



Strathmore
UNIVERSITY

SCHOOL OF HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES
BACHELOR OF ARTS IN COMMUNICATION
END OF SECOND SEMESTER EXAMINATION
BAC 1206: WRITING FOR EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

Date: 11th March 2024

Time: 15:30 – 17:30

Instructions

1. This examination consists of **FOUR** questions.
2. Answer **Question ONE (COMPULSORY)** and any other **TWO** questions.

Question 1

(30 marks)

Read the passage below and answer the questions that follow.

Family Counterculture
by Ellen Goodman

Sooner or later, most Americans become card-carrying members of the counterculture. This is not an underground holdout of hippies. No beads are required. All you need to join is a child.

At some point between Lamaze and the PTA, it becomes clear that one of your main jobs as a parent is to counter the culture. What the media delivers to the children by the masses, you are expected to rebut one at a time.

The latest evidence of this frustrating piece of the parenting job description came from pediatricians. This summer, the American Academy of Pediatrics called for ban on television ads. Their plea was hard on the heels of a study showing that one Saturday morning of TV cartoons contained 202 junk-food ads.

The kids see, want, and nag. That is, after all, the theory behind advertising to children, since few six-year-olds have their own trust funds. The end result, said the pediatricians, is obesity and high cholesterol.

Their call for a ban was predictably attacked by the grocers' association. But it was also attacked by people assembled under the umbrella marked "parental responsibility." We don't need bans, said these "PR" people, we need parents who know how to say "no."

Well, I bow to no one in my capacity for naysaying. I agree it's a well-honed skill of child raising. By the time my daughter was seven, she qualified as a media critic.

But it occurs to me now the call for “parental responsibility” is increasing in direct proportion to the irresponsibility of the market-place. Parents are expected to protect their children from an increasingly hostile environment.

Are the kids being sold junk food? Just say no. Is TV bad? Turn it off. Are their messages about sex, drugs, violence all around? Counter the culture.

Mothers and fathers are expected to screen virtually every aspect of their children’s lives.

To check the ratings on the movies, to read the labels on the CDs, to find out if there’s MTV in the house next door. All the while keeping in touch with the school and, in their free time, earning a living.

In real life, most parents do a great deal of this monitoring and just-say-no-ing. Any trip to the supermarket produces at least one scene of a child grabbing for something only to have it returned to the shelf by a frazzled parent. An extraordinary number of the family arguments are over goodies-sneakers, clothes, games- that the young know only because of ads.

But at times it seems that the media have become the mainstream culture in children’s lives. Parents have become the alternative.

Barbara Dafoe Whitehead, a research associate at the institute of America Values, found this out in interviews with middle class-parents. “A common complaint I heard from parents was their sense of being overwhelmed by the culture. They felt their voice was a lot weaker. And they felt relatively more helpless than their parents.

“Parents,” she notes, “see themselves in a struggle for the hearts and minds of their own children.” It isn’t that they can’t say no. It’s that there is so much more to say no to.

Without wallowing in false nostalgia, there has been a fundamental shift. Americans once expected parents to raise their children in accordance with the dominant cultural messages. Today they are expected to raise their children in opposition.

Once the chorus of cultural voices was full of ministers, teachers, neighbours, leaders. They demanded more conformity but offered more support. Now the messages are Ninja Turtles, Madonna, rap groups, and celebrities pushing sneakers. Parents are considered “responsible” only if they are successful in their resistance.

It’s what makes child raising harder. It’s why parents feel more isolated. It’s not just American families have less time with their kids. It’s we have to spend more of this time doing battle with our own culture.

It’s like getting your kids to eat their green beans after they’ve been told all day about the wonders of Milky Way. Come to think of it, it’s exactly like that.

Questions

- i. Identify the Thesis Statement and pick out 2 instances it is restated in the passage. (2 marks for identifying thesis statement; 2 marks each for restating thesis statement)
- ii. Describe using four instances where the support for the passage’s thesis statement appears logical and sufficient. **(2 marks each, total 8 marks)**
- iii. Using 3 relevant examples from the passage discuss how Goodman uses the concept of unity from beginning to end. **(2 marks each, total 6 marks)**
- iv. Analyse three stylistic devices Goodman uses to good effect. **(2 marks each, total 6 marks)**
- v. Explain your responses when your parents or guardians tried to moderate your use of social media. Illustrate your answer using two examples. **(2 marks each, total 4 marks)**

Question 2**(15 marks)**

Explain six strategies you would use in writing a description of a local festival or ceremony from your own area or community, aiming to convey as much of the spirit of the events and feelings of those participating as possible.

Question 3**(15 marks)**

In their book, *Cohesion in the English Language (1976)*, Halliday and Hasan state: “Coherence refers to the related meaning of sentences within the structure of the text. Cohesion refers to the presence in each sentence of one or more of the four strategies that connect one sentence to another.”

Read the following paragraph and answer the questions that follow:

Collecting tolls on the turnpike must be one of the loneliest jobs in the world. Each toll attendant sits in his or her booth, cut off from other attendants. Many drivers pass by every booth. None stays long enough for a brief “hello.” Most don’t acknowledge the attendant at all. Many toll attendants work at night, pushing them “out of synch” with the rest of the world. And sometimes attendants have to deal with rude drivers who treat them as non-people, swearing at them for the long lines at the tollgate. Attendants also dislike how cut off they feel from their coworkers. Except for the infrequent breaks, they have little chance to chat with each other and swap horror stories – small pleasures that would make their otherwise routine jobs bearable.

- i. Give three reasons that make the paragraph lack coherence. **(2 marks each, total 6 marks)**
- ii. Rewrite the paragraph to achieve coherence. **(9 marks)**

Question 4**(15 marks)**

Discuss the importance of pre-writing, drafting, revising, editing, proofreading and publishing to a university student. **(3 marks for importance 2 marks each for discussion)**