

## FOUR COMMON VCE LANGUAGE ANALYSIS MISTAKES

This guide outlines four common VCE language analysis mistakes. It is designed to help you identify and avoid these common VCE language analysis mistakes in your own writing and improve your marks as a result.

Language analysis is often the area VCE English students struggle most with. If you find yourself experiencing difficulties with language analysis, don't fret. You're certainly not alone – on the [2017 English exam](#), language analysis had the lowest average score out of all three sections. The good news is that, once you know the common VCE language analysis mistakes, improving the quality of your essays often requires only a few simple changes.

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### COMMON VCE LANGUAGE ANALYSIS MISTAKES: MISTAKE #1: NOT ANALYSING THE ARGUMENT HOLISTICALLY

Many students write about persuasive techniques in isolation from one another, while others simply list off persuasive techniques without explaining *how* these techniques persuade the reader.

Instead of analysing each persuasive technique in isolation, you should consider the argument *holistically*. That is, you should consider both how the techniques impact one another *and* how the techniques factor in to the overall strategy the author is using to persuade the reader. For example, suppose an author has begun their piece with an anecdote and then later brings in anecdotes from third parties. You may consider commenting on how the initial anecdote impacts the efficacy of the later anecdotes and how the use of anecdotes supports the author's overall strategy.

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## COMMON VCE LANGUAGE ANALYSIS MISTAKES: MISTAKE #2: FAILING TO PROPERLY ANALYSE THE SECOND TEXT

Of the common VCE language analysis mistakes I see, one of the most prevalent mistakes students make is failing to give the second text as much attention as they should. There are three main errors students make with regard to the second text:

1. **Not leaving enough time to analyse the second text:** Some students spend so much time writing about the first text that they run out of time to analyse the second. Try to leave ample time to analyse *both* texts. The more practice language analysis essays you write, the better you'll get at figuring out exactly how much time you can afford to each text.
2. **Failing to analyse the second text holistically:** Sometimes students will analyse the first text holistically but fail to give the second text the same treatment. As with the first text, your analysis of the second text should take a holistic approach, examining the techniques *and* how the techniques interact with and impact on one another.
3. **Failing to consider who the second text is aimed at:** Many students do not consider if the second text is aimed at a different audience than the first. You should always ask yourself who the second text's intended audience is and how this impacts the efficacy of the author's argument.

In short, you should treat the second text as if it is as important as the first text – because it is.

### **COMMON VCE LANGUAGE ANALYSIS MISTAKES: MISTAKE #3: NOT ANALYSING THE WAY THE IMAGES *SUPPORT* THE AUTHOR'S ARGUMENT**

Many students write about the visuals in isolation. Instead, students should analyse the way that the visuals *support* the author's argument. The visuals have been deliberately chosen for the article and often emphasise or support something that has already been argued in writing. For example, a black and white image of a sad child may strengthen the impact of the author's emotive writing. As such, students should always examine the visuals *in the context of* the main argument made by the author.

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### **COMMON VCE LANGUAGE ANALYSIS MISTAKES: MISTAKE #4: REPEATING THE SAME PHRASES**

Many students have a small collection of phrases and terms that they use repeatedly throughout their analysis, such as "the author positions the reader". This makes reading your piece repetitive.

Instead, you should try to diversify the 'impact' vocabulary that you use so that your writing is rich and varied. Consider making a broad list of phrases you could use and try to incorporate different ones each time you do a practice language analysis essay. For example, instead of repeating "the author positions the reader", you might say the author "implores", "incites", "encourages", or "manipulates" the reader. Instead of saying the author "writes in an aggressive tone", you might use adverbs such as "the author aggressively argues that [x]" or "the author casually suggests that [y]."