Focus 1 — Word choice and sentence structure

Example: Question 2(a)

Show how the word choice and sentence structure in lines 8–14 emphasise the strong feelings of those who feel the countryside is under threat.

Extract from Text — Passage 1, lines 8–14:

One faction has cried constantly that the countryside is in mortal danger from greedy developers whose only motive is profit; another has kept on roaring that farmers are killing every wild thing in sight and threatening the very soil on which we stand through overuse of machinery and chemicals; still another has been continually heard ululating over a decline in the bird population, or the loss of hedgerows, or the disappearance of marshland, or the appearance of coniferous forest.

Extract from Marking Instructions

Marks will depend on the quality of the comment. Insightful comment on one feature could be worth up to 3 marks. For full marks, there must be reference to both word choice and sentence structure.

Reference alone: 0. Mere identification of a feature of sentence structure: 0.

Possible answers:

Word choice:

1 “cried constantly” suggests a state of permanent outrage
2 “mortal danger” suggests extreme peril, life threatening
3 “greedy” suggests they are over-eager for monetary gain
4 “only motive is profit” suggests single-minded quest for gain
5 “kept on roaring” suggests persistent expression of anger, aggression
6 “killing every wild thing in sight” use of hyperbole to express scale of destruction
7 “threatening the very soil” intensive, emphasising extent of menace
8 “overuse” suggests injury by excessive use
9 “continually ... ululating” suggests constant loud lamentations
Sentence structure:

10 listing (lines 12-14) emphasises the range of alternatives which provoke protest
11 repetition of "or" suggests determination to find a source of complaint
12 Tripartite structure of "One faction has cried", "another has kept on roaring" and "still another ... ululating" in three sections separated by semi-colons building to a climax of noisy dissent.
Focus 1 — Word choice and sentence structure

Activity 1

Discuss with the Workshop Presenter what mark (out of 4) you would assign to each of the following three answers.

Answer 1

Word Choice: He uses “cried” and “roaring” and “screaming” to show he feels very strongly and is upset.

Sentence structure: He repeats the word “or” to show he has lots to say and he uses lists to show just how strongly he feels.

Your mark [ ] Agreed mark [ ]

Notes

Answer 2

“constantly” and “continually” suggest that these people never stop - they are so angry they just keep on and on about it. The list of all the things they complain about makes it sound as if there is a huge range of complaints.

Your mark [ ] Agreed mark [ ]

Notes
Answer 3

- "ululating" has connotations of a howling, wailing sound as if they are really worked up

- describing the developers as "greedy" shows their contempt for them - they are seen as interested only in money

- the repetition of "or" makes it sound as if it's just one thing after another - these people will grasp at anything

- the writer's use of "one" then "another" then "still another" with separation by semicolons emphasises the sort of never-ending stream of complaints

Your mark [ ] Agreed mark [ ]

Notes

---

End of Activity 1
Activity 2

On your own, or with a partner, assign marks to the following answers:

Answer 4

The word "cried" connotes ideas of a painful moment, strong emotion, or similar to that of a war-cry. The writer uses the word to reflect the pain and discontent that the “faction” has experienced because of the countryside under threat. They clearly do not just "speak out" but give a painful "cry".

The list function with “or” at the beginning of each item emphasises the strong feelings of the “faction”. The repetition puts emphasis on the strong opinions of the faction on to the reader. It emphasises everything that the factions are against and adds to the length of the list – it seems like it will go on and on, showing the strength and determination of the people.

Your mark [ ] Agreed mark [ ]

Notes


Answer 5

The use of semicolons instead of full stops gives the structure of the sentence a flow. It is as if the various objections literally "join together" and become one! "One faction has cried..." , "Another has kept on roaring", "continually heard ululating"; all of these descriptions use emotive terms to describe the feelings of the various groups. Phrases such as "killing every wild thing in sight", "threatening the very soil", "disappearance of marshland" emphasise the people's strong feelings on the subject.

Your mark [ ] Agreed mark [ ]

Notes


  


Answer 6

“Mortal danger” shows that the people who are aware of particular threats to the countryside are very passionate and firmly believe that these are serious threats posing complete destruction of the countryside.

The whole paragraph is one sentence, separated by commas and semicolons, creating an impacting list sentence to emphasise each of the multiple dangers. The repetition of “or” again emphasises each individual threat listed in the last section, showing that there are significant problems relating to many key elements of the countryside.

Your mark [ ]   Agreed mark [ ]

Notes

End of Activity 2
Activity 3

And finally, three more — just to see if you’ve got the hang of it:

Answer 7
“roaring” suggests that it is a very fierce feeling and that it is extremely strong, like a lion.

Use of semicolons shows us the large numbers of people and the large amounts of problems facing them.

“cried” has connotations of somebody being very upset by something. This, again, shows the extent of the feelings.

The use of a long sentence helps us to understand why their feelings are so strong: there’s so many things being “destroyed”

Your mark [ ]

Agreed mark [ ]

Notes


Answer 8

sentence structure - semi colons, to separate the list of clauses. A very long sentence used indicating the complex process that is happening to the countryside.

word choice - greedy - to want too much. Using this word emphasises these developers are somewhat selfish, not nice. Also it is an informal word so highlights this fact for the reader.

disappearance - to no longer be here - makes it sound as though the marshland is missing, as though the farmer is hiding it.

Your mark [ ]

Agreed mark [ ]

Notes

[ ]
Answer 9

- The word “mortal” which literally means being in danger of death, highlights how people feel the countryside is in the worst possible danger which there is no way back from, like death.

- The word “roaring” which is a loud expression of rage and passion highlights how angry and outraged people are and how strongly they feel about the issue.

- The long lists of complaints, separated by semi-colons, is all one long sentence and gives us the idea that people who talk about the countryside go on forever, showing a passion.

- The repeating pattern of introducing a group and then stating its complaint highlights how they all feel the same and are clearly united because they feel so strongly.

Notes

End of Activity 3
ANSWERS:

1. 0
2. 2
3. 4
4. 2
5. 0
6. 1
7. 1
8. $\frac{1}{2}$
9. $3 \frac{1}{2}$