3.2 Punctuation for Effect: 10-minute Pack

about 10 minutes

Total Marks

Name: _____ Date: ____ / ____ / _____

Answer ALL questions. This pack is about punctuation used as a deliberate stylistic choice, not just an accuracy rule: examiners reward writers who choose a short sentence, a colon, a dash or an ellipsis on purpose, for a clear effect. Where a dash interrupts a sentence for effect, it is printed as a hyphen with a space on each side (-), in line with house style. An ellipsis is printed as three full stops with no spaces (...).

Source A and Source B: 'The Lock-up' and an extract from a charity speech

Both sources were written for Revision Library (original, copyright-free). Source A is a short invented narrative extract. Source B is an invented extract from a persuasive speech to a school year group. Neither is adapted or copied from any published text, real speech or named author.

SOURCE A: 'The Lock-up' (a short original narrative extract)

Frank had worked the night shift at the boatyard for eleven years, and in all that time nothing had ever happened. Nothing at all. He liked it that way.

Tonight the tide was unusually high, the gulls were unusually loud, and the padlock on the old workshop was unusually - impossibly - hanging open.

He should have called it in there and then. He didn't.

Frank pushed the door. It gave without resistance, swinging back on hinges he had oiled himself only last month, and revealed exactly what he had feared it might reveal: nothing. An empty room, swept clean, not so much as a dust sheet out of place.

He almost laughed. Then he saw the note pinned to the workbench, and his laughter died somewhere in his throat. It read simply: we know what you did in 2019.

Frank stood very still. Somewhere behind him, in the dark of the yard, a footstep. Then another. He told himself it was nothing... but he did not quite believe it.

SOURCE B: extract from a speech given to Year 11 students by the head of the school's charity fundraising committee (an original transactional text)

Some of you will say that twenty-four hours of silence is impossible. Impossible.

Last year, three hundred and twelve students at this school stayed silent for a whole day, with no shouting in the corridors, no laughter in the canteen and no chatter on the bus home. And in that silence, they raised four thousand pounds for a single cause: a new sensory room for the children's ward at the county hospital.

© Revision Library | revisionlibrary.co.uk

Ask yourself one question: what is twenty-four hours of your voice worth, set against a room that might calm a frightened child for years to come?

I will not stand here and pretend this will be easy. It will not be easy - not for the first hour, and certainly not for the last. But somewhere around hour fifteen, something remarkable tends to happen. You stop noticing the silence around you and start noticing everything else instead.

So here is my challenge to every single one of you: sign the sheet outside this hall by Friday... and find out what happens when a room full of teenagers finally stops talking.

1 Look at these four short extracts from Source A. For each part, choose the letter (A-D) of the technique used for deliberate effect. Each letter is used only once.

(a) 'Nothing at all.' **(1)**

- ☐ A) a short (or minor) sentence used deliberately for impact
- ☐ B) a dash, or pair of dashes, used to interrupt the sentence for dramatic effect
- ☐ C) a colon used to build towards a revelation or a punchline
- ☐ D) an ellipsis used to create tension or suggest a trailing, unfinished thought

(b) 'unusually - impossibly - hanging open' **(1)**

- ☐ A) a short (or minor) sentence used deliberately for impact
- ☐ B) a dash, or pair of dashes, used to interrupt the sentence for dramatic effect
- ☐ C) a colon used to build towards a revelation or a punchline
- ☐ D) an ellipsis used to create tension or suggest a trailing, unfinished thought

(c) 'revealed exactly what he had feared it might reveal: nothing.' **(1)**

- ☐ A) a short (or minor) sentence used deliberately for impact
- ☐ B) a dash, or pair of dashes, used to interrupt the sentence for dramatic effect
- ☐ C) a colon used to build towards a revelation or a punchline
- ☐ D) an ellipsis used to create tension or suggest a trailing, unfinished thought

(d) 'He told himself it was nothing... but he did not quite believe it.' **(1)**

- ☐ A) a short (or minor) sentence used deliberately for impact
- ☐ B) a dash, or pair of dashes, used to interrupt the sentence for dramatic effect
- ☐ C) a colon used to build towards a revelation or a punchline
- ☐ D) an ellipsis used to create tension or suggest a trailing, unfinished thought

(Total for Question 1 is 4 marks)

© Revision Library | revisionlibrary.co.uk

2 Add a colon in the correct place in this sentence, so that it builds towards the short, striking revelation that follows: 'She had only one rule left in the world she trusted no one.'

(Total for Question 2 is 2 marks)

---

3 Rewrite this flat statement, using an ellipsis to build tension before the final, unsettling detail: 'She reached the top of the stairs and there was nobody there.'

(Total for Question 3 is 2 marks)

---

4 Combine these two sentences using a semicolon, so that the two contrasting ideas are held in careful balance: 'The crowd was silent. Inside, everyone was screaming.'

(Total for Question 4 is 2 marks)

---

5 Identify and correct the punctuation error in this sentence, which was meant to interrupt for dramatic effect but is missing its second dash: 'The bridge - which had stood for two hundred years, its stones dark with age and lichen finally collapsed into the river.'

(Total for Question 5 is 2 marks)

© Revision Library | revisionlibrary.co.uk

Mark scheme · 3.2 Punctuation for Effect: 10-minute Pack

Question 1

(a) A **B1**

(a) Answer: A

(b) B **B1**

(b) Answer: B

(c) C **B1**

(c) Answer: C

(d) D **B1**

(d) Answer: D

Question 2

colon placed immediately after 'world', before the revelation **B1**

no other punctuation is wrongly added or removed, and the sentence still makes complete sense, cao **B1**

Answer: She had only one rule left in the world: she trusted no one.

Question 3

ellipsis (three full stops, no spaces) placed to delay the final, unsettling detail, e.g. before 'and there was nobody there' or before 'nobody', oe **B1**

the rewritten sentence retains the original meaning and uses the pause to build tension before the final detail, oe; no separate explanation is required **B1**

Answer: She reached the top of the stairs... and there was nobody there. (Also accept: She reached the top of the stairs and there was... nobody there.)

Question 4

the two independent clauses are joined with a semicolon, with no coordinating conjunction added **B1**

the contrast between outward silence and inward noise is preserved and clearly balanced across the semicolon, cao **B1**

Answer: The crowd was silent; inside, everyone was screaming.

Question 5

identifies that a closing dash is missing, so the interrupting detail is never framed off from the rest of the sentence **B1**

correct rewrite with the second dash added immediately after 'lichen', cao **B1**

Answer: The bridge - which had stood for two hundred years, its stones dark with age and lichen - finally collapsed into the river.

© Revision Library | revisionlibrary.co.uk