**Stage 2 English – Assessment Type 3: Comparative Analysis**

*Complete a written analysis of Nikita Khrushchev's 1953 Secret Speech and his 1959 Kitchen Debate with US Vice President Richard Nixon evaluating the ways in which language techniques, purpose and persuasive features are utilised to represent political perspectives in order to influence audiences.*

Extracts of then Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev's 1953 *Secret Speech* denouncing his predecessor Joseph Stalin and the televised 1959 *Kitchen Debate* between Khrushchev and then-United States Vice President Richard Nixon at an American National exhibition in Moscow, represent Cold War-era communist and capitalist perspectives. Differing in purpose, both texts influence audiences through language and stylistic features.

Referencing the previously censored Lenin's Testament' by Bolshevik revolutionary Vladimir Lenin, Khrushchev's revisionist assessments of communism in the cautiously planned, drafted and edited *Secret Speech* influenced largely reactionary, high-ranking Communist Party members as well as astute international readers. Amid a new emphasis by the United States and Soviet Union on cultural exchanges, the unscripted *Kitchen Debate* facilitated a frank discussion where Khrushchev asserts rhetorical superiority, disquieting Nixon as well as American and Soviet audiences at the exhibition and on television. Khrushchev assumes the *Secret Speech*'s audience understands communism and its reformist denomination known as Leninism. Although the *Kitchen Debate* also assumes knowledge of communism, the speakers assume the audience understands capitalism and American distrust of Soviets.

Both texts differ in tenor and register. As a prepared, considered report, the *Secret Speech* employs an academic register. Thus, Khrushchev nominalises throughout, such as in stating that Lenin described the *"application"* of terror as being necessitated by, *"resistance of the exploiting classes".* Khrushchev maintains proper syntax, employing formal sentence constructions such as, *"we are"* and, *"it is*". By contrast, the *Kitchen Debate*'s impromptu style means the audience holds the speakers to a comparatively lower standard. Thus, the audience accepts spontaneous use of familiar constructions such as the word *"Stupid"* as is appropriate in informal banter. Additionally, improper prose is to be expected, particularly when Nixon states: *"make life more easy".* Given the absence of formal debating procedures, where the exchange of ideas is mediated, Khrushchev interjects to embarrass Nixon: *"No, in rockets we've passed you by".*

However, as the debate occurs through interpreters, and the audience's attention is divided between the orators and the exhibition, Khrushchev and Nixon frequently pause; facilitating adequate translation and comprehension of arguments. The fact that the *Kitchen Debate* was filmed places Khrushchev under public scrutiny, unlike in the unrecorded Secret Speech. Therefore, Khrushchev moderates his language to advocate only general and uncontroversial communist perspectives such as disapproval of the, *"capitalistic attitude toward women".* Moreover, cordiality underpins the style. Nixon speaks politely as a foreign representative, complimenting Khrushchev: *'you would have made a good lawyer".* However, Khrushchev assuming that Soviet audiences are familiar with his personality is comparably boisterous, with his humorous hand gesture provoking laughter when saying: *''As we pass you by, we'll wave 'hi"'.* Both texts exhibit fundamentally different structures.

Khrushchev adheres to the forms appropriate to his context, for each text. According with political speech conventions, Khrushchev carefully and logically structures the *Secret Speech* with an introduction, body and conclusion, gradually destroying Stalin's messianic image. Parallel sentence structure, repetition and triples command attention to the central ideas: *"the cult of Stalin became the source of a series of exceedingly serious perversions of party principles, of party democracy, of revolutionary legality."* In addition, short, emotive sentences such as, *"Innocent individuals became victims"* focus the audience's attention. The body contains many examples of imagery and triples supporting Khrushchev's inference that Stalin brainwashed the audience with, "[philosophical] *deviations, cover-ups of shortcomings, and vanishings of reality".* By scrutinising Stalin's corruption, Khrushchev's concludes with, *"Leninism!"* to signify a restoration of Lenin's more genuine principles. On the contrary, the *Kitchen Debate*'s conventions derive from the audience's expectations regarding structure and style. The accepted style invites the use of the Russian idiom: *"we don't beat flies with our nostrils!"* and formal language: "/ *have been insulted by experts".* However, Khrushchev and Nixon use the personal pronoun *"we"* as a political language convention, presenting opinions as national, rather than personal to increase their validity for the audience. While the Secret Speech also uses *"we"* frequently, this relates ideas to the immediate audience rather than the entire constituencies as in the *Kitchen Debate*. The *Secret Speech* applies colloquialisms to a lesser degree such as *"shifty",* which is used to generalise, rather than convey specific facts. Generally, the *Secret Speech* conforms to rigid report conventions, whereas the *Kitchen Debate*'s conventions are abstract.

The purpose behind the Secret Speech was to use language to alienate Stalinists, reinforcing Khrushchev's agenda to redefine communism. Pursuing this objective, persuasive devices such as triples and generalisations expose Stalin's terrors: *"Mass arrests and deportations of many thousands of people, execution without trial, created conditions of insecurity, fear and even desperation."* Facts substantiate Khrushchev's arguments: *"Of the 139 members and candidates of the central committee ... 70 per cent, were arrested and shot."* In comparison to the *Secret Speech*, the *Kitchen Debate* seeks to argue the merits of communism and capitalism, in which Khrushchev conveniently omits the bleaker aspects of life under the former. For example, his contrasts, sarcasm and imagery serve to criticise American inequality: *In Russia...You are entitled to housing ... In America, if you don't have a dollar you have the right to choose between sleeping in a house or on the pavement."* Khrushchev's anecdote about First Deputy Premier Anastas Mikoyan who, conversely to Khrushchev, *"likes very peppery soup"* advertises opportunities for mutual understanding, reiterating that, *"this does not mean that we do not get along."* In a cunning quip, Nixon's repetition and triples advocate free markets and democracy: *"Let the people choose the kind of house, the kind of soup, the kind of ideas that they want."* Disparate purposes convey that as Khrushchev is ashamed of Stalin's legacy and hence desires peaceful coexistence with Americans.

Ethos fortifies Khrushchev and Nixon's credibility, as they undermine past and present political figures via commentary, which the audience is not privy to in the *Secret Speech*, but is in the *Kitchen Debate*. The *Secret Speech*'s ethos arises from comparisons between Leninism and Stalinism. Citing Lenin's *The State and Revolution*, Khrushchev delivers a reasoned judgement: *"Lenin taught that the application of revolutionary violence... referred to the era when the exploiting classes... were powerful."* Consequently, the audience learns that Stalin blurred the boundaries between revolutionary necessities and despotic excesses. Furthermore, opinion as fact and inclusive language reiterate the Party's submission to Stalinist despotism: *"We cannot say that we have been following this Leninist example in all respects."* Depicting Stalinism as an unfortunate misadventure, Khrushchev persuades the audience to accept the *Secret Speech* as a framework for rehabilitating communism. A profound distinction is that the *Kitchen Debate* sees Khrushchev and Nixon convey ethos through anecdotes instead of facts. Khrushchev's anecdote casts aspersion on Nixon in order to protect his own reputation: *"I have read much about America and American houses, and I do not think that this exhibit and what you say is strictly accurate."* Nixon's failure to rebut presents Khrushchev as being more knowledgeable. Recognising Khrushchev's rhetorical intentions, Nixon's anecdote threatens his opponent's standing by spotlighting the lasting impression of wealthy American life:"!... *went down to visit a market, where the farmers... bring in their items to sell... there was a great deal of interest among these people".* Khrushchev utilises ethos in both texts, but faces a more loyal audience in the *Secret Speech* and so alters his language.

Khrushchev and Nixon exchange arguments with logic to communicate logos retrospectively and prospectively, imbuing it with rhetoric. Most notably, Khrushchev employs anaphora in describing films illustrative of Stalin's foolish personality cult: *"Let us recall 'The Fall of Berlin'. Here only Stalin acts. He does not reckon with anyone. He asks no one for advice."* Refuting the film's historical accuracy, Khrushchev conjures emotional and nationalistic appeal claiming, *"the party"* and, *"our... talented* [military] *leaders and brave soldiers"* achieved the Soviet victory in World War. As a consequence, Khrushchev prompts the audience to feel betrayed by Stalin's attempt to rewrite history. Alternatively, the *Kitchen Debate*'s logos derives from assumed knowledge applied in the context of present communist and capitalist successes. For instance, Khrushchev undercuts capitalism by juxtaposing its emphasis on short-term luxuries: *"American houses are built to* [become outmoded after] *20 years"* with communism's focus on long-term necessities in building, *"firmly... for...children and grandchildren."* Nixon's anaphora and repetition produce a counterargument on how economic liberalism promotes freedom of choice: *"We don't have one decision made at the top by one government official."* Hence, he judges the state controlled Soviet economy, because it restricts entrepreneurship and economic competition. Contrasts in logos reveal Khrushchev and Nixon's reflection on the American and Soviet politico­ economic divides.

Another variation is that the *Secret Speech*'s pathos reduces the audience's fear whereas the *Kitchen Debate* fosters anxieties about the Soviet-American Arms Race, epitomising the underlying disdain between Cold War rivals. ln the *Secret Speech*, Khrushchev's opinion as fact and inclusive language secure the audience's loyalty by portraying his avowals as virtuous: *"The fact that we present... the basic problems of overcoming the cult of the individual* is *evidence of .. great moral and political strength".* Fortifying this claim, Khrushchev's powerful imagery and emotive language assuage fears about a post­ Stalinist future: *"our party... will lead the...people to new successes."* Though the *Secret Speech*'s pathos eases the audience to some degree, the *Kitchen Debate* fuels consternation among the viewers. Khrushchev attempts to frighten American audiences with prospects that the Soviets will achieve economic and strategic superiority: *"in another* 7*years, we'll be at the level of America, and after that we'll go farther."* As a result, he challenges American notions of supremacy by exploiting the nation's exaggerated fears of communism. Notwithstanding his desire for peace with Americans, Khrushchev displays subconscious contempt for them and hence subtle rejection of Nixon's perspectives. In particular, he makes the boorish gesture of donning his hat as Nixon speaks, and points passively-aggressively at Nixon, demanding he tell the truth: *"give me your word that my speech will...be taped in English."* The subliminal inference to the audience is that both leaders are somewhat sceptical of the other's outward geniality. Pathos relieves the audience to some extent in the *Secret Speech*, yet agitates Soviet-American rivalry in the *Kitchen Debate*.

The *Secret Speech*'s register makes its tone more serious compared to the *Kitchen Debate*'s convivial atmosphere. Khrushchev is initially frustrated in the Secret Speech, but later shifts to a galvanising tone. His emotive language, analogy and repetition invoke disgust in Stalin's personality: *"Stalin was a very distrustful man... The sickly suspicion created in him a general distrust."* However, Khrushchev transitions to confidence in connecting his concepts to the, *"resolute will to accomplish the great task of building communism".* Here he manipulates the audience's guilt to appeal to their loyalty by convincing them that Party goals require their active endorsement. Distinguishing the *Secret Speech* from the *Kitchen Debate* is the latter's fervent and jovial tones. Khrushchev's direct address and hyperbole disparage Nixon: *'you know absolutely nothing about Communism, except for fear!"* Later, he switches to jocularity through a metaphorical jest referencing Russian greeting etiquette, light-heartedly underlining the irrelevance of ideological differences in international co-operation: *"You're a lawyer for capitalism, I'm a lawyer for communism. Let's kiss."* In doing so, Khrushchev reduces American hostility towards Soviets, echoing his key message that political beliefs need not proselytise hate. Both leaders reinforce this idea with affable body language, as they are smiling, laughing and patting each other on the shoulder; positioning the audience to appreciate their diplomatic bond. Tonal contrasts suggest that Khrushchev recognises that international friendship is possible despite political divisions.

Contrasting convictions on the Cold War arise from the application of language features, purpose, and persuasive features in the different occasions presented by the *Secret Speech* and *Kitchen Debate.* Asthe *Secret Speech* delivers an organised, insightful and linguistically rich synopsis of the past's misgivings and seeks to reinvigorate communist ideals apparent in Lenin's time, it is more informative than the Kitchen Debate. Nevertheless, the *Kitchen Debate* entertainingly compares communism and capitalism in front of an audience comprising of both Soviets and Americans. Khrushchev's stylistically, linguistically and emotionally varied expressions result in the surprising observation that the same man speaks articulately and effectively in markedly distinctive situations.

**Performance Standards for Stage 2 English**

**Overall: A+ (30/30)**

|  | **Knowledge and Understanding** | **Analysis** | **Application** |
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| A | Comprehensive knowledge and understanding of ideas and perspectives in a range of texts.Thorough knowledge and understanding of ways in which creators of texts use a range of language features, stylistic features, and conventions to make meaning.Extensive knowledge and understanding of a wide range of ways in which texts are created for different purposes, audiences, and contexts. | Complex analysis of ideas, perspectives, and/or aspects of culture represented in texts.Perceptive analysis of language features, stylistic features, and conventions used in texts, and thoughtful evaluation of how these influence audiences.Critical analysis of similarities and differences when comparing texts. | Versatile and precise use of language and stylistic features to create a wide range of coherent texts that address the purpose, audience, and context.Fluently integrated use of evidence from texts to develop and support a response.Sophisticated use of accurate, clear, and fluent expression. |
| B | Knowledge and understanding of ideas and perspectives in a range of texts.Knowledge and understanding of ways in which creators of texts use a range of language features, stylistic features, and conventions to make meaning.Knowledge and understanding of a range of ways in which texts are created for different purposes, contexts, and audiences. | Detailed analysis of ideas, perspectives, and/or aspects of culture represented in texts.Detailed analysis of language features, stylistic features, and conventions, and evaluation of how these influence audiences.Clear analysis of similarities and differences when comparing texts. | Accurate use of language and stylistic features to create a range of coherent texts that address the purpose, context, and audience.Appropriate use of evidence from texts to develop and support a response.Consistent use of accurate, clear, and fluent expression. |
| C | Knowledge and understanding of some ideas and perspectives in texts.Knowledge and understanding of ways in which creators of texts use some language features, stylistic features, and conventions to make meaning.Knowledge and understanding of ways in which everyday texts are created for different purposes, contexts, and audiences. | Analysis of some ideas and perspectives represented in texts.Description and some analysis of different language features, stylistic features, and conventions, and/or some evaluation of how these influence audiences.Analysis of some similarities and differences when comparing texts. | Generally accurate use of language and stylistic features to create texts that address the purpose, context, and audience.Selection of some evidence from texts to develop and support a response.Appropriate use of accurate, clear, and fluent expression. |
| D | Knowledge and understanding of some ideas in a narrow range texts.Some knowledge and understanding of ways in which creators of texts use language features and conventions to make meaning.Knowledge and understanding of ways in which some everyday texts are created for different purposes and audiences. | Description of some ideas in texts.Description of some language features, stylistic features, and/or conventions.Description of some similarities and differences in texts. | Use of some language and stylistic features to create a narrow range of texts.Partial use of basic evidence from texts to develop a response.Inconsistent use of expression. |
| E | Identification of an idea in a text.Identification of a limited range of ways in which creators of texts use language techniques.Recognition of one or more ways in which a familiar text is created. | Reference to an idea in a text.Recognition of language or stylistic features.Recognition of a simple connection between texts. | Restricted use of language or stylistic features to create a text.Limited use of evidence from a text in a response.Limited use of clear expression. |