

Commentary on candidate evidence

Candidate 8

The evidence for this candidate has achieved the following marks for each section of this course assessment component. The candidate was awarded **10 marks**.

Genre: Discursive – persuasive
Title: Politics: Public Profile over Policy?

This persuasive piece criticises and ridicules the electorate’s decision-making process: by valuing style over content, we place power in the hands of people who have little substance.

The opening paragraph starts off by presenting the frightening prospect of the US and UK being governed by Donald Trump and Boris Johnson respectively. The question posed is to what extent we, as voters, base our choice on the personality of the candidates over the policies they want to pursue. Paragraph two gives example of sex scandals which have influenced politics, eg. the Profumo affair, arguing how ridiculous it is to blame and subsequently mistrust a government and a prime minister for the actions of one of his ministers. There follows a reference to the Lewinsky affair. In paragraph three, the tone and style of writing change. The candidate examines the issue of money and looks at the lack of ethics employed by some politicians to increase their wealth. It references the expenses scandal of 2008, Jesse Jackson Jr and the Panama Papers, as well as the issue of corporation tax avoidance. The ideas here continue to be good, but the expression is significantly less secure, and consequently less convincing. This is perhaps even more true for the next section: paragraph four discusses racism and the fact that being a racist does not preclude one from being elected. The choice of examples is obvious (Trump and UKIP), but this section is not well expressed, nor is the argument particularly well-developed. The final section tries to warn the reader – since the voting age is lowered, the youth of the voters in combination with our obsession with online gossip means that many people now vote for whom they like or admire, rather than who might be the person with the best policies.

Content

Overall, the treatment of the central thematic concerns reveals some thoughtfulness and insight, which would place it in 9-7, rather than 12-10. The piece of writing is of uneven quality in content. The first arguments show a judicious use of source material (which is not referenced). Paragraph two explores the idea of the private and the public “the likelihood that Profumo would have relayed secret British intelligence onto his nineteen year old mistress in his state of euphoria is unlikely” and later in paragraph two “Does Bill’s inability to be faithful to his wife have any real impact on his ability to be a good politician?”.

Paragraph three is merely appropriate, eg the reference to Jesse Jackson Jr ends with the statement that he was “eventually caught and diagnosed with bipolar disorder”, which does not strengthen the overall argument. It is not really clear what points the candidate is trying to make here – while initially the argumentation seems to be that a politician’s image and private life ought not to have an impact on his ability to do his job, the arguments presented here oppose this: “their private lives need to be examined.” Paragraph four, on racism, is similarly confused; it does not distinguish between racist characters and racist policies. The candidate seems to argue against racist politicians and parties, but the piece ends with referencing Churchill, and asserts that he was the best person for the job, despite his racism.

Structure

There is shaping and sequencing with some impact, which again places this piece in the 9-7 range. While the topics of the respective paragraphs show very clear delineations (sex scandals, money, racism), they are not linked.

Stance/tone/mood

Initially, there is a very clearly identifiable stance (12-10) The writing is lively, engaging and entertaining: “we may have the privilege to witness ...” creates a tone of mockery, which is beautifully sustained over the first page; “every day is a bad hair day”, “people are voting with their eyes rather than their ears”, “when an Armenian woman’s arse can “break the internet ...” In the latter pages this is only mostly sustained (9-7), rather than consistently sustained (12-10).

Expression

The first two paragraphs show ample evidence of a confident use of style, technique and language (12-10) eg end of paragraph two: “After all, politicians are just human, and if there is one thing we know about humans, it is that they can’t help but karma their sutra.” Later paragraphs are consistently accurate in their use of style and language (9-7), but perhaps less elegant eg paragraph three: “It is in instances such as these that the question of does Cameron’s money saving scheme hinder his ability to be Prime minister cannot be raised due to the fact that his government had lost hundreds of millions of pounds in taxes from corporations such as Google and Starbucks.”

Overall, while many aspects of this piece fall into the 9-7 range, it is awarded 10 because there is just enough evidence of the descriptors from the higher range.

Mark: 10