

Essential English

Question and response book

Practice Paper 1 — Representations of Screen Time and Sleep

Time allowed

- Planning time — 15 minutes
- Working time — 90 minutes

General instructions

- Answer all questions in this question and response book.
- Write using black or blue pen.
- Respond in full sentences, which may include bullet points.
- Planning paper will not be marked.

Section 1 — 1 short response question

Section 2 — 1 short response question

This is an original practice resource modelled on the format of the QCAA Essential English Common Internal Assessment (CIA). It is not an official QCAA paper and does not reproduce any real QCAA topic, stimulus or question content.

Section 1

This section has one question.

Stimulus 1 (seen — online article)

'Why Our Screens Are Stealing Our Sleep' by Priya Nash, posted on her blog Not Another Listicle

Confession: I used to fall asleep with my phone lighting up my face like a tiny blue campfire. Then I tried something almost embarrassingly simple — I put the phone in the kitchen at 9 pm. The first night felt like withdrawal. By night four, I was waking up before my alarm, actually rested.

Here's what nobody tells you: it isn't really about the phone. It's about the promise every notification makes — that something more interesting than your own thoughts is happening somewhere else. Chasing that promise until midnight doesn't make you more connected. It makes you exhausted at first period and useless in every conversation that matters.

I'm not saying throw your phone in the bin. I'm saying give your brain a proper closing time. A kitchen charger, a lock-box, an old-fashioned alarm clock — whatever it takes. Your sleep isn't negotiable. Everything else can wait until morning.

QUESTION 1

Explain how the author of the online article in Stimulus 1 creates two representations of screen time and sleep. Explain how a belief, a language feature and a text structure contribute to creating each representation.

Worked Responses (modelled on an A-standard response)

The real CIA is graded on-balance A–E against a QCAA marking guide (CIAMG), not numeric marks. The model responses below are written to A-standard ('detailed explanation') so you can see the full target, then scaled down to show what a B/C-standard response typically drops.

Question 1 — Section 1 (Stimulus 1)

Assessment objectives: 3, 4, 5, 6, 9 (objectives 1, 2, 7, 8 are not assessed by the CIA)

Representation: Screens as an understandable, forgivable habit — not a personal failing

- Belief: The author draws on the belief that habits change more effectively through empathy and self-recognition than through shame or willpower alone. This underpins her decision to admit her own habit before criticising anyone else's.
- Language feature: The metaphor 'like a tiny blue campfire' reframes the phone screen as something primal and comforting rather than shameful, softening the reader's defensiveness before any advice is given.
- Text structure: The confessional opening ('Confession:') structures the whole piece as a personal admission rather than a lecture, positioning the writer alongside the reader rather than above them.

Representation: Good sleep as achievable through small, deliberate action — not willpower or deprivation

- Belief: The author draws on the belief that meaningful change comes from small, sustainable actions rather than dramatic overhauls, shown explicitly in 'I'm not saying throw your phone in the bin.'
- Language feature: The listing of concrete options ('A kitchen charger, a lock-box, an old-fashioned alarm clock') represents the solution as flexible and low-effort, inviting the reader to see it as achievable rather than restrictive.
- Text structure: The shift from personal anecdote to a short, generalised maxim ('Your sleep isn't negotiable') at the end of the piece structures the article to move from individual experience to a universal rule the reader can adopt.

B/C-standard note

- A B-standard response explains both representations and at least most of the belief/feature/structure elements appropriately, but with less precision about how each element specifically shapes meaning. A C-standard response may explain the representations but only identify (rather than explain) one or more of the beliefs, features or structures.

KEY TAKEAWAY

A 'representation' question always wants TWO separate things: what idea/version of the topic the text builds, and the specific belief + language feature + text structure that build it. Naming a feature without explaining its effect on meaning will not reach a B standard.