beast' connotes the manner in which the detrimental influence of the media has been unleashed. The repeated use of superlatives, e.g. 'greatest' and 'biggest', emphasises the dramatic impact of the media. The word 'saturated' implies that children are inundated by the influence of the media, while 'shove in front of their faces'/'game changer' reinforces this idea.

- 1.8 Choose the correct response from the options provided below. Write down only the letter of your choice.

Are the media going away? No. Should it? Absolutely not. Media literacy is therefore very important, because the media are pervasive in our culture and affect everyone. No one, except a cave-dweller, remains above its reach.

Refer to paragraph 10 ('Are the media ...above its reach'). The writer's **tone** is

- A aggressive.
- B assertive.
- C hostile.
- D offensive.

B

(1)

- 1.9 Is paragraph 12 an **effective conclusion** to the text? Substantiate your view.

So let's hear it for our youngest generation of parents, who make a go of it in the Internet Age – self-high-fives!

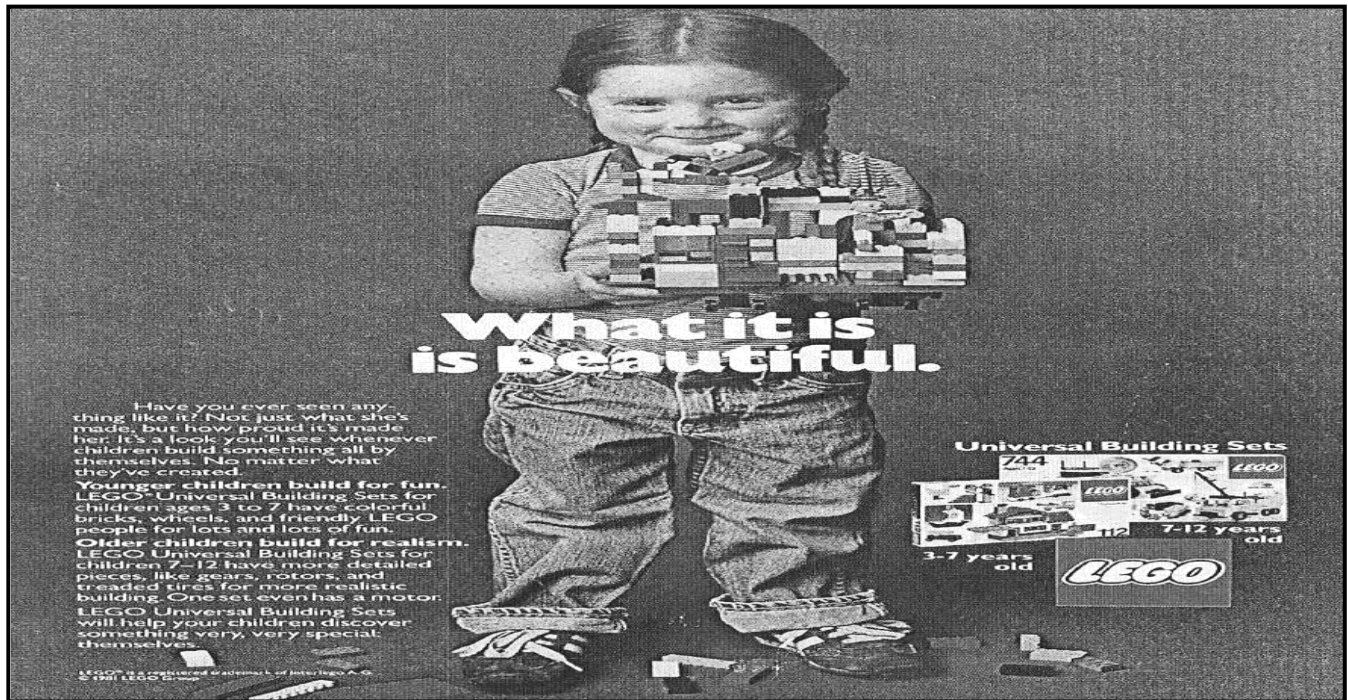
YES-The writer acknowledges that parents have an onerous task in ensuring that the power of the 'third parent in the room' (the media) is lessened. They need to be encouraged to take up the challenge of responsible parenting with gusto. The expressions 'let's hear it' and 'self-high-fives' suggest approval and self-motivation. The light-hearted conclusion rounds off a serious topic on a positive note.

NO-There is no reason for self-congratulation. The writer does not indicate that parents challenge the gender stereotypes presented by the media. Rather, he suggests that parents need to be more informed and critical of the influence of the media.

- 1.12 Does the message of TEXT B support the writer's view as expressed in paragraph 2 of TEXT A? Justify your response. **(Comparing texts)**

It's so insanely formulaic and a lot of adults are laughing all the way to the bank at the expense of our children's self-definition. The strategy is simple: convince children of both genders that they are very different from each other. They need different products with different colours and different labels, and they will naturally want only what they've been told is 'for' them and what has been spoon-fed to them since birth. Parents will then dole out double the money buying separate products for their sons and daughters, ensuring that the retailers and marketers double their profits and cash in on the stereotyped messaging. And why wouldn't they? It's brilliant. It's lucrative. It's also a breathtaking act of psychological

vandalism against our children. The media shape perception and perception becomes reality.



YES

The writer of Text A maintains that companies should not benefit by gender stereotyping. Parents support the ideology that different genders have different needs. Text B similarly dispels the notion that gender stereotypes should dictate the kinds of product that parents should buy for their children. Aspects such as creativity and personal potential are highlighted while gender should be immaterial when purchases are made for children.

November 2016 – YOUTH IN CRISIS: COMING OF AGE IN THE 21ST CENTURY

- 1.4 Refer to paragraph 4. Why has the writer included **statistics** in this paragraph? (2)

Violence remains one of the leading causes of death for youth and young adults. In many parts of the world, the loss of life in countries affected by armed conflict is high, particularly for the youth. Two million children have been killed in conflicts in the last decade, one million orphaned, and six million wounded. Three hundred thousand youths are serving as child soldiers. This means a great deal in terms of lost opportunities and uncertainty about the future. 'We don't know what we would like to be when we get older. We haven't thought about it, because we haven't been to school,' a group of young people in Uganda's Arum refugee camp said.

The statistics provided by the writer shock the reader into realising the unnecessary loss of life through violence. The number of deaths has deprived many of the opportunity to contribute positively to society. The statistics are used as a manipulative device. (Award only 1 mark.) They give credibility to the writer's argument. (Award only 1 mark.)

- 1.6 Comment on the impact of the **contrast** between paragraphs 5 and 6. (3)

The frustration of youth is all the more poignant when it comes to migration opportunities – or the lack of them – which greatly affects thousands of young people in developing nations who are denied upward socio-economic mobility.

While globalisation and greater access to media tend to create a new global culture shared by youth all over the world, some young people, especially in less-developed countries, become more aware of the benefits they could have if they lived in Western countries.

In paragraph 5, the writer states that the youth in developing nations can progress economically only if they leave their countries of origin.

However, in paragraph 6, he speaks of how the media have created a global youth culture. The impact of this contrast is that the youth of developing countries are aware of opportunities but are unable to access them. This causes frustration among them.

1.9 Refer to paragraph 10.

In your view, are the **rhetorical questions** effective at this point in the passage? Justify your response.

How can young people become dynamic contributors to and participants in the society in which they are born? How is it possible to harness the tremendous power of inventiveness of the developing countries' populous new generation?

YES-It indicates that the conversation has not ended and it creates more opportunities to engage the youth in issues affecting them.

NO-He has already addressed the content of the rhetorical question in the preceding paragraphs, therefore it should have served as an introduction to the topic, 'Youth in Crisis'.

November 2017 – CULTURAL APPROPRIATION

1.5 Suggest why the writer includes the **aside**, 'thanks, but no thanks' (line 32). (3)

As a Nigerian, I could easily empathise. A few years ago, the popular English chef, Jamie Oliver, came out with his own recipe for Jollof rice, a West African dish. While West Africans themselves often debate who makes the best rice, many all over the diaspora took to the Internet to reject Jamie Oliver's recipe and let him know, thanks, but no thanks. If Jollof is to be the international sensation it ought to be, it will not be Jamie Oliver who makes it so.

The writer is dismissive of/sarcastic toward/politely rejects foreign chefs appropriating African dishes and presenting them as their own. The West Africans jealously guard their recipes and it should be their right to make them internationally popular. A foreign chef should not be appropriating their dishes.

1.6 How does the **language** used in paragraph 6 indicate the **writer's attitude** to 'cultural appropriation'?

For those speaking from positions of power, the idea of cultural appropriation may be seen as an affront to their historical liberty to participate in cultures freely – a liberty that has often resulted in everything from cultural annihilation and loss to colonisation. That history occurred the way it did, has set us up for a cultural moment in which exchange between cultures cannot be viewed as simply occurring in a vacuum. This fact is certainly lost on novelist Lionel Shriver, who recently gave one of the most culturally tone-deaf speeches at the Brisbane Festival.

The writer uses strong, assertive expressions ('cultural annihilation' and 'loss to

colonisation') to display his criticism/rejection of the practice. He acknowledges the importance of culture ('cultures cannot be viewed as simply occurring in a vacuum') and accuses Shriver of being culturally insensitive ('This fact is certainly lost on novelist Lionel Shriver'). He is also derisive of people like her, whom he describes as 'culturally tone-deaf'.

November 2018 - MATERIALISM: A SYSTEM THAT EATS US FROM THE INSIDE OUT

1.1 Account for the **writer's feelings** in paragraph 1. (2)

That they are crass, brash and trashy goes without saying. But there is something in the pictures posted on *Rich Kids of Instagram* that inspires more than the usual revulsion towards crude displays of opulence. There is a shadow in these photos – photos of a young man wearing all four of his Rolex watches; a youth posing in front of his helicopter; endless pictures of cars, yachts, shoes, mansions, swimming pools and spoilt teenagers throwing gangster poses in private jets – of something worse: something that, after you have seen a few dozen, becomes disorienting, even distressing.

He is disgusted by/pities the flashy/obscene displays of wealth by spoilt teenagers.

1.4 Refer to paragraphs 3, 4 and 5.

Explain the writer's purpose in referring to various **research findings**. (2)

There has long been a correlation observed between materialism, a lack of empathy and engagement with others, and unhappiness. A series of studies published in the journal *Motivation and Emotion* in July showed that as people become more materialistic, their wellbeing (good relationships, autonomy, sense of purpose and the rest) diminishes. As they become less materialistic, it rises.

In one study, the researchers tested a group of 18-year-olds, then re-tested them 12 years later. They were asked to rank the importance of different goals – jobs, money and status on one side, and self-acceptance, fellow-feeling and belonging on the other. They were then given a standard diagnostic test to identify mental health problems. At the ages of both 18 and 30, materialistic people were more susceptible to disorders. But if in that period they became less materialistic, they became happier.

In another study, psychologists followed Icelanders weathering their country's economic collapse. Some people became more focused on materialism, in the hope of regaining lost ground. Others responded by becoming less interested in money and turning their attention to family and community life. The first group reported lower levels of wellbeing; the second group higher levels.

The writer wishes to provide convincing evidence to support his view/to validate his argument.

The research findings are contrary to what people generally believe: materialism is associated with happiness. In fact, materialism is shown to be the enemy of fulfilment./It is paradoxical that people turn to consumerism to fill their loneliness yet this consumerism makes them more lonely and isolated./Paradoxically, a consumer journal publishes negative viewpoints on consumerism.

1.7 Refer to paragraph 8.

Critically comment on TWO **elements of style** used by the writer in this paragraph.

The two varieties of materialism that have this effect – using possessions as a yardstick of success and seeking happiness through acquisition – are the varieties that seem to be on display on *Rich Kids of Instagram*. It was only after reading this paper that I understood why those

photos distressed me: they look like a kind of social self-mutilation. Materialism forces us to compare our possessions to those of others. There is no end to it! If you have four Rolexes while another has five, you are a Rolex short of contentment. The material pursuit of self-esteem reduces your self-esteem. It may also leave a trail of unpayable debts, mental illness and smashed relationships. Materialism smashes the happiness and peace of mind of those who succumb to it.

The writer uses various stylistic techniques to strengthen his argument that materialism gives rise to a cycle of destruction.

- **The writer uses metaphorical expressions/hyperbole such as 'self-mutilation' and 'smashed' to highlight the destructive nature of an obsession with possessions.**
- **The satirical remark, 'a Rolex short of contentment', graphically illustrates the insatiable nature of materialism.**
- **The writer inserts a short exclamation 'There is no end to it!' to emphasise his exasperation with endless consumerism.**
- **Strong emotive words, e.g. 'distressed', 'forces' and 'smashes' effectively convey a sense of destruction.**
- **Conversational style/use of personal pronouns creates a bond of confidence between the writer and the reader.**

1.11 To what extent does TEXT B support the **title** and paragraph 1 of TEXT A? Motivate your response.

That they are crass, brash and trashy goes without saying. But there is something in the pictures posted on *Rich Kids of Instagram* that inspires more than the usual revulsion towards crude displays of opulence¹. There is a shadow in these photos – photos of a young man wearing all four of his Rolex watches; a youth posing in front of his helicopter; endless pictures of cars, yachts, shoes, mansions, swimming pools and spoilt teenagers throwing gangster poses in private jets – of something worse: something that, after you have seen a few dozen, becomes disorienting, even distressing.



Text B portrays the manner in which our morals are compromised by the created images of materialism. The opulent lifestyle of villains is seen as desirable. The headline of Text A refers to the effect of a materialistic society: moral decay erodes our humanity via the imagination ('eats us from the inside out'). The possessions idolised by the Rich Kids of Instagram are similar to the desired lifestyle depicted in Text B. In both texts, materialism is acceptable when it is glamorised. Both the writer and the cartoonist disapprove of our mindless acceptance of materialism.

November 2019 - THE RISE OF MACHINES

- 1.1 What is the function of the **rhetorical question** in the by-line, 'The Rise of the Machines ... be crushed by it?' (2)

The Rise of the Machines: Are we ready to participate in the Fourth Industrial Revolution, or be crushed by it.

The rhetorical question engages the reader on the topic under discussion./The issue, namely man versus machine, is brought into sharp focus.

- 1.5 Suggest reasons for the writer's inclusion of the **aside**, 'you heard me'(line 18).

Researchers of the Fourth Industrial Revolution remind us that artificial intelligence has already been weaponised. We now have smart bombs and missiles which cannot only see the target toward which they are flying but also whether to take the decision to kill or not. Yes, you heard me, to take the decision to kill or not. In the past, in order to have a measure of control over the machines, we humans insisted that all kill decisions must and can only be made with human participation. Increasingly now, they say, military personnel are insisting that such decisions must be made by the machine. They argue that more precise information or data will be processed and as such a more informed decision would be made, taking all variables into consideration – much more than a human being could process. Also, this would greatly reduce fatality rates and collateral damage, or so they argue.

The aside engages the reader personally/creates a conversational tone. It alerts the reader to a shocking revelation about the power that machines will wield over human beings. The writer wants to convince the reader that a potentially fatal situation could arise.

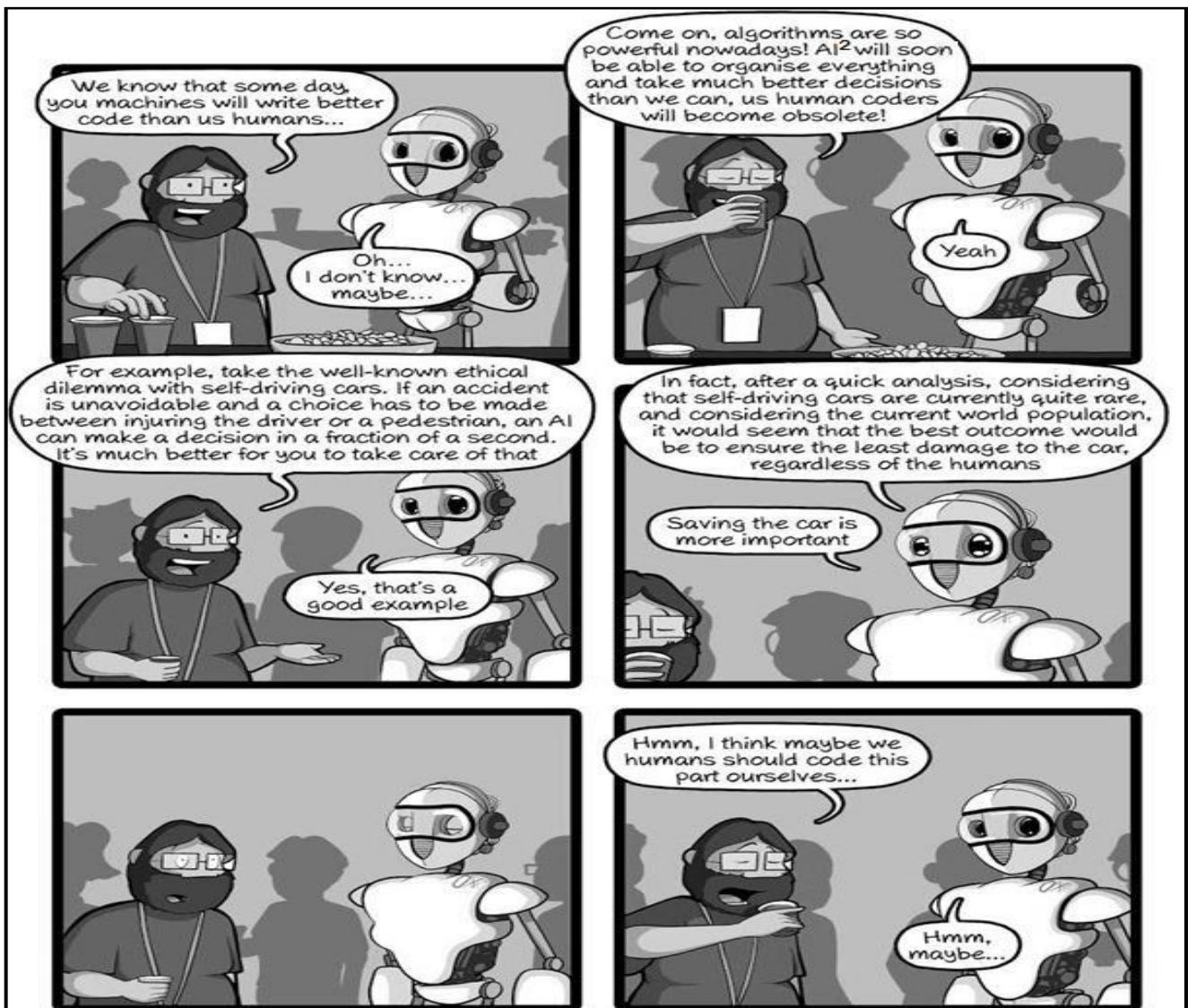
- 1.6 Comment on the **irony** implicit in paragraph 6.

We're already finding ourselves unable to control certain functions, which we have completely outsourced to machines. They are outsmarting human beings because they can retain and process vast amounts of information. Consequently, the machines will see us as being sick, having a digital malfunction and in the end, in desperate need of repair or deletion.

It is ironic that machines would have power over human beings who are their creators. Instead of humans retaining control of the machines' functions, machines would be able to see humans as deficient. Mankind would be disempowered ('desperate need') and at the mercy of machines.

- 1.11 In your view, does TEXT B support the views expressed in paragraph 4 of TEXT A? Justify your response with close reference to both **TEXT A and TEXT B.**

Researchers of the Fourth Industrial Revolution remind us that artificial intelligence has already been weaponised. We now have smart bombs and missiles which cannot only see the target toward which they are flying but also whether to take the decision to kill or not. Yes, you heard me, to take the decision to kill or not. In the past, in order to have a measure of control over the machines, we humans insisted that all kill decisions must and can only be made with human participation. Increasingly now, they say, military personnel are insisting that such decisions must be made by the machine. They argue that more precise information or data will be processed and as such a more informed decision would be made, taking all variables into consideration – much more than a human being could process. Also, this would greatly reduce fatality rates and collateral damage, or so they argue.



YES -The man in Text B believes that robots could make split-second decisions, whereas human beings would grapple with ethical issues. Similarly, Text A presents the views of military experts who endorse mechanised military decisions which are seen as accurate and devoid of emotion. The man's realisation that Artificial Intelligence could be dangerous is aligned with the writer's scepticism regarding the autonomy of Artificial Intelligence.