

## English Language Year 12 Induction Task

The article below appeared in the Express online on August 24th, 2020. Read the article and then answer the questions which follow.

# Whatever next? Now snowflakes can't handle the full stop –it's aggressive!

12:36, Mon, Aug 24, 2020 | UPDATED: 13:07, Mon, Aug 24, 2020

LOVERS of correct grammar have been sent reeling after claims that a text message with a full stop could be a sign of aggression. War has broken out on social media about whether a simple dot at the end of a message could indicate the writer was annoyed or irritated.

Some argued it appeared "quite abrupt" or blunt to younger readers, while others ridiculed sensitive millennials who take offence. The battle began when *Guardian* columnist Rhiannon Cosslett tweeted: "Older people, do you realise that ending a sentence with a full stop comes across as sort of abrupt and unfriendly to younger people in an email/chat? Genuinely curious."

One wrote: "My dad texts like this and it always reads as though he's furious with the recipient."

Best-selling crime novelist Sophie Hannah said: "Just asked 16-year-old son – apparently this is true.

"If he got a message with full stops at the end of sentences he'd think the sender was 'weird, mean or too blunt'."

However, many were irritated by the suggestion that correct punctuation was somehow offensive.



Apparently, some young people see full stops as aggressive (stock image) (Image: Getty)

One exasperated user wrote: "Perhaps these youngsters should learn some grammatical rules?"

Another added: "Younger people, if a full stop at the end of a sentence triggers you in any way, get

your head out of your backside, it's not all about you."

Experts believe the problem arises from the ways different generations interpret language in texts.

Younger people often start a new text for each sentence, making full stops unnecessary.



The tweet that started it has since been deleted by the Guardian columnist (Image: <https://twitter.com/rhiannonlucyc>)

The inclusion of one can therefore appear to create extra emphasis, indicating annoyance or anger.

Linguist Dr Lauren Fonteyn said: "If you send a text message without a full stop, it's already obvious that you've concluded the message.

"So if you add that additional marker for completion, they will read something into it and it tends to be a negative tone."

A 2015 study by Binghamton University in New York involving 126 undergraduates found text messages ending in a full stop were perceived as being less sincere than the same message without a full stop.

The researchers said: "Text messaging is one of the most frequently used computer-mediated communication methods.

"The rapid pace of texting mimics face-to-face communication, leading to the question of whether the critical non-verbal aspects of conversation, such as tone, are expressed."

1. Reread the headline.
  - a) What is meant by the word 'snowflakes' in this context? Why this choice of noun? (2 marks)

- b) Does the use of 'snowflakes' in the title encourage readers to side for or against people who do NOT use the full stop in text messages (delete as appropriate)? (1 mark)
- c) What does the use of the noun 'snowflake' and phrase 'sensitive millenials' in the first two paragraphs suggest about who the imagined audience is/ is not for this article? (2 marks)

2. Highlight words from the semantic field of war/aggression in the first two paragraphs. What is the effect of this semantic field? (3 marks)

3. The use of the semantic field of war/ aggression is hyperbolic (exaggerates the issue), can you find another example of hyperbole in the first paragraph (provide a quotation)? (1 mark)

4. Use the table below to summarise some of the views expressed both for and against the use of full stops in text messages (find at least two for each column). (4 marks)

| Against the use of full stops in texts | In favour of full stops in texts |
|----------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
|                                        |                                  |

4. What insights do 'experts'/ linguists offer about the debate? You have been given one idea below. Try to find at least two more. (2 marks)

- Experts believe the problem arises from the ways different generations interpret language in texts.
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5. Using all of your answers above to help you, write a couple of paragraphs in response to the following question:

**'Analyse how the article uses language to create meanings and representations'.**

You can use the following sentence stems to help if you like but you must support your points with short quotations from the article. Try to analyse or 'unpack' these quotations by considering the writer's language choices.

The article is about....

The use of ..... suggests that the writer is aiming the article at an audience who .....

In parts of the article, young people who don't use punctuation in text messages are represented as ...

However later in the article the writer uses ..... to offer a more balanced or nuanced interpretation of the issue.....

(10 marks)

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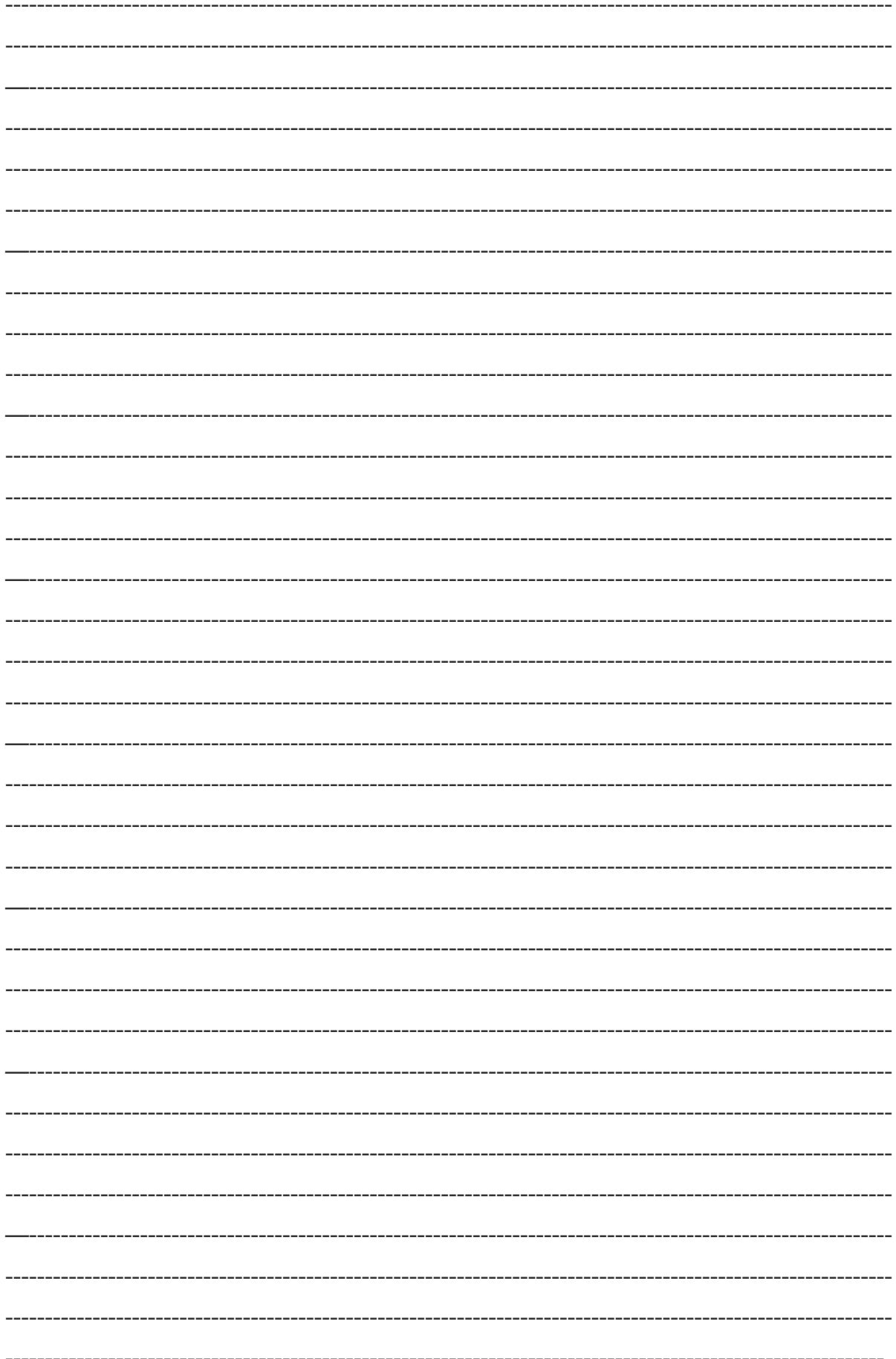
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