

**'Chewing gum is harmless. It doesn't disrupt learning so should not be on the list of things we are not allowed to have in our school bag.'**

Write an article for the school magazine, arguing your point of view on this statement.

(24 marks for content and organisation

16 marks for technical accuracy)

[40 marks]

As you watch the [revision video](#), use the space around the article to highlight features and annotate their impact.

# No point in chewing on it

*Good riddance to grotesque gum, says Stan Athel;  
there's nothing charming in chewing in the classroom.*

By Stan Athel

31<sup>st</sup> March 2022



**Headline:** short, attention grabbing, introduces the topic.

**Lead:** a couple of sentences at the start of the article to summarise the main point of the article topic and further engage the reader.

**By-line:** gives the name of author and date.

There's a creeping blight afflicting our school communities – a so called fashion statement that goes beyond the trainer brand you're wearing, the bag you're carrying or the music you have saved in your playlist. The finishing touch to the new version of 'cool in school' seems to involve the incessant movement of the jaw, the constantly maddening mastication and monstrous mouth exercise that is the addictive practice of chewing gum.

How many of you honestly enjoy listening to the sound of saliva swishing around anyone's mouth? And what exactly is attractive about seeing the white splodge of semi chewed gum skimming (or should that be scumming) over someone's teeth?

**Introduction:** acts like a hook that catches the attention of the reader and invites them to engage in the topic and your opinion around this.

**Main body:** develops a clear opinion and argument, adding substance to each point and using a range of persuasive techniques to engage the intended reader.

Some people even play with the gum whilst they're chewing it. You must have seen them. They have one finger close to their lips and every so often, they insert this digit into their mouth and play stretch the gum. I've had to endure this from the student I sit next to in my maths lesson. They wrap the gum around their finger, take it out to admire their handiwork and then put it back into their mouth for some more chomping. What chance do I have of concentrating on the finer details of geometry when this grotesque behaviour is happening within a metre of my own face?

Those that regularly swallow the gum have mountains of breath freshening, spearmint gloop lying undigested in their stomachs. And whilst I accept that horror stories of this being the case for years and years are now recognised by food scientists as unfounded, it is true that chewing gum resin is indigestible. Our bodies are clever, complicated and canny. So if our digestive tract expels chewing gum through to the colon without taking any goodness from it, that tells me everything I need to know about chewing gum's pointless existence in the world.

If this was the only problem with gum, I could simply avoid making friends with any 'chewies' and try not to sit near them in lessons. However, I find that these chewing gum fanatics take their addiction a stage further and think that it is acceptable to use that one piece of gum to inflict acts of gum terrorism on the rest of the school community.

As you've probably guessed, I'm talking about the discarding of gum in totally inappropriate places. Under the desk, on the floor, down the side of the seat, smeared over walls and even inside books. Why do people think that throwing gum on the floor is somehow less selfish than throwing an empty crisp packet into a field? It is still litter. What's more, those chewing criminals who stick their used gum under the desk are committing biological warfare on the rest of us. I bet it's happened to all of you. You accidentally put your finger in someone's old gum, you step on it and it's stuck to your shoe for hours, you find it glued to your clothes. It might be better not to think about the bacteria that lurk within, delighted to have a new host.

If you look closely the next time that you are walking along the tarmac areas around schools, you will notice hundreds of dirty grey spots. This isn't a form of tarmac measles; it is simply the product of years of gum abuse. Each little drop of gum is stepped into the pavement by thousands of feet and eventually it leaves a permanent scar. In my opinion, these gum villains should have their hair stuck together with gum and then be sent out to scrape the gum off our schools' spaces...with their fingernails!

This isn't such an outrageous suggestion. In Singapore, a chewing gum ban in 1992 has succeeded in keeping the city streets and buses free from this toxic waste, aiming to create a 'first-world oasis' of tidiness and good behaviour. Why don't we want the same for our society? Because this isn't only a curse of the school campus. Keep Britain Tidy research estimates that 87% of city streets are stained with gum. The consequence of this is that chewing gum litter wastes millions of pounds of taxpayers' money every year; the annual clean-up cost is estimated at 7 million pounds.

Back in Singapore, since 2004, there is a nod to those who believe in the therapeutic powers of gum chewing in that pharmacists and dentists are allowed to sell gum to customers with a medical prescription. In the same way that some students have access arrangements for exams, authorised exit cards to seek mental health support or differentiated resources to support specific learning needs, the pastoral leaders in schools could easily give concessions to those students who need to chew for dental reasons or because the action of chewing soothes an anxious mind. This controlled compromise would significantly reduce acts of gum vandalism both inside and outside of the classroom.

This isn't a conundrum that really needs any more chewing over. The answer is obvious. Add chewing gum to the list of banned substances in every school, empower teachers to react to those who try and chew their way round the rules and educate students to see the benefits of a future that is gloriously gum free!

**Conclusion:** *a strong ending that pulls the argument together and calls the reader to action.*

Can you see how this article fits into the top descriptors in the mark scheme?

<b>AO5 Content and Organisation</b> Communicate clearly, effectively and imaginatively, selecting and adapting tone, style and register for different forms, purposes and audiences. Organise information and ideas, using structural and grammatical features to support coherence and cohesion of texts.		
<b>Level</b>		<b>Skills descriptors</b>
Level 4 19–24 marks  <b>Compelling, Convincing Communication</b>	Upper Level 4  22-24 marks	<p><b>Content</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communication is convincing and compelling</li> <li>• Tone, style and register are assuredly matched to purpose and audience</li> <li>• Extensive and ambitious vocabulary with sustained crafting of linguistic devices</li> </ul> <p><b>Organisation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Varied and inventive use of structural features</li> <li>• Writing is compelling, incorporating a range of convincing and complex ideas</li> <li>• Fluently linked paragraphs with seamlessly integrated discourse markers</li> </ul>

<b>AO6 Technical Accuracy</b> Candidates must use a range of vocabulary and sentence structures for clarity, purpose and effect, with accurate spelling and punctuation. (This requirement must constitute 20% of the marks for each specification as a whole.)	
<b>Level</b>	<b>Skills descriptors</b>
Level 4 13–16 marks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sentence demarcation is consistently secure and consistently accurate</li> <li>• Wide range of punctuation is used with a high level of accuracy</li> <li>• Uses a full range of appropriate sentence forms for effect</li> <li>• Uses Standard English consistently and appropriately with secure control of complex grammatical structures</li> <li>• High level of accuracy in spelling, including ambitious vocabulary</li> <li>• Extensive and ambitious use of vocabulary</li> </ul>

### What can I do next?

1. READ opinion articles, newspaper columns, persuasive blogs – the more you are exposed to this sort of writing, the easier it is to adopt a similar style yourself.
2. LEARN the techniques that will help you write persuasively. Look for these in the language you see and hear around you. When you see / hear a technique, name it and explain what the impact of using it is.
3. PRACTISE planning and writing a clearly structured article – find a question and time yourself to plan in 5 minutes. If you have longer, write the article (45 minutes, including planning time).
4. REVISIT the revision videos and use these to make revision cue cards.
5. PERFECT your SPAG skills. If you know that you often misuse commas, for example, find out when to use them accurately and then keep trying to use them correctly.