

English Language A Level Component 1: Sample Paragraphs (Section A)

Example 1

Where the judges on “Strictly” are almost universally positive about the performance, those on “The Voice” are clearly more critical. Significantly, however, they consistently seek to mitigate their criticism with Boy George, for example, using prosodic stress on the degree adverb in the noun phrase “really pretty voice” to praise Niamh. By also emphasising the demonstrative determiner in the prepositional phrase “in this performance”, he implies other performances of hers might well be more successful. In the same way, Ricky uses predictive evaluative adjectives as a form of face work to complement Niamh as a person (“marvellous and wonderful”) while using idiomatic language in the clause “it didn’t feel like a safe pair of hands” to render his criticism of her singing itself less personal. All the judges point to the possibility of success with Paloma’s emphasis on the modal auxiliary in the clause “you will do it” and use of the imperative “keep going” asserting her confidence in Niamh’s future career.

Example 2

All the judges in “Strictly Come Dancing” like the dance a lot and say a lot of nice things about it. Bruno’s really excited and stands up to shout his comment which makes it exciting for the audience. They love him and the way in which he talks appeals to the audience, making the show really good to watch. Craig is different in that he tends to be more hostile and give lower marks but even he says he enjoyed it. They all use language really well and my family really enjoy watching it.

Example 3

The language of the judges in “Strictly” is slightly more technical than in “The Voice” where quite broad terms like “shaky” are used. Bruno uses the abstract nouns “power” and “artistry” to praise the performance but also talks about “your arm movements”, a noun phrase that reveals his awareness of the technical demands of dancing. Darcey also talks about “shaping” (noun), although Tess’ summary is more general, simply praising the “amazing final performance”.

Example 4

Tess Daly is the topic manager in Text A and she decides who is going to speak when. Sometimes, she does this through just saying the name such as “Len” and sometimes she uses an interrogative, “and you Bruno?”. She really likes Jay and Aliona’s performance and praises them at the end, telling them “your work is done” which is a declarative sentence. She also interrupts Craig when she thinks he is being too critical of them, showing that she wants everyone to say nice things about them. When we reach the scores, it is clear that the judges also think that Jay and Aliona have done well.

Example 5

Boy George’s language both criticises the performance and seeks to make the contestant feel better. He uses the adjectives “shaky” and “exposed” as well as the dynamic verb “wobble” to underline the weaknesses of Niamh’s singing but by giving an account of his own problems as a singer, he shows that he empathises with her. His use of the dynamic verb “howled” exaggerates his failure for comic effect. In contrast to “Strictly”, all the judges on “The Voice” refer to their own experience with Ricky using a deictic expression “this” in the declarative “I wasn’t doing this” to emphasise how impressed he is by Niamh’s performance at such a young age. Perhaps unsurprisingly given her age, all the judges use language to stress how well she has done and, despite not having turned in their chairs, how they think she will do well in the future.