Punctuation matters

What is this thing called love?

“What is this thing called, love?”

As you can see, punctuation certainly does matter! It can change the meaning of a sentence, or affect the way we read it. Examiners often say that they want students to punctuate for effect – in other words to make the reader ‘hear’ exactly what the writer intended.

The following pieces of text have very little or no punctuation. Your task is to add the punctuation that will allow the text to make sense, and be ‘heard’ by the reader in the way that you ‘hear’ it when you read it.

1 When the history of sport comes to be written one of the greatest most enduring chapters will be devoted to england’s world cup win in 1966 why was it such an achievement perhaps because the manager sir alf ramsey said very simply a year before the tournament england will win the world cup and they did.

2 Would you make a child drink dirty water of course you wouldn’t but that is what millions of children in Africa do every day and thousands die every year from water borne diseases think of this for just 60 pence a day you could provide clean water for a village and ensure that children have a better chance to live to adulthood surely that isn’t too much to ask or is it

3 One of the trickiest aspects of punctuation is the phrase in apposition this is where a pair of commas is used to separate out a phrase from the rest of the sentence for example john who was 16 at the time felt that the death of michael jackson was a defining moment in his life here the comma after john and before felt separate out that phrase that gives additional information the rest of the sentence makes sense without it which is a key test of whether the marked out phrase is indeed in apposition.