

Too many rules play us for fools

I STAYED at a motel recently and poured myself a coffee as part of my continental brekkie. The coffee wasn't the best I've had, but my main criticism was it was cold – well, lukewarm if I'm being generous. When I politely complained to the pleasant maître d', he explained ruefully that because of health and safety regulations they're not allowed to serve the coffee hotter than 50 degrees.

Newsflash. Coffee is hot. Cold coffee is an entirely different beverage and frankly if I'd wanted an iced coffee I would have asked for it.

The waiter went on to tell me that recently an umbrella blew away at a local swimming pool. The upshot of that minor incident was the removal of everything around the pool not tied down – pool toys, sunbeds and the like. How ridiculous. It makes me wonder how people of my age survived our frighteningly unsafe childhoods.

I'm so sick of being mollycoddled and treated like a child by over-regulation. When did the world become so unsafe?

Back in my motel room, I looked around. With my heightened appreciation of health and safety, it seemed a litigious death trap. A nightmare of sharp, burny and hurty objects just waiting to pounce. The iron – heavy and hot. Power points – perfect repositories for bobby pins and scissor blades. That king-size bed. Why, a person could suffocate in the doona or fall off and break a hip.

I recently heard Canadian journalist and design guru Tyler Brûlé speak of Australia's global reputation as a nanny state, with far too many rules and regulations, especially regarding the hospitality industry and our major cities. Although his name sounds



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like a dessert and he's so hip he's almost disappeared up his own designer-bespoke orifice, Monsieur Brûlé makes a fair point.

Surely I should be allowed to drink a glass of wine from a glass, not a plastic cup, while sitting poolside?

Why should the actions of a few yobbos and the paranoia of bureaucrats dictate the rules for the majority of sensible, law-abiding citizens?

How do we learn about responsibilities, risks and dangers if we're never allowed to explore?

A friend recently planned to go to an outdoor ballet performance in Brisbane. "Bring a picnic!" declared the promo. But guess what? No eskies allowed, not even soft-shell eskies. No bottles. No wine. No glasses. No umbrellas. No chairs. Somehow the idea of sitting in the rain (possibly) gumming on soft cheese, sucking moisture from a damp flannel has little appeal.

This is not a picnic. This is a pathetic joke.

Why not just issue every newborn baby with a high-vis bib and a hard hat at birth and be done with it?

At what point do we stop the madness, stick two fingers in the air and live dangerously? Yep. Hot coffee. Wine out of a glass. Sharp knives. And if you get in my way, I shall stab you with my umbrella.

Sue Wighton, *The Courier-Mail*, 1 July

Sue Wighton is a Brisbane freelance writer.

VCE English Unit 2: Wednesday, October 20:

Read the 'opinion piece' entitled 'Too many rules play us for fools'

And write a body paragraph like you would for a SAC. 150-250 words.

- Topics sentence: Express one of the writer's arguments and tone.

E.G.: The writer, adopting a ____ tone, argues that _____.

- Identify 3+ techniques **that are used to support the argument you have identified** – with evidence from the text for each (e.g. a short quote). You may discuss the image, but only if it supports the argument you identify to start your paragraph.

Please note: not all techniques need a quote (e.g. if you're using an anecdote, you wouldn't need to find a word that 'proves' it is an anecdote); however, within that anecdote, you would no doubt identify other techniques the writer used (e.g. emotive language or a metaphor) – which you would give a quote to 'prove' that it is in the text.

- For each technique, either on its own or in conjunction with other quotes: explain how the technique/s intend to position/encourage/coerce/manipulate/invite/etc to reader to either think and/or feel – *being as specific as you can with the thoughts and emotions*.

Hint: this is a good text to choose examples of persuasive language – e.g. words with certain **connotations**.

- Then explain how that initial impact on the reader (how they are positioned to think and/or feel) – then allows them to be persuaded to share the writer's argument (the one you identified in the topic sentence).
- Make your final sentence is a mini-conclusion that re-states /summarises how certain of the techniques discussed in the paragraph support the writer's overall contention.

Extension: rather than just a general reader, try to imagine the specific type/s of readers the text, and your chosen techniques, target.

& see if you can discuss structure at all (it might not be relevant to the argument you are discussing; but it probably is in some way).

The difficulty with structure can be how to 'bring it in'. There's no real 'one way' – just keep experimenting, and look at how others do it.

Due: Tomorrow – Thursday, October 21

(Next MONDAY at absolute latest – don't forget though, or you will shoot yourself in the foot.)