YEAR 12 READING

Editorial Analysis

Analyse argument, language and visuals in an editorial (VCE/HSC style)

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Name: _____ **Date:** _____ **Score:** _____ / 9

Editorial: The Four-Day Week Deserves a Fair Trial

For more than a century, the five-day working week has been treated as a law of nature. It is not. It was a 20th-century compromise, won by workers who had been toiling six days a week. There is no reason to believe it is the final word.

Trials of a four-day week in the United Kingdom, Iceland and here in Australia have produced striking results. Many participating businesses reported that productivity held steady or improved, while staff reported less burnout and better health. Most chose to keep the shorter week after the trial ended.

Critics warn of disaster. Small businesses, they say, cannot afford it; hospitals and schools cannot simply close on Fridays. These are serious concerns, and they deserve serious answers. A four-day week need not mean everyone downs tools on the same day. Rostering, staggered weeks and sector-specific models are all possible.

What is not serious is the reflexive claim that Australians would simply become lazy. That insults millions of workers who are already juggling caring responsibilities, long commutes and second jobs.

The state government should fund a two-year pilot across a range of public sector workplaces, with independent evaluation. If it fails, we will have learned something. If it succeeds, we may have found a better way to work.

Either way, it is time to stop pretending that 1950s solutions must govern 2020s lives.

Choose the best answer.

1. The opening challenges the idea that the five-day week is...
   ⓐ natural and permanent ⓑ too short ⓒ illegal
2. Mentioning international trials is an appeal to...
   ⓐ fear ⓑ patriotism only ⓒ evidence and reason (logos)
3. 'These are serious concerns, and they deserve serious answers' makes the writer seem...
   ⓐ angry ⓑ fair-minded and reasonable ⓒ dismissive
4. The writer distinguishes 'serious' concerns from the 'laziness' claim in order to...
   ⓐ agree with critics ⓑ change topic ⓒ discredit the weakest opposing argument
5. The final sentence uses contrast between '1950s' and '2020s' to...
   ⓐ suggest current practice is outdated ⓑ praise the 1950s ⓒ give statistics

Analyse the argument.

6. Identify the contention and the specific proposal.

7. How does the writer use concession and rebuttal?

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Editorial Analysis

Analyse argument, language and visuals in an editorial (VCE/HSC style) (continued)

8. How does the editorial appeal to readers' sense of fairness?

9. Write a VCE-style analysis paragraph on how the writer positions readers to support a trial.

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Editorial Analysis

Analyse argument, language and visuals in an editorial (VCE/HSC style)

Choose the best answer.

1. a) natural and permanent
2. c) evidence and reason (logos)
3. b) fair-minded and reasonable
4. c) discredit the weakest opposing argument
5. a) suggest current practice is outdated

Analyse the argument.

6. A four-day week deserves a fair trial; the state government should fund a two-year independently evaluated public-sector pilot.
7. They concede critics' points about small business and essential services, then rebut by suggesting rostering and staggered models.
8. It points out that the laziness claim 'insults millions of workers' who are already juggling caring, commuting and second jobs.
9. Answers will vary. Example: The editorial positions readers to see a trial as sensible rather than radical. It reframes the five-day week as a 'compromise' rather than 'a law of nature', which unsettles readers' assumptions. International evidence then adds credibility. The low-risk framing ('If it fails, we will have learned something') reassures cautious readers that supporting a trial costs little.

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