

STYLE QUESTIONS



READING COMPREHENSION, UNSEEN FICTION, UNSEEN POETRY

QUESTIONS ON STYLE

- ❖ You are generally being asked to comment on **how** the writer presents the material and **what effect** this has on you as a reader.
- ❖ It is important to remember to comment on the **effectiveness** of various writing styles.
- ❖ To do this, you must use a verb to explain what each feature of style does: 'The writer's use of rhetorical questions **engages** the reader and **provokes thought** on the topic...'

HINT

WATCH OUT FOR THE WORD
'HOW'. IT CAN OFTEN BE A
CLUE THAT THE QUESTION IS
ABOUT STYLE.



EXAMPLE 2014 READING COMPREHENSION

- ❖ How does Caitlin Moran capture the atmosphere of **both** the night Sherlock first broadcast and the night of the premiere of the second Sherlock series?

MARKING SCHEME

- ❖ Night one:
- ❖ She captures the emotion of the night. Private domestic setting of Moffat's house - small scale - tense – claustrophobic - uncertain? The new TV series is known only to the cast and crew.
- ❖ Tone of intimacy
- ❖ Creation of tension and anxiety -sense of waiting

- ❖ Use of dialogue, especially direct quotation.
- ❖ Circumstance creates tension - Cumberbatch late – on Baker Street!
- ❖ Tone of intimacy
- ❖ Sudden change of mood when phones began ‘exploding’
- ❖ Use of hyperbole to convey the extraordinary response
- Exploding
- ❖ Relief afterwards - private conversations
- ❖ Sense of a momentous event “everything had changed in 90 minutes”

- ❖ Night two:
- ❖ Public setting at prestigious venue (BFI) - big national celebrity event
- ❖ Sense/mood of hysteria/celebrity: 'communal moans' over Cumberbatch's beauty
- ❖ More intimate setting in theatre - room full of love - shared experience

- ❖ Crew and fans are dedicated to the production
- ❖ Exaggerated reactions of fans, camping in the cold, cheering, clapping
- ❖ Use of sound - 'whoops and screams'
- ❖ Hyperbole
- ❖ Relief afterwards - private conversations

OTHER EXAMPLES

- ❖ This passage is written in an autobiographical style. Identify two aspects of this style evident in the passage and comment on their effect on you as a reader. (2010 Reading)
- ❖ Did you find this passage entertaining? Give reasons for your answer. (2008 Reading)
- ❖ How does the poet convey a sense of excitement about the water in the poem? (2008 Unseen Poetry)

- ❖ Based on your reading of the above passage, do you think that Yun Ling is a good storyteller? Support your answer with reference to the extract. (2014 Unseen Fiction)
- ❖ *The Prince of Mist* has been called, ‘a gripping and well written novel’. Based on your reading of the above extract, do you agree with this view? Explain your answer with reference to the text. (2012 Unseen Fiction)

PAST PAPERS REVISION HINT

TRY TO IDENTIFY AS MANY FEATURES
OF STYLE AS YOU CAN AND THEN GO
TO THE MARKING SCHEME FOR THAT
YEAR ON EXAMINATIONS.IE TO SEE
HOW MANY YOU FOUND .



WRITING TO INFORM - KEY FEATURES

- ❖ Information given in a clear, straightforward way
- ❖ Writing is objective: we do not know the writer's own opinion on the topic
- ❖ Facts and figures are given



- ❖ The word 'I' is rarely used.
- ❖ Adjectives and adverbs are used sparingly as they can make the writing subjective.
- ❖ Look at your Geography textbook, for example. there is a lot of information there, but you know nothing about the person who wrote the book.

COMPARE THESE EXAMPLES

- ❖ The Lee Valley stretches from the Derrynasaggart Mountains on the Cork / Kerry border to Cork Harbour. The two main rivers are the Lee and the Sullane. (*Informative and objective*)



The beautiful Lee Valley stretches from the unspoilt mountains on the Cork/ Kerry border to Cork Harbour. The whole area is rich in fascinating history and teeming with wonderful wildlife. It is one of my favourite places to visit.

(Descriptive and subjective)

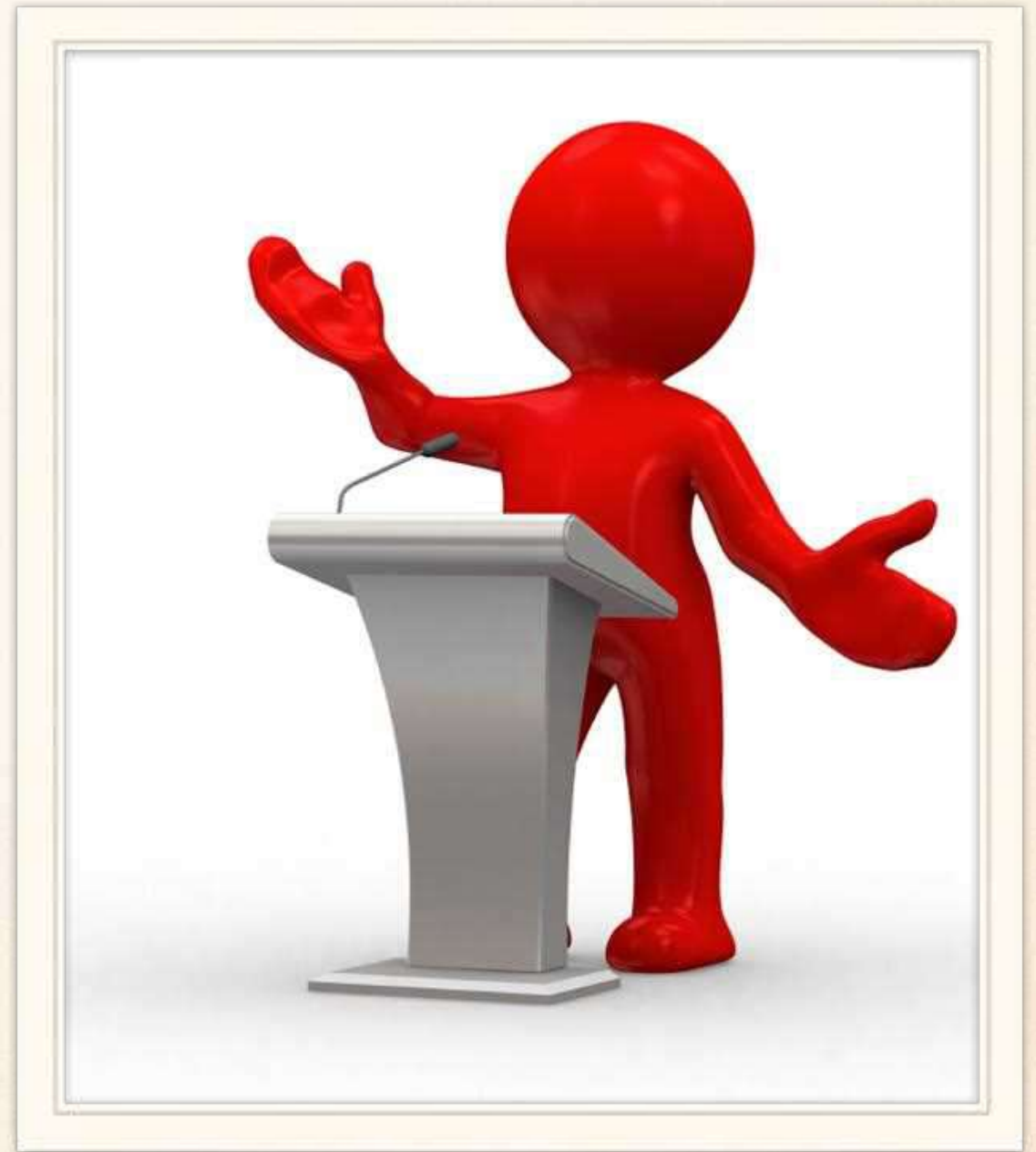
HINT

IN YOUR FUNCTIONAL WRITING TASK AND YOUR PERSONAL WRITING ESSAY, BEAR IN MIND WHAT LANGUAGE STYLE YOU ARE GOING TO USE. FOR EXAMPLE, INSTRUCTIONS SHOULD BE WRITTEN IN THE LANGUAGE OF INFORMATION. THE EXAMINER WILL BE CHECKING!



WRITING TO ARGUE, DEBATE OR MAKE A CASE

- ❖ Rhetorical questions engage the reader and make him or her think about the points being made.
- ❖ Facts and figures make the writer's case appear well-researched and therefore credible.



- ❖ Acknowledging other viewpoints can make the writer appear rational and fair-minded. It can also anticipate and briefly respond to the reader's possible objections to the argument: 'There are, of course, those who say that if schools do not have uniforms, students will be distracted by the fashions and accessories sported by their classmates and will not concentrate on their work. I feel that this is a ridiculous argument which implies that teenagers are immature, shallow and silly. As we all know, this is not the case.'

- ❖ Quotations can give the impression that the writer is just one of many people who feel this way about the topic under discussion. They add weight to the argument and help to make it memorable.
- ❖ Repetition (especially the rule of three) can add emphasis: “Never before in the field of human conflict was so much owed by so many, to so few” – Sir Winston Churchill
- ❖ “Friends, Romans, Countrymen” – William Shakespeare in Julius Caesar

- ❖ Antithesis is the contrast of ideas by means of a parallel arrangement of words. Sounds complicated? Well, it's not! You have heard examples of this plenty of times: 'Ask not what your country can do for you, but what you can do for your country.' 'Let us never negotiate out of fear, but let us never fear to negotiate.' Such sentences are memorable.

- ❖ Personal opinion and anecdotes can support the point being made and can make the writing more interesting.
- ❖ Emotional manipulation can play on the reader's conscience and make him or her feel guilty or pressurised into agreeing with the case being made. It can also flatter the reader into agreeing.

HINT

THINK OF THE WAY THESE
TECHNIQUES ARE USED IN
ADVERTISING (MEDIA STUDIES).
L'OREAL - BECAUSE YOU'RE WORTH
IT.



DESCRIPTIVE WRITING

- ❖ Events and people are described in detail
- ❖ Adjectives and adverbs are used to good effect
- ❖ Personification can be used: 'The wind howled angrily and tugged at my coat'.

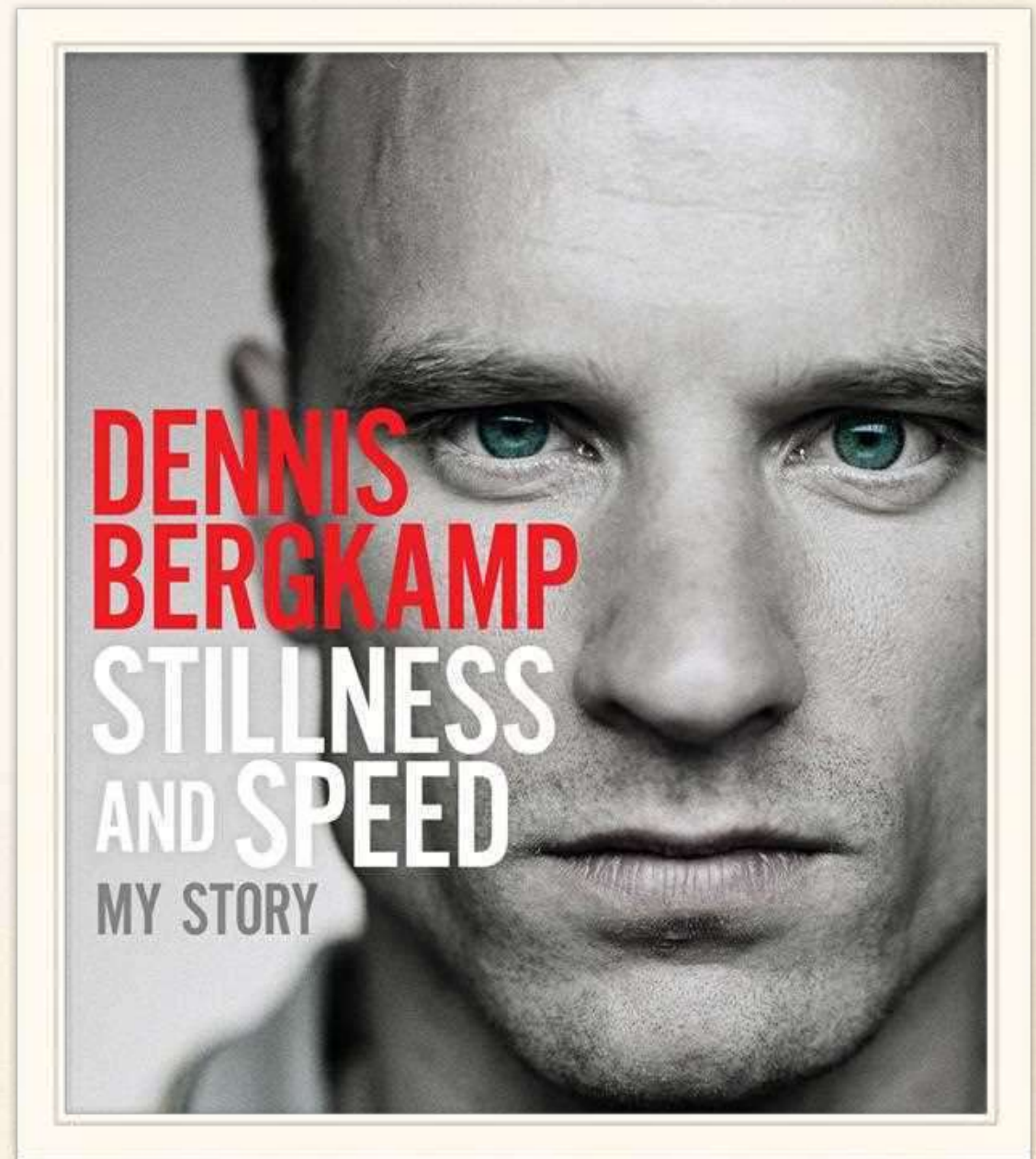


- ❖ Descriptive writing appeals to the senses. If a reader can imagine the sights and sounds, he or she will be engaged by the writing. Look at this example from the 2003 Unseen Fiction Section:
- ❖ It had been drizzling steadily since the first grey shadows of dawn had crept over the city, and the lanes and alleyways around Spitalfields market were glistening with rain and vegetable refuse. The great steel barn of the fruit market echoed with the shouts of porters, the whinings of forklift trucks, the crashing of crates and the tramp of feet.

- ❖ Metaphors and similes are used to good effect
- ❖ Language can be musically pleasing, as in a poem, and assonance and alliteration can be used to create a sense of atmosphere. Look at this example from James Joyce's *The Dead*: 'His soul swooned slowly as he heard the snow falling faintly through the universe, and faintly falling, like the descent of their last end, upon all the living and the dead'.

AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL WRITING

- ❖ Written in the first person
- ❖ Personal account which tells us a great deal about the character of the writer
- ❖ Insights and information that we would not get from any other source



- ❖ Subjective: the person will naturally want to give their perspective and may want to tell their side of the story.
- ❖ Can be nostalgic: the writer may look back fondly at days long gone.
- ❖ The 2010 Reading section of Paper 1 is an example of autobiographical writing

HUMOROUS WRITING

- ❖ Facts may be deliberately exaggerated for comic effect
- ❖ May be humorous misunderstandings
- ❖ The unexpected can be used to good effect



- ❖ Amusing comparisons may be used
- ❖ The writer may be self-deprecating. This simply means speaking about oneself in a modest or critical manner
- ❖ The edited extract from the book *U2 B.Y. U2* was part of the Reading section of the 2010 Junior Cert exam and it contains many of the features of humorous writing which are given above. The writer is self-deprecating, he deliberately exaggerates his ugliness for comic effect, and he compares himself to a famously ugly cartoon character.

- ❖ I was a very cute toddler; I've seen the photographs. But then at around the age of five something started to happen that radically changed my appearance. We are not talking here about some accidental injury or anything medical, but a gradual transformation. My appearance started to inspire a certain mild alarm in adults who caught sight of me for the first time and to elicit sympathetic and vaguely disappointed looks from my parents. My head grew, quite quickly, to an unfeasibly large size. It was not a disagreeable head, in certain contexts it was quite handsome, but from the age of five as a result of this unusual development I started to look unnervingly like the kid on the cover of Mad magazine. Along with the head came the teeth, or specifically my two big front teeth. No matter what form of mouth management I employed, there was just no hiding them, so by the time I was seven the full Mad magazine look was complete.

