

# Tutorial letter 201/1/2017

**Genres in Language and Literature:  
Theory, Style and Poetics**

**ENG2602**

**Semesters 1**

**Department of English Studies**

## CONTENTS

1. Pre-examination information.
2. Response to Assignment 01:  
Persuasive Prose or Conversational Analysis

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Dear Student

## PRE-EXAMINATION INFORMATION

The examination will be a two hour paper. You will be expected to write two essays. The paper will be divided into two sections: a section on language and a section on literature. You will be expected to answer one question per section.

**NB: Please manage your time carefully. You would have to write one essay per hour. Keep this in mind when preparing for the exam.**

The section on language will have a question on Persuasive Prose and a question on Conversational Analysis. You will be expected to answer one of these questions.

The section on literature will have a question on Prose Fiction, a question on Poetry, and a question on Drama. You will be expected to answer one of these questions.

Even though you will have a choice in the exam, we suggest that you do at least some preparation on all the sections, and perhaps prepare at least two units per section in detail. If you only prepare one unit per section there is a risk that you could find the question on the unit that you prepared to be difficult. If, on the other hand, you are prepared to answer a question on more than one unit per section, you would be able to switch to answering on a different unit.

In each unit, you can expect the following types of questions:

Persuasive Prose: you will be given a short passage from an unseen persuasive text (such as a newspaper article, an advertisement, a political speech, etc.). You will have to write an essay in which you analyse the passage: this means that you will have to outline briefly **what** the passage is about, **why** it has been written, and **who** the target audience is, and then to explain in detail **how** it has been written. Your essay should focus on **how** the author **uses language** to persuade his/her target audience.

Conversation: you will be given an excerpt from a real life conversation which you will be asked to analyse according to specific aspects and features of Conversational Analysis. Refer to the 'Conversational analysis additional resource' document under the 'Additional Resources' tab on myUnisa for a survey of the key facets of this section.

Prose fiction: you will be given a short passage from an unseen prose fiction text. You will have to write an essay in which you analyse the passage, discussing in detail how it uses language, for example, to portray character, shape, tone and setting, for thematic and symbolic effects, etc.

Poetry: you will be given a poem from the list of poems provided under 'Additional Resources' on myUnisa. You will have to write an essay in which you analyse the poem, discussing in detail how it uses language to present and explore its main themes and concerns.

Drama: you will be given an excerpt from an unseen play. You will be expected to write an essay in which you analyse how the passage uses language, for example, to form imagery or reveal the qualities of the characters in relation to the passage's main themes and concerns.

### Use the following additional guidelines to help you prepare for the examination:

- Read your study guide and the prescribed book. Make notes of the important features of each genre of writing.
- Read as widely as possible, including newspapers, magazines, novels, short stories, poems and dramas. Write notes on the texts that you read, outlining the way they use the strategies that are appropriate to each genre.

- Pay attention to general features of language use, such as point of view, register, diction, tone, irony and figures of speech as you analyse extracts from texts in preparation for the examination.
- Write sample essays in which you examine the way each extract in the reader uses the conventions of its genre.
- Remember to time yourself as you write these sample essays since you will be expected to write two essays in two hours in the exam.

Good luck with your preparations!

## RESPONSE TO ASSIGNMENT 01

### QUESTION 1: PERSUASIVE PROSE

The assignment consisted of **TWO** questions. You were required to answer either Question 1 or Question 2. If you had chosen Question 1, you would have been required to answer a question on Persuasive Prose.

For this assignment you were referred to some chapters in the prescribed book to enhance your response to the question. How this was applied varied from student to student. What is important to note is that any secondary source should not become the dominant voice in your response, but should rather be used to augment your argument and should be properly cited.

You were asked to respond in a well-constructed essay, which means that the traditional essay structure and academic register was expected. Although there were bullet points to guide you, no subheadings should have been used. It goes without saying that cohesion and correct grammatical use of language also plays an important role in self-expression and at this point should not be something you still struggle with, therefore, while content forms the essence of your essay, as it reflects your understanding of the given topic, an equal mark will also be allocated for language usage. (Please refer to the Assessment Criteria in Tutorial Letter 101 for further information.)

The article you had to respond to has numerous language and stylistic effects that could have been discussed, while you were not expected to discuss them all. You were expected to discuss enough to convince the marker of your mastery in critical analysis. What follows below are guidelines on what could have been part of your response and therefore not an exhaustive response.

This was your question:

Before attempting the assignment below, please read Study Unit Three in your study guide carefully and complete the activities as you proceed. This should be accompanied by a study of the relevant chapters in the prescribed book by Goatly.

Carefully read the article on alcohol advertising on this link:

<https://www.asa.org.uk/News-resources/Hot-topics/Alcohol.aspx#.Vw516YXRbfg>.

Write an essay in which you critically analyse the text. Your response should reveal the following:

What the article is about.

Who the target audience is.

Why (Purpose and Effect) the article has been written.

How language has been used in a persuasive manner. (Consider syntax, diction, figures of speech and other relevant stylistic effects.)

(ASA. 2016. "Alcohol advertising." <https://www.asa.org.uk/News-resources/Hot-topics/Alcohol.aspx#.Vw516YXRbfg> Accessed: 19 April 2016.)

## The introduction

A number of students have asked for help in formulating a proper introduction. It is important to understand its purpose, which is to be a window into what you are going to deliver in the body of your essay and a guide to you as the writer not to detract from what you have set out to do. This is a very important part of your response as it gives the first impression on whether you have understood the instruction in the given question and whether you have an understanding of the given source.

### Sample Introduction

This is an article that reveals measures taken in the United Kingdom to restrict alcohol consumption especially among children and the youth, through controlling its advertising. It is broadly targeted at people who are concerned about the social conscience and morals, which could include politicians, social welfare practitioners, parents and the youth itself. Its main purpose is to convince the society at large that government is working hard to fight the advertising of alcohol that could promote excessive alcohol consumption. This essay will analyse how the text and visuals have been used effectively in a persuasive manner.

(Note how there are no examples in the introduction. These will only be used in the body as the ideas presented in the introduction are developed. You should also note how claims have been made about the source. This is your writer's compass, because from this point onwards, you should prove the truth of these claims and as you do so, you will see how the bullet points are being addressed. Remember this is a sample, therefore we do expect that there will be a variation in presentation and due credit will be given on merit.)

### Sample Body

The visual of a bottle combined with a big and bold font in the title of the article, immediately draw the reader's attention and reveal what is at the core of the article – alcohol. Anyone that could have mistaken the bottle as a container for any other beverage is immediately notified that it is for alcohol, in the title. Diction in the introduction shows that the article is a response to a social problem. Through words like “sensitive topic”, “societal concerns”, “political agenda”, “rarely out of the headlines”, the writer establishes that there is a pressing problem that needs to be addressed. Being a “sensitive topic”, there are allusions to a need for careful handling of the situation in order not to offend any stakeholders in business as well as the society involved, since “societal concerns” shows that the matter is already receiving the attention of the society. It is a topical controversy hence it being “rarely out of the headlines”. This also implies that urgency is imperative in addressing this crucial matter as headlines deal with matters of immediate importance to the society. By bringing the phrase “high on the political agenda” the writer is reassuring the society – and all concerned – that the matter is receiving attention at government level and the word, “high”, emphasises the priority it is given at government level.

A quick glance through the article shows how it is already set to persuade the reader that measures are being taken to address the issue. Through the underlined parts the writer first shows businesses that are promoting unfavourable alcohol-related behaviour that could entice the public, especially children and the youth, to experiment with alcohol. This proves that the concerns are valid, therefore convincing the reader that the measures taken are justified. The underlined parts towards the end are linked to specific action taken to address the issue. The fact that this is presented as a list, convinces the reader that there was not one, isolated, incident that was problematic and was responded to.

The target audience is revealed through style and diction. A formal register has been used throughout the article to articulate how serious the matter at hand is and it reveals that the audience being addressed is concerned with crucial issues. Politicians, parents and social welfare practitioners are implicated through diction like “political agenda” and “societal”, which show that the people engaged in discussions to correct the situation are all part of the society. Furthermore, social issues affect all these parties. The kind of youth included in the target audience would fall under those concerned with social conscience, who are the more mature, serious types of youth, hence the register adopted.

The seriousness of the matter is further highlighted through words like “close scrutiny” which relate to the intensity of the engagement in attempts to resolve the issue. The superlative “strictest” is complemented by “significantly tightened” and “stringent rules” to give the reader the notion that the ASA is doing all in its might to ensure that alcohol advertising does not entice the “wrong” consumer. The underlined parts of the quotes show a high degree of strictness being applied. Words like “re-evaluated” and “ongoing” add to this strictness by showing that it is not a once-off intervention but a continuous effort to protect the youth and children. Added to that is the information that the rules are applied “across all media” which means that the application is not selective and the fact that it is “mandatory” means there is no one who is exempted from the rules or can choose not to apply them; compliance is not negotiable. Such an emphatic phrasing leaves the reader assured that the measures taken will be enforced, they are not idle promises.

There is more diction used in the text reflecting different methods of persuasion. The first that shall be discussed is diction to prove credibility. By saying that the “amongst the strictest in the world” the writer positions the reader to believe that British rules on advertising conform to international and not just local standards. He even uses the superlative, “strictest”, to convince the reader that they are among the top uncontested rules. The writer also claims that they are “based on evidence” to make the reader believe that research has been conducted to reach this conclusion, therefore whichever measures taken, they are addressing something that has been proven to be a problem. This also implies that these measures have a stronger potential of addressing the problem compared to measures based on assumption. There is also mention of “investigations” by ASA and “research” that was commissioned, which all relates to the previously discussed manner of proving credibility.

The next set focuses on collaboration. If one works in isolation it is easy to give false reports as there is no one to corroborate the information, therefore by proving that this intervention is a collaborative effort the writer proves authenticity. The writer mentions “full public consultation” which implies that the whole society has been involved in the remediation process. Not only does this prove authenticity but it further reveals a democratic approach that will get the public to accept the measures that will eventually be made rules, because they were consulted in the formulation of these rules. A “co-regulatory partner” is mentioned to imply better vigilance and better results since more than one party is involved and what one missed the other can discover. This gives the reader confidence in the research conducted. The use of the pronoun “we” towards the end, cements all the collaborations and makes the actions belong to the society as a whole because the public has been consulted and other partners engaged, therefore the implementation of the rules through the actions taken are on behalf of all stakeholders.

An authoritative tone is adopted towards the end through phrases like “took action”, “we told”, and “published”. By claiming that action was taken, the reader is made to realise that the research conducted was not a waste of time and resources. The specific action taken is clearly articulated in “we told” which is a command that brooks no argument. “Published” shows more action that was executed and this implies that no advertiser can claim lack of knowledge of the guidelines. The authoritative tone gives the reader confidence in the ASA’s ability to fight the alcohol abuse problem. This tone is connected to the earlier imperative voice found in “alcohol ads must not be directed at people under 18” (note the underlined imperative) and “banned” which does not give advertisers an option to do otherwise. It forces them to comply and by using “banned” it becomes clear that anyone who does not comply will be engaging in unlawful conduct.

Transparency that was alluded to through the public consultation process, is reiterated right at the end through the underlined links. People who wish to view the rules to determine if they are stringent enough can do so. This adds to the credibility of the ASA. Other factual statements are made towards proving the truthfulness of their claims, like the “ads [that] are banned from appearing in and around [certain programmes]”. The society views these programmes and they will be able to tell if the ban is complied with, therefore with such statements made the reader is convinced that government is taking serious measures to restrict alcohol abuse, especially among children and the youth.

(As indicated earlier, this body is not exhaustive. What it shows are some of the ways you can approach the question. An attempt has been made to cover at least one key aspect of each bullet point that you are expected to discuss.)

### **The Conclusion**

(Understanding that the conclusion sums up the argument of your body, we do not expect any new points to be discussed at this point. Varied presentations were expected and duly credited.)

#### **Sample Conclusion**

The writer has effectively convinced the society at large that government is fighting hard to control the advertising of alcohol that could lead to its abuse. Rhetorical devices, like tone and diction have been effectively combined as persuasive tools to show authority and prove credibility and authenticity.

**TOTAL: 100**

Kind regards

Lungelwa Phakathi

### **QUESTION 2: CONVERSATION**

The assignment consisted of **TWO** questions. You were required to answer either Question 1 or Question 2. If you had chosen Question 2, you would have been required to answer a question on Conversational Analysis.

Consider the two samples of dialogue below, Sample A and Sample B. Identify which of the two samples is an excerpt from a real life conversation and which is an excerpt from a play. Substantiate your answer in an essay in which you discuss the differences between a play and real life dialogue, as illustrated in the two samples.

**Sample A:**

01 Doc: tch D'you smgke?, h  
 02 Pat: Hm mm.  
 03 (5.0)  
 04 Doc: Alcohol use?  
 05 (1.0)  
 06 Pat: Hm:: mgderate I'd say  
 07 (0.2)  
 08 Doc: Can you define that, hhhehh ((laughing outbreath))  
 09 Pat: Uh huh hah .hh I don't get off my- (0.2) outta  
 10 thuh restaurant very much but [(awh:)  
 11 Doc: [Daily do you use  
 12 alcohol or:=h  
 13 Pat: Pardon?  
 14 Doc: Daily? or[:  
 15 Pat: [Oh: huh uh. .hh No: uhm (3.0) probably:  
 16 I usually go out like gnce uh week.  
 17 (1.0)  
 18 Doc: \*Kay.\*

(Office of Behavioral and Social Sciences Research. 2016. Conversation Analysis.  
<http://www.esourceresearch.org/eSourceBook/ConversationAnalysis/5CAinAction/tabid/520/Default.aspx> Accessed: 18 March 2016.)

### Sample B:

Nurse: My file says you've come in for three HIV tests over the last...I (*Flipping through file.*) four months.  
 Vincent: I like to take precautions.  
 Nurse: You're not in a relationship, are you, Vincent?  
 Vincent: No.  
 Nurse: When last did you have intercourse?  
 Vincent: You mean...  
 Nurse: Sex!  
 Vincent: Not... um... not for a while.  
 Nurse: And how many sexual partners have you had over, say... the last five years?  
 Vincent: (*Thinking hard.*) None... that I can recall, off the top of my head.  
 Nurse: Then you really have nothing to worry about. So, here is my suggestion. Let's call it a prescription. [...] Will you try this for me?  
 Vincent: It depends.

*The NURSE scribbles on a prescription pad, spelling out each letter.*

Nurse: L...I...F...E. It's free, and fun when you get the hang of it!

*She smiles warmly, tears the prescription from the pad and hands it to VINCENT. He takes a deep breath, glances down at the paper and exits the scene.*

(Coppen, Neil. 2011. *Abnormal Loads*. Junkets: Mowbray. p. 21-22.)

**TOTAL: 100**

**Your first step in answering this question would be to first determine exactly what the question asks of you.** The assignment requires you to be able to distinguish a transcribed conversation from an excerpt of a play. You must then determine which of the two excerpts is a real life conversation and which is a play. However, you will not be able to do this if you do not first establish the difference between the two genres.

**Therefore, your next step would be to work through the relevant sections in your study material.** In your study guide, you had to work through “Study Unit Five: Drama” and “Study Unit Six: Conversational analysis – ‘real life’ dialogue.” The study guide would then also refer you to certain sections in Goatly (2000)/Goatly and Hiradhar (2016) as well as Carter *et al*’s *Working with texts* (2008) and Mullaney and Stockwell’s *Introducing English Language* (2010). (The last title is available as an e-book in the library.)

As you read through your sources, make a note of everything that pertains to the characteristics of real life dialogue or drama and the ways in which the two differ. As I read through these sources, I made note of the following:

Real life conversation is spontaneous (Levey *et al*, 2013:76) or improvised (Carter *et al*, 2008:197). It contains mistakes and fillers (Levey *et al*, 2013:79) and can therefore not be judged by the rules of written English (Carter *et al*, 2008:197). Drama, on the other hand is contrived (Levey *et al*, 2013:66). It is written to be performed. Therefore, it contains fewer mistakes and fillers and even if they do occur, they tend to be unspontaneous (Levey *et al*, 2013:66).

An important difference that also becomes evident as one reads through the study material, is that a drama is first written and then performed (there are exceptions to this: plays are sometimes “workshopped,” but usually the play is first written and then performed). On the other hand, as Carter *et al* (2008:197) states, conversations are by definition an oral form, but in order to analyse it, it has to be written down.

Therefore, while real life conversation and performance both entail interlocutors exchanging verbal utterances, conversation spontaneously happens and is then transcribed (for our benefit as researchers/students) while performance is based on a memorised script that was first written.

**Now that you have established the difference between the two genres, your next step is to read carefully through the two excerpts** to see which corresponds more closely to the criteria of real life conversation, and which to drama. As I read through the two excerpts, I made the following notes:

Sample A is clearly written following certain transcription conventions. The utterances of a doctor (“Doc”) and patient (“Pat”) are recorded in a way that also shows us when the interlocutors paused and the duration of these pauses. The words are written in a way to reflect the phonetic value of the utterances. Through the course of four adjacency pairs, the doctor establishes firstly if the patient smokes and secondly what his or her alcohol consumption is. There is an overlap in the conversation (in lines 10 and 11) which leads the patient to ask the doctor to repeat him- or herself. The conversation is quite dull and the only aim seems to be the obtaining of information about the patient by the doctor.

Sample B, on the other hand, is an easier read than Sample A. It is written in grammatically correct English and the words are not obstructed by indications of the duration of pauses or pronunciation. The text shows an interaction between someone named Vincent and a nurse. Through six adjacency pairs the nurse enquires why Vincent tests himself regularly for HIV. It becomes clear that Vincent does not engage in any activity that would put him at risk for contracting HIV and yet he regularly has himself tested. The nurse then writes him a prescription for “L...I...F...E”, implying that he should “get a life”, so to speak.



Clearly, these events are not very realistic. Firstly, Vincent's concern over his health seems neurotic rather than merely cautious and the nurse's suggestion that he should live a fuller and more interesting life is rather unprofessional. However, the interchange is quite entertaining and the utterances are delivered with a comic rhythm. The nurse's question of how many sexual partners Vincent has had over the last five years is one that would only require thinking if the number was high. Despite the fact that Vincent has to think about his answer and states that it is difficult for him to answer "off the top of [his] head", he did not have any sexual partners during this time.

In addition, the text also reflects the interlocutors' actions during the interchange. The nurse, for example, "*flips through [her] file*" during her first utterance and Vincent is "*thinking hard*" before he discloses how many sexual partners he has had. Lastly, as Vincent takes the prescription from the nurse, the text states that he "*exits the scene*".

Although this text is somewhat unrealistic, it does convey quite a bit of information about the interlocutors. We can assume that the nurse is acquainted with Vincent, since she strongly suspects that he is not in a relationship. She also takes it on herself to give him life advice, although he came to see her in her professional capacity. We can thus also say that she is somewhat nosy, but well-intentioned. We can deduce that Vincent is a lone figure, since he has not been involved with anyone in five years. He is overly cautious – maybe even neurotic – about his health since he takes unnecessary precautions.

Therefore, you could draw the conclusion that Sample A is a real life conversation and Sample B is an excerpt from a drama. Valid reasons for drawing this conclusion are the following:

- Sample B contains fewer fillers and no overlaps. Where a filler is present, it serves a comic function. For example, Vincent is reluctant to reveal when he last had sex because it was a long time ago. Sample A, on the other hand, contains quite a few fillers and an overlap.
- Sample B is written in grammatically correct English, while Sample A is written using conventions that indicate an utterance's phonetic value and the duration of pauses. In addition, Sample B also contains conventions associated with a performance on a stage. Vincent is, for example, described as exiting "*the scene*".
- Sample A is significantly duller than Sample B. Sample A only tells us of the patient's smoking and drinking habits, while Sample B provides the reader with a significant amount of exposition about the interlocutors.

Now that you have established which sample is a real life conversation and which is an excerpt from a drama and have three clear reasons to back this claim up, **you can start planning your essay, which will be the next step in completing this assignment.**

The main argument would be that Sample A is an example of real life dialogue and Sample B is an excerpt from a drama. You could substantiate this argument with the three reasons cited above: firstly, Sample A is more spontaneous and Sample B is more contrived, secondly, Sample A is written using CA conventions and Sample B refers to stage conventions, and thirdly, Sample A is dull and gives us little insight into the interlocutors while Sample B is entertaining and contains exposition.

The essay would then look like this:

**Introduction:** briefly **state the main argument** and **map out the rest of the essay**. In this case, the introduction could look something like this:

Because drama mimics the way people talk in real life, there are significant similarities between real life conversation and drama. There are, however, also significant differences between real life conversation and drama. This essay argues that Sample A is an example of real life conversation while Sample B is an excerpt from a drama. This claim will be substantiated through a discussion of spontaneity in dialogue, the conventions of Conversational Analysis and the functions of dialogue as illustrated in Sample A and Sample B.

**Paragraph 1: Spontaneous vs contrived dialogue**

- Explain what Carter *et al* (2008) and Levey *et al* (2013) say about spontaneity of real life dialogue and the contrived nature of drama.
- Give examples from the text that illustrate that Sample A is spontaneous and Sample B is contrived.

**Paragraph 2: Conventions of real life conversation and the stage**

- Explain what Carter *et al* (2008) and Levey *et al* (2013) say about the conventions of real life conversation and drama respectively.
- Give examples from the text that illustrate that Sample A follows CA conventions and Sample B follows the conventions of the stage/drama.

**Paragraph 3: Entertainment value of dialogues**

- Explain what Carter *et al* (2008) and Levey *et al* (2013) say about the purpose of real life conversation and drama respectively.
- Give examples from the text that illustrate that Sample A has the function of obtaining information from a patient while Sample B contains entertainment value.

**Conclusion:** briefly summarize **why Sample A is an example of real life conversation and Sample B is an excerpt from a drama**.

For example,

In conclusion, Sample A is clearly an example of real life conversation since it contains an overlap and various fillers, suggesting that it is spontaneous and not planned in advance. The sample also contains conventions associated with Conversational Analysis, such as a denotation of the length of pauses and the phonetic value of utterances. Sample A is furthermore quite dull, its only function seeming to be the obtaining of information. On the other hand, Sample B contains fewer errors and fillers suggesting that it was contrived. It is also written in grammatically correct English and refers to stage conventions. Lastly, Sample B is quite entertaining and provides the reader with exposition on the two interlocutors. Sample B was therefore likely written to be performed while Sample A is a transcript of a real life conversation between a doctor and a patient.

Remember to give credit to your sources (see Tutorial Letter 301). For the essay planned in this tutorial letter, the bibliography would look like this:

**Bibliography:**

Carter, Ronald, Goddard, Angela, Reah, Danuta, Sanger, Keith, Swift, Nikki. Beard, Adrian (ed.). 2008. *Working with texts: A core introduction to language analysis*. 3rd Ed. London: Routledge.

Levey, David, Ndlangamandla, Clifford, Donaldson, Eileen, Makoe, Pinky, Van Niekerk, Marinus, Dambe, Sira, Kreuiter, Allyson, Zindela, Nomsa. 2013. *Genres in Literature and Language: Theory, Style, Poetics*. Pretoria: University of South Africa. (Only study guide for ENG2602.)

**TOTAL: 100**

Best wishes for the exams!

Lida Krüger