Pearson Edexcel

A level English Language

Teacher Guide to 9EN0/03
Investigating Language

9EN0 03 Investigating Language

We hope that this guide and the accompanying support material prove useful as in preparing students for 9EN0 03: Investigating Language. Please be aware that additional exemplars with commentaries are available on the website. Although the subtopics are different, they are still helpful in terms of demonstrating where candidates meet the criteria for particular levels.

The accompanying material also includes ideas about how the skills for 9EN0 03 can be integrated with other aspects of the A Level course to ensure that students are as prepared as possible for this unit prior to the pre-release material being made available.

Introduction

In response to requests for further guidance with this unit, we have produced this document to help teachers of A Level English Language support their students with their chosen investigation for 9EN0 03. It is a deliberately generic guide that should be applicable to all subsequent series but it is important to be aware that this is just a guide, not a favoured or preferred approach.

The guide is broken down into five key steps designed to help students approach the investigation while still maintaining their independence in terms of the areas they research.

The five steps covered in this guide are:

- **Selection**
- **Immersion and Representative Features**
- **Timeline**
- **Case Study for Section B**
- **Wider Reading**

Step One - Selection

Once the pre-release material has been made available, encourage students to look carefully at the summary of the subtopic and remind them about the areas of research they should focus on:

- the historical development of their chosen subtopic
- relevant frameworks associated with their chosen subtopic
- the influence of social, historical, technological and cultural factors on their chosen subtopic.

It is important that students look carefully at the title of their subtopic and ensure that they are confident that they know what they are researching.

2019 – Language and Gender **Subtopic: Gender Identity in Superhero Comics** The genre of superhero comics began in the USA in the early 1930s with characters such as Mandrake the Magician, The Phantom and, towards the end of the decade, possibly the first female superhero, Sheena, Queen of the Jungle. Gender identity became more fluid in superhero comics in the late 20th and early 21st centuries, when comics started including gay characters, trans characters and developed the roles of women.	*In this pre-release guidance, the focus is on printed comics and the representation of gender within them. Some candidates focused on film representations of superheroes, meaning they struggled to handle the data offered in Section A.*
2019 – Regional Language Variation **Subtopic: Change Over Time in the Tyneside Dialect** The dialect of English spoken in Newcastle-upon-Tyne and Tyneside is one of the most widely recognised dialects in the UK and is often known as 'Geordie.' As society has undergone social, cultural and technological changes, so the Tyneside dialect has changed with it. Your investigation should focus on the particular characteristics of the Tyneside dialect as it is spoken today and as it was spoken over the past 50 years.	*In this pre-release guidance, the focus is specifically on how the Tyneside dialect has changed over time. Students are explicitly directed to look at change over the last fifty years and so their research needs to include some coverage of the Tyneside dialect from the 1970s onwards.*

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2021 – Language and Power **Subtopic: Parliamentary Debates** Parliamentary debates are the formal discussions surrounding a particular proposal within the House of Commons and the House of Lords. In terms of the format of Parliamentary debates, an MP or a Member of the House of Lords puts forward a proposal which is then debated. There are a number of rules and conventions which help manage the debates.	*In this pre-release guidance, students are advised to look specifically at debates from within either the House of Commons or the House of Lords. There is also an explicit reference to the rules and conventions of parliamentary debates meaning students should be explicitly aware of this aspect of the subtopic.*

Step Two – Immersion and Representative Features

At this point in the investigation, students should be immersing themselves in the subtopic, consuming as wide a range of sources as possible. Not all of these sources need to be used in Section B of their investigation, but students should be looking at a range of examples so that they can confidently identify the representative features of their chosen subtopic.

Students should use this part of the process to think about the relevant language frameworks associated with their chosen subtopic. It is important that students cover a range of frameworks – for some subtopics, students become fixated on one framework over all others, resulting in a narrower or more generalised discussion in Section A.

Students should also be aware of the key representative features of their chosen subtopic. For example, for the 2021 Language and Gender subtopic, Representation of Gender in Stand-Up Comedy, students should be aware of how comics structure jokes around gender and the common topics associated with the representation of gender in comedy.

Step Three – Timeline

This step is not necessarily about creating a chronological list of everything that has ever happened in the history of the subtopic. Instead, it is a reminder that one of the bullet points in the pre-release material asks students to look at the historical development of their subtopic as well as the influences of

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technological and cultural factors. To support them with this element of the research process, students should be encouraged to look at any key moments or historical issues surrounding their subtopic.

For example, with the Parliamentary Debates subtopic, students could have made notes about when debates were first televised, considering how that may have affected the way language was used. For the Comic Superheroes subtopic, students may have found it helpful to be aware of the Golden Age and Silver Age of comic books as well as issues surrounding feminism to help them engage more evaluatively with the context of the Section A data. Being aware of key movements in feminism might also have been useful to understand developments in the Gender Representation in Sports Journalism subtopic as well.

Step Four – Case Study for Section B

Once students have a secure understanding of the representative features of their chosen subtopic, they should then select a narrower range of data sources to focus their investigation around. The quantity of data should be manageable. While students may have looked at a wide range of sources at a superficial level in the immersion stage of their investigation, they should focus on a narrower range of data at greater depth for Section B of the paper.

Students will need to evaluate their sources, ensuring that they have selected material that is appropriate for the subtopic and that can be adapted to meet the demands of the question. It is important that students really consider the sources they have chosen in light of the subtopic. One example of problematic data can be seen in the 2022 series where, for the Gender and Sports Journalism subtopic, some students selected an article entitled, '10 Sexiest Women in Football,' as part of their research, comparing it with match reports about men's football games. Clearly, this article has been deliberately written about women's sex appeal rather than reporting on their sporting prowess, making comparisons less effective.

While evaluating their data sources, students should also consider the mark scheme for Section B of the exam. The final bullet point of the mark scheme asks students to analyse and evaluate connections across data so students should have selected sources that can be compared in some way. These connections can be discussed in light of the statement and direct comparisons can be made. One example of data that uses the statement to draw connections can be seen in Script 12 of the 2019 Exemplars.

Step Five – Wider Reading

The pre-release material offers students a starting point for their wider reading around the subtopic. Students should be thinking about how their wider reading informs their understanding of their own data so revision material

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should be geared towards thinking about how the concepts, theories and issues relate directly to their data sources.

Students should be guided to reliable sources such as JSTOR and DiVA Portal, along with using Google Scholar to search for other academic reading materials. Just like their data sources, students will need to evaluate their wider reading ensuring that it is useful in terms of exploring their own data. It is also worth thinking about how the wider reading might inform their understanding of the representative features of their chosen subtopic so that they can potentially apply their knowledge to the data in Section A.

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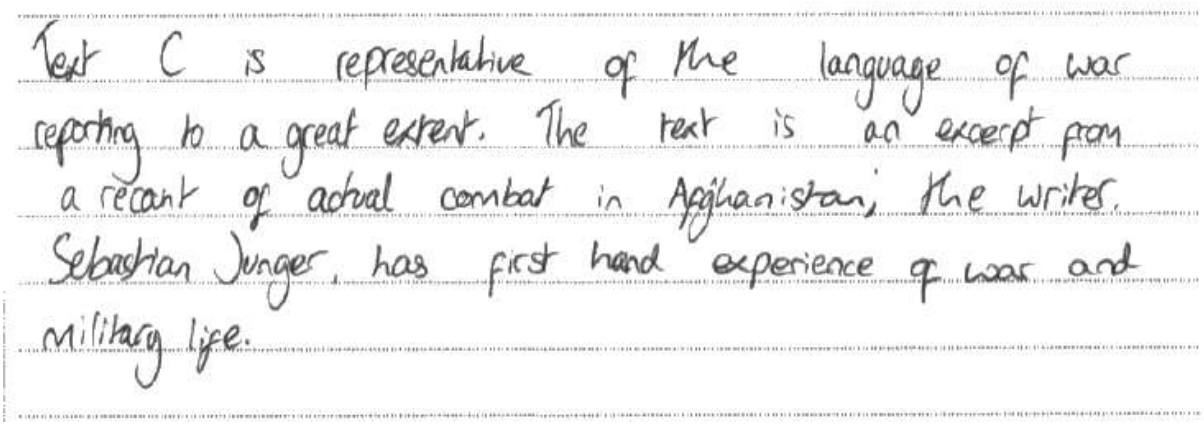
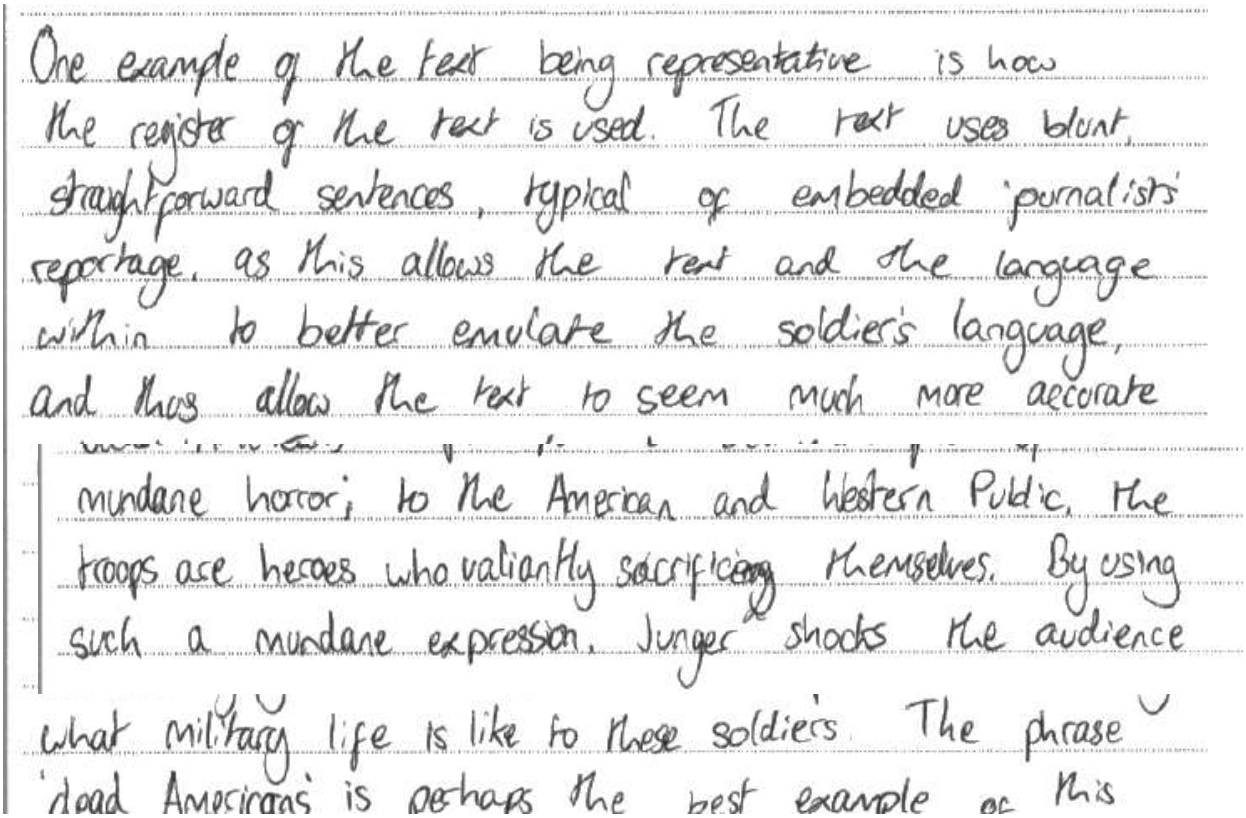
Section A Level 5 Response

Below is an example of a Level 5 response from 2021. The subtopic of this response is War Reportage. In this response, the candidate has an excellent understanding of the representative features of the subtopic and is able to explore the data fully.



Text C is representative of the language of war reporting to a great extent. The text is an excerpt from a recount of actual combat in Afghanistan, the writer, Sebastian Junger, has first hand experience of war and military life.



One example of the text being representative is how the register of the text is used. The text uses blunt, straightforward sentences, typical of embedded 'journalists' reportage, as this allows the text and the language within to better emulate the soldier's language, and thus allow the text to seem much more accurate

mundane horror; to the American and Western Public, the troops are heroes who valiantly sacrificing themselves. By using such a mundane expression, Junger shocks the audience what military life is like to these soldiers. The phrase 'dead Americans' is perhaps the best example of this

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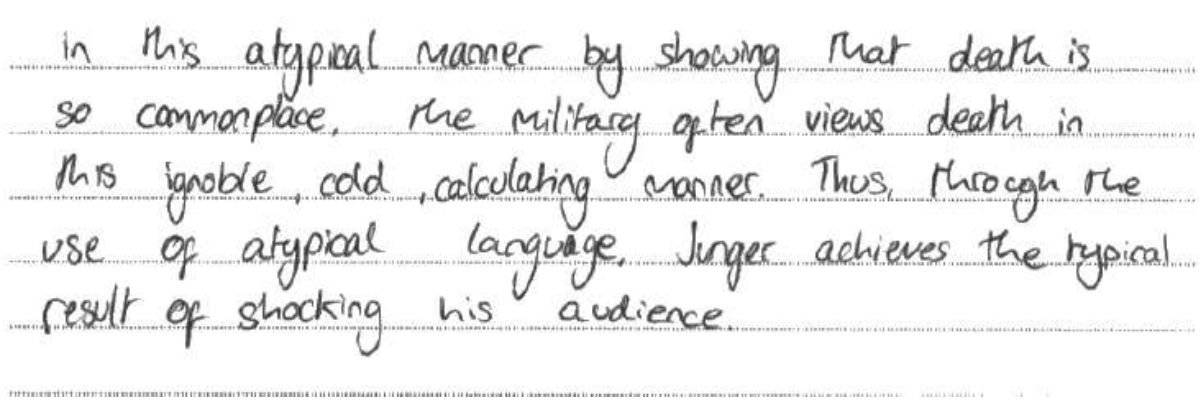

In this opening section, the candidate discusses a range of features in the data. By discussing the lack of a vivid description, the candidate demonstrates that they have an understanding of typical features and is therefore able to evaluate the effect of the text's atypical usage. The candidate's discussion of how horror is created also allows the candidate to critically discuss the context of the text.

The candidate has also selected a precise quotation to support their argument, showing a judicious selection of material.

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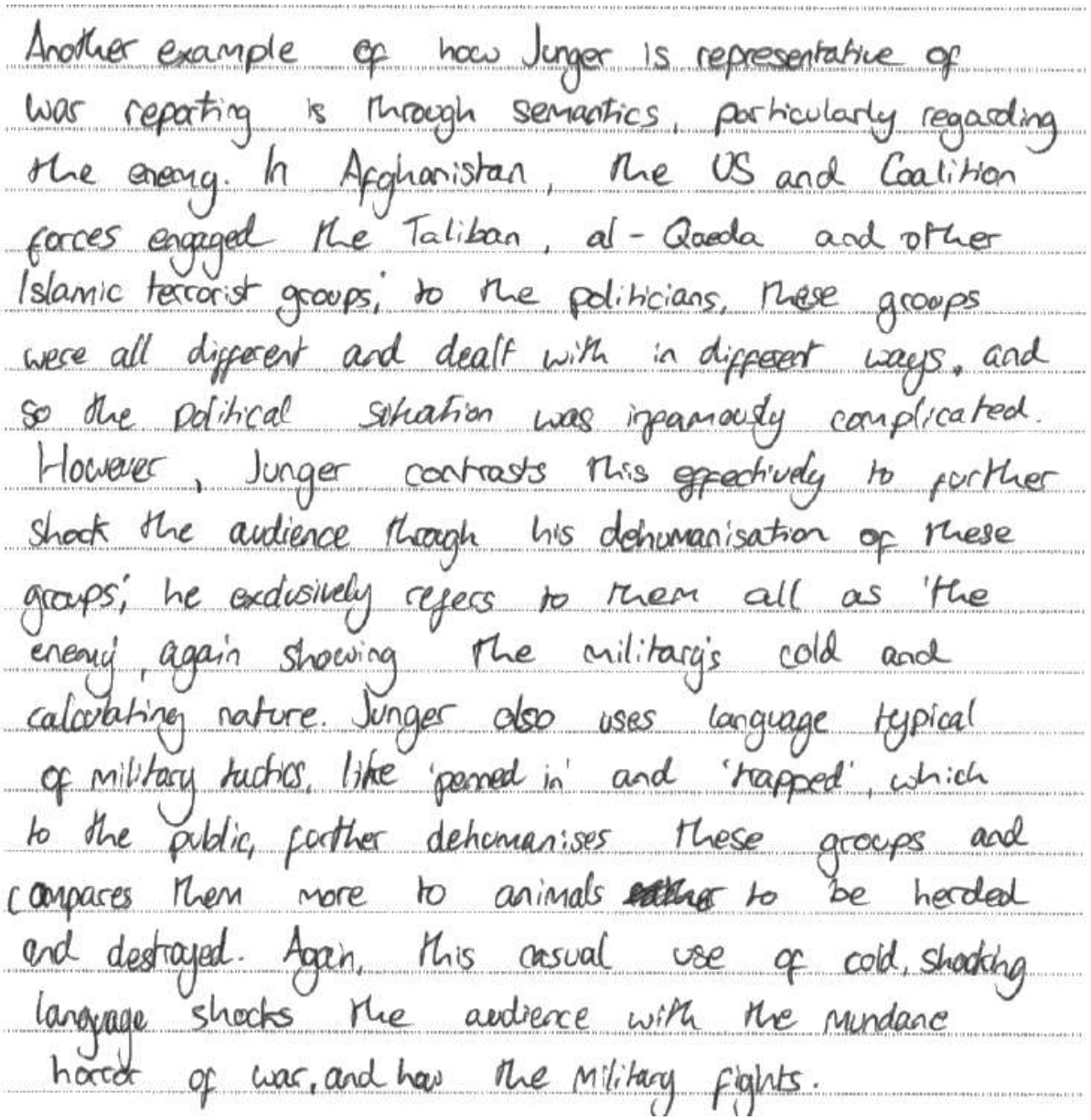
Another example of how Junger is representative of war reporting is through semantics, particularly regarding the enemy. In Afghanistan, the US and Coalition forces engaged the Taliban, al-Qaeda and other Islamic terrorist groups; to the politicians, these groups were all different and dealt with in different ways, and so the political situation was infamously complicated. However, Junger contrasts this effectively to further shock the audience through his dehumanisation of these groups; he exclusively refers to them all as 'the enemy', again showing the military's cold and calculating nature. Junger also uses language typical of military tactics, like 'pened in' and 'trapped', which to the public, further dehumanises these groups and compares them more to animals ~~eating~~ to be herded and destroyed. Again, this casual use of cold, shocking language shocks the audience with the mundane horror of war, and how the Military fights.

In this section, the candidate builds on their previous argument about the cold nature of war reportage. The comments about the dehumanisation of the enemy are fully supported and the candidate makes a number of inferences and evaluations about the construction of meaning.

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Furthermore, Junger uses military jargon to make his audience feel alienated and distanced from the war, to challenge their perception of this war and combat. The use of jargon like '240', in reference to the medium machine gun, 'suppressed M4' and 'Apache' combat gunship. The detail and accuracy of using these designations puts the audience out of their depth and deliberately alienates the audience as the use of offical nomenclature contrasts with the audience's knowledge of the equipment, such as which would be much simpler and general, such as 'machine gun' for '240', 'riple' instead of 'M4' and 'helicopter' instead of 'Apache'. The alienations of the audience makes the text and Junger to appear much more accurate and embedded within military culture, suggesting the audience aren't as knowledgeable about the war and fighting as they would've thought, challenging their perceptions of the war.

This section offers a particularly perceptive discussion about the use of jargon and the motives of the writer. Again, the candidate has selected judiciously from the data, fully supporting their ideas. Furthermore, the discussion about the alienation of the audience shows an understanding of the typical features of war reportage.

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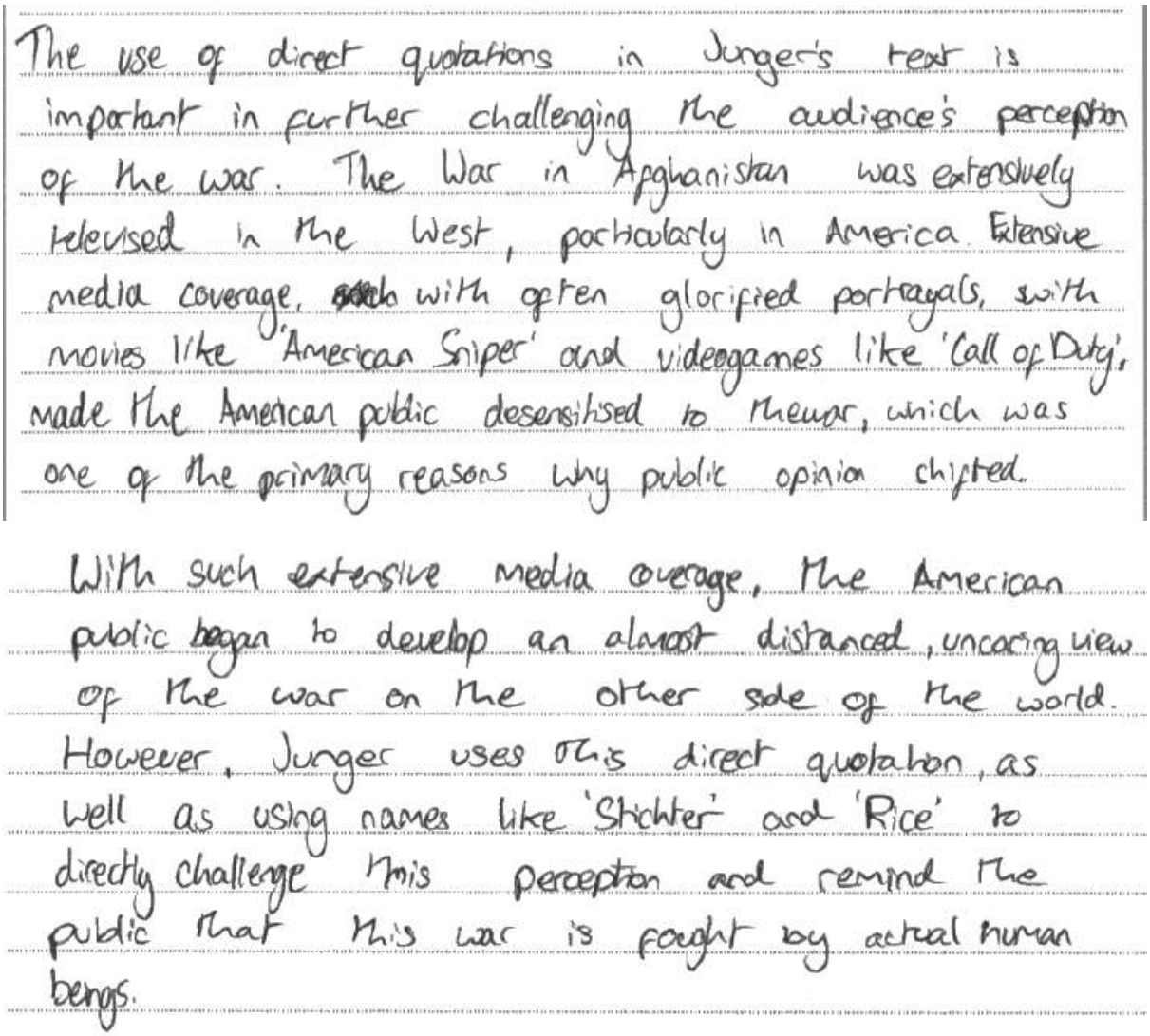

The use of direct quotations in Junger's text is important in further challenging the audience's perception of the war. The War in Afghanistan was extensively televised in the West, particularly in America. Extensive media coverage, ~~with~~ with often glorified portrayals, with movies like 'American Sniper' and videogames like 'Call of Duty', made the American public desensitised to the war, which was one of the primary reasons why public opinion shifted.

With such extensive media coverage, the American public began to develop an almost distanced, uncaring view of the war on the other side of the world. However, Junger uses this direct quotation, as well as using names like 'Stichter' and 'Rice' to directly challenge this perception and remind the public that this war is fought by actual human beings.

This section of the response demonstrates how preparing a timeline can be useful. The candidate has clearly researched the historical development of war reportage and recognises the impact of technological and cultural factors on war reportage. The candidate uses this information to effectively discuss some of the features of the text.

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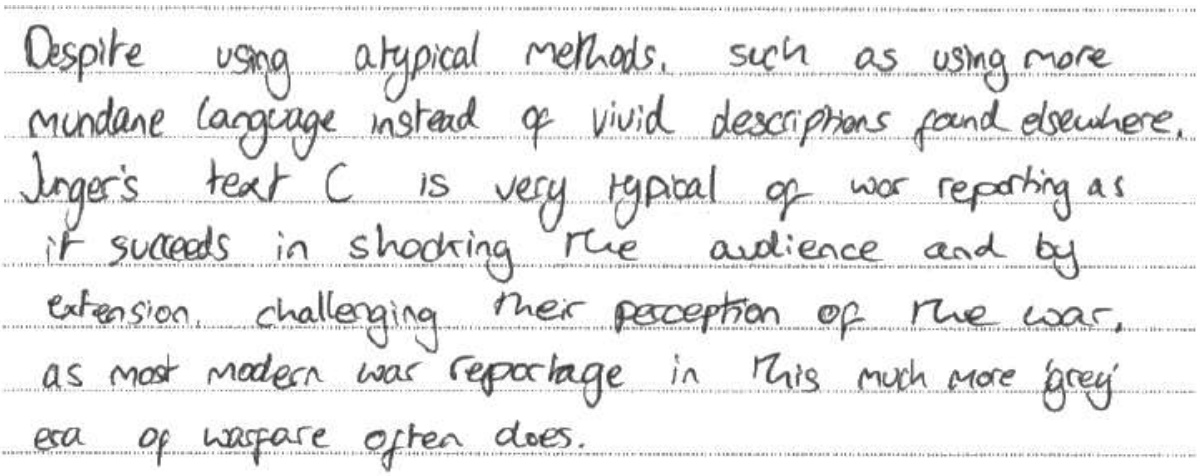
Despite using atypical methods, such as using more mundane language instead of vivid descriptions found elsewhere, Unger's text C is very typical of war reporting as it succeeds in shocking the audience and by extension, challenging their perception of the war, as most modern war reportage in this much more 'grey' era of warfare often does.

The final paragraph of this essay focuses on summarising the essay but it offers an interesting discussion about the developments of war reportage and the effect the writer has achieved.

Overall, this is a well-structured, carefully considered discussion of the data that covers a range of language frameworks. Examples from the data are embedded throughout the essay and there is a critical discussion of the nature of war reportage.

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