



Strathmore
UNIVERSITY

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

DATE: 21st March 2025

TIME: 08:30 – 10:30

Instructions

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

Question 1

(30 marks)

Carefully read the passage below and answer the questions that follow. Illustrate your answers with relevant evidence from the text.

In Defence of the Animals

By Meg Greenfield, Pulitzer Prize-winning editor of the Editorial Page of the Washington Post and Columnist for Newsweek Magazine.

I might as well come right out with it. Contrary to some of my most cherished prejudices, the animal rights people have begun to get to me. I think that in some part of what they say they are right.

I never thought it would come to this. As distinct from old-style animal rescue, protection, and shelter organizations, the more aggressive newcomers, with their “liberation” of laboratory animals and periodic championship of the claims of animal well-being over human well-being when a choice must be made, have earned a reputation in the world I live in as fanatics and just plain kooks. And even with my own recently (relatively) raised consciousness, there remains a good deal in both their critique and their prescription for the virtuous life that I reject, being not just a practicing carnivore, a wearer of shoe leather, and so forth, and a defender of certain indisputably agonizing procedures visited upon innocent animals in the furtherance of human welfare, especially experiments undertaken to improve human health.

So, viewed from the pure position, I am probably only marginally better than the worst of my kind, if that: I don’t buy the complete “speciesist” analysis or even the fundamental language of animal “rights” and continue to find a large part of what is done in the name of that cause harmful and extreme. But I also think, patronizing as it might sound, that the zealots are required early in any movement if it is to succeed in altering the sensibility of the leaden masses, such as me. Eventually they get your attention. And eventually you at least feel obliged to weigh their arguments and think about whether there may not be something there.

It is true that this end has often been achieved – as in my case – by means of vivid, cringe-inducing photographs, not by an appeal to reason or values so much as by an assault on squeamishness. From the famous 1970s photo of the newly skinned baby seal to the videos on

animals being raised in the most dark, miserable, stunting environments as they are readied for their life's sole fulfilment as frozen patties and cutlets, these sights have had their effect. But we live in a world where the animal protein we eat comes discreetly prebutchered and prepacked so the original beast and his slaughtering are remote from our consideration, just as our furs come in coat hangers in salons, not on their original proprietors; and I see nothing wrong with our having to contemplate the often unsettling reality of how we came to the animal products we make use of. Then we can choose what we want to do.

Our objection to our being confronted with these dramatic, disturbing pictures is first that they tend to provoke a misplaced, uncritical and highly emotional concern for animal life at the direct expense of a more suitable concern for human suffering. What goes into the animals' account, the reasoning goes, necessarily comes out of ours. But I think it is possible to remain stalwart in your view that the human claim comes first and in your acceptance of the use of animals for human betterment and *still* to believe that there are some human interests that should not take precedence. For we have become far too self-indulgent, hardened, careless, and cruel in the pain we routinely inflict upon these creature for the more justifiable purposes. And I also think that the more justifiable purposes, such as medical research, are shamelessly used as cover for other activities that are wanton.

For instance, not all of the painful and crippling experimentation that is undertaken in the lab is being conducted for the sake of medical knowledge or other purposes related to basic human well-being and health. Much of it is being conducted for the sake of super refinements in the cosmetics and other frill industries, the noble goal being to contrive yet another fragrance or hair tint or commercially competitive variation on all the daft, fizzy, multi-coloured "personal products for the medicine cabinet and dressing table, a firmer-holding hair spray, that sort of thing. In other words, the conscripted, immobilized rabbits and other terrified creatures, who have been locked in boxes from the neck down, only their heads on view, are being sprayed in the eyes with different burning, stinging substances for the sake of adding to our already obscene store of luxuries and utterly superfluous vanity items.

Phony Kinship

Oddly, we tend to be very sentimental about animals and their idealized, fictional form and largely indifferent to them in realms where our lives actually touch. From time immemorial, humans have romantically attributed to animals their own sensibilities – from Balaam's biblical ass who providently could speak and who got his owner out of harm's way right down to Lassie and the other Hollywood pups who would invariably tip off the good guys that the bad guys were up to something. So we simulate phoney cross-species kinship, pretty well down in the cuteness of it all – Mickey and Minnie and Porky – and ignore, if we don't countenance, the brutish things done in the name of the Almighty Hair Spray.

This strikes me as decadent. My problem is that it also causes me to reach a position that is, on its face, philosophically vulnerable, if not absurd – the muddled, middling, inconsistent place where finally you are saying it's all right to kill them for some purposes, but not to hurt them gratuitously in doing it or to make them suffer horribly for one's own trivial whims.

I would feel more humiliated to have fetched up on this exposed rock, if I didn't suspect I had so much company. When you see pictures of people laboriously trying to clean the Exxon gunk of sea otters even knowing that they will only be able to help out a very few, you see the same outlook in action. And I think it *can* be defended. For to me the biggest cop-out is the one that says that if you don't buy the whole absolutist, extreme position it is pointless and even hypocritical to concern yourself with lesser mercies and ameliorations. The pressure of the animal-protection groups has already had some impact in improving the way various creatures are treated by researchers, trainers, and food producers. There is much more in this vein to be done. We are talking about rejecting wanton, pointless cruelty here. The position may be philosophically absurd, but the outcome is the right one.

- (i) Where does Greenfield state her thesis? (5 marks)
- (ii) What four patterns of development are used in this essay and what is their purpose? (5 marks)
- (iii) Discuss the assumption, claim, and support Greenfield makes in this essay. (6 marks)
- (iv) Analyze the rhetorical appeals Greenfield uses in this passage. (6 marks)
- (v) What objections does Greenfield raise and how does she counter them? (8 marks)

Question 2 **(15 marks)**

You are the Communications and External Relations Director in a United Nations agency. You are responsible for a wide range of duties and functions among them writing academic documents and producing technical knowledge products.

- i. Discuss the key differences in the purpose and audience of academic and technical writing within your workplace context. (3 marks)
- ii. Explain how the structure and format of academic writing differ from those of technical writing. (5 marks)
- iii. How does the use of language and tone differ between academic and technical writing? Provide examples. (3 marks)
- iv. Evaluate the importance of visual elements in technical writing compared to academic writing. (4 marks)

Question 3 **(15 marks)**

“Writing is a reflective practice that involves a continuous process of thinking, analyzing, and self-examination. It is more than just putting words on paper but also engaging in critical reflection on one’s thoughts, experiences, and ideas.”

Discuss 5 advantages university students would gain from using journaling as a tool to enhance their academic performance and self awareness.

Question 4 **(15 marks)**

“Writing, composition and reading processes involve reflection, reflexivity and action both in writers and readers.”

Compare and contrast any two theories from the list below that you studied in this course that best illustrate their relevance to writers seeking to improve their writing and composition skills.

- i. Cognitive Process Theory (Linda Flower and John R. Hayes, 1981)
- ii. Scaffolding Theory (Lev Vygotsky, 1978)
- iii. Social Constructivist Theory (Kenneth Bruffee, 1986)
- iv. Process Theory (Janet Emig, 1971)

Question 5

(15 marks)

"Audience analysis is crucial in effective writing."

Discuss three methods you would use to analyze an audience before writing and explain how this analysis improves communication.