

A PRACTICAL ESSAY WRITING GUIDE



**ACADEMIC  
TASK FORCE**

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# **ESSAY WRITING**

YEAR 11 & 12

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**PAMELA BAGWORTH**

# ESSAY WRITING

A Step by Step Guide to  
Writing Better Essays.

Pamela Bagworth



**ACADEMIC  
TASK FORCE**

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Website: [www.academicgroup.com.au](http://www.academicgroup.com.au)

National Library of Australia

ISBN 978-1-74098-315-0

First published 2022

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Printed in Singapore.

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As Principal of Academic Group, Dr Bagworth has established numerous highly successful Revision Programs, to help students prepare for exams, by teaching effective strategies to improve results. She has developed many very successful resources, including Essay Writing and Study Skills courses, which are taught widely in Academic Group programs and schools and form the basis for this Essay Writing book.

Dr Bagworth has over 40 years' teaching experience at a range of Secondary schools in Western Australia; both city and country, government and private, including as Head of Learning Area in English. She has also taught in all the WA Universities, in the Faculties of English and Education.

# CONTENTS

PREFACE		i
CHAPTER 1	INTRODUCTION	1
CHAPTER 2	UNDERSTANDING THE QUESTION	11
CHAPTER 3	CONSTRUCTING A THESIS	45
CHAPTER 4	PLANNING YOUR ESSAY	65
CHAPTER 5	WRITING YOUR ESSAY USING THE TET PLAN	86
CHAPTER 6	WRITING INTRODUCTIONS	107
CHAPTER 7	DEVELOPING PARAGRAPHS	131
CHAPTER 8	CONCLUSIONS	162
CHAPTER 9	DEVELOPING ESSAY WRITING SKILLS	169
CHAPTER 10	EDITING YOUR WORK	191
CHAPTER 11	WRITING ESSAYS FOR VARIOUS SUBJECTS	200
CHAPTER 12	WRITING ESSAYS IN EXAMS	218
ANSWERS		235

# PREFACE

This Essay Writing book grew from the essay writing lessons I began teaching my students in response to their frustration and confusion about how to write an essay. The lessons developed into a course when I realised that many students were eager to learn how to write good essays. They were exasperated by the fact that, although they knew their content well, they were being asked to present it in this strange form called an essay, which they had difficulty writing. Despite knowing their work, they were not gaining the marks they wanted and deserved because they didn't understand how to put that material into an essay form.

Science students were particularly frustrated. They used the scientific approach to presenting material: know the formula, substitute the specific details into the formula and work through to the answer. They knew how to develop a thesis and follow a process to prove or disprove the hypothesis. This method didn't seem to work in the subject English. They could not understand why they were losing marks in English – their content was correct, but that information, presented in an essay form, was 'wrong'.

To provide a structure for my students, especially the science-oriented ones, I taught them to use a clear format, a 'formula' which they could apply to their essay writing. I called it **the TEE model**, because at that time (1990s) the exam students sat was called the TEE (Tertiary Entrance Exam). The essay 'formula' I developed was that every paragraph was formed with a Topic sentence, Example (or Evidence) sentences and an Explanation (or proof) sentence. The final step, the Explanation or Why, tied the Evidence back to the question. When TEE exams became WACE, then ATAR, the formula became TET: Topic sentence, Example sentences and Thesis/Tie back to Thesis (the Explanation or argument). This formula provided students with a clear pattern or template that they could apply and use to shape the material they knew but didn't know how to present.

I am not saying that essay writing is formulaic. The mysteries and complexities of the universe can be made meaningful through the application of mathematical formulas which enable us to make sense of and study the universe. Likewise, an essay writing formula provides a structure for understanding and structuring your content.

The TEE/TET model was enthusiastically adopted, and students began to gain confidence and increased marks, so the adoption of the model spread. Academic Task Force Essay Writing courses grew in popularity, they became a regular part of our Holiday Revision Programs. The model was eagerly received and used because students found it very helpful. The purpose of this book is to document this process, extend the reach of the Essay Writing course to other students and to enable students who attend our programs to consolidate and expand their understanding and use by providing more detailed examples in this book; and to provide students with a simple process for writing better essays.

You may be familiar with my model or a similar variation. My model became very popular and was adopted by many teachers, while others developed their own versions. There are

some useful variations on the TET model; A popular one is the acronym TEEL or PEEL, where P stands for Point rather than Topic and L stands for Link, reminding you that the final sentence in your paragraph provides a link, back to the question and your thesis and the E has been expanded or unpacked to include Explanation, Evidence, Elaboration, etc. (the multiple expansions of E were always part of the E, but kept condensed for simplicity.) Same model, different letters. I prefer the simpler, more specific, targeted TET, to keeps you on track and it focuses on your thesis as the central, controlling idea for your essay and to remind you to tie every paragraph back to your thesis. Whether you use TET or TEEL, remember you need a strong final statement which ties the paragraph back to the question and the thesis.

The TET model has also been visually represented with the **Hamburger model**, with the good substantial content of the filling held in place with a clear topic sentence on top and a solid thesis on the bottom, holding it together.

The TET model is based on the approach used in a **debate**. As a debater myself, I knew the importance of defining the topic, outlining the areas to be covered by each speaker and, most importantly, having a strong thesis, boldly proclaimed by the first speaker and hammered home after every point (or topic) presented by each member of the team (your paragraphs). It is important that the final sentence is a tie back sentence – justifying **why** you are presenting this material, confidently proclaiming your solution to the question.

But there is more to writing an essay than just having a plan or formula. This book (and our course) demonstrate all the necessary stages to writing great essays and achieving excellent results.

We start with **understanding the question**. The most common reason students get poor marks for essays is that they don't answer the question. This book will take you through the process of dissecting and analysing the question, carefully considering the meaning and implication of the words used, considering all aspects and defining the scope. Understanding the question is an essential starting point for developing a good strong essay.

Paramount to writing a good essay is having a strong **thesis** or argument (the hypothesis in the scientific model) Did public opposition to the Vietnam War lead to the withdrawal of troops or did changes in American foreign policy cause cessation of the conflict? Does Jane Austin's *Pride and Prejudice* prove that every young man in possession of a fortune is in want of a wife, or does it reveal the economic dependence of women in 18<sup>th</sup> Century England? Whichever thesis is chosen it needs to be stated clearly and strongly and proved.

To develop essay writing skills this book contains many exercises dealing with rewording the question, formulating strong thesis statements, writing attention grabbing **introductory paragraphs**, organising strong, coherent **body paragraphs**, finishing with a strong **conclusion** (restatement), then **editing**.

There are chapters on writing essays for **various subjects** and in specific situations, such as **exams**. This book provides you with the tools and the confidence to write quality, high marks earning essays. So, get writing.

**NOTE:** I have based my examples on actual questions and essays used in ATAR exams and school assessments and texts and topics relevant to WA students following the Australian Curriculum. Some of the examples used in this book have come from material written by students or teachers at Academic Task Force programs. Many thanks for their contributions.

**NOTE:** The purpose of this book is to teach you how to write essays for all subjects which require essay answers. It is not just a book for English, so I have tried to use questions and examples from a range of subjects. Work through the examples for all the subjects. You do not need to know the actual content; the purpose of the examples is to provide a framework to help you develop the skills you need to write good essays for all subjects.

I have generally selected texts, events and issues that are commonly taught, so that you should be familiar with the content of the examples and thus be able to focus on the technique. However, do not feel you need to know the actual text or content, focus on how the material is used. In developing your own answers, I would encourage you to widen the scope of your resource material and choose less commonly written about texts and issues. Different texts, fresh approaches will make your work more engaging and interesting and score you higher marks.

**NOTE:** The book contains activities for you to practise the skills taught. While some answers and marking keys are given, suggestions rather than set answers are provided and not all activities have answers, as the purpose of the book is to get you writing independently by following the guidelines discussed in the text and applying it to your texts and areas of study.

**NOTE:** Titles of texts have been underlined or quotation marks used, rather than italics, as a guide for students when handwriting their own essays. Normally italics rather than underlining would be used for a typed text.

**NOTE:** Coloured print has sometimes been used to highlight particular features of paragraphs: **Blue** for Topic sentence, **green** for Examples and Explanations, **purple** for quotes, **red** for Thesis and Tie back to Thesis sentences.

**NOTE:** Square brackets [ ] have generally been used in the text to indicate my comments or additions to a student's work, or my suggested response.

## TESTIMONIAL

My son attended your Essay Writing holiday course in the hope he would improve his grades in English, which were averaging in the low 50s for essays. He also disliked English but needed to do the subject at ATAR level. After attending the program, he came home excited about English! He stated that he finally understood how to structure an essay and felt much more confident about the subject. In the next semester his English grades improved by an average of around 15%, with him scoring in the high 60s. His confidence improved along with his grades and he no longer dislikes English. We'd like to thank Academic Task Force for the great impact this has had. (Laura Rowan, July 2020)



# INTRODUCTION

# 1

Many students find writing essays difficult; they do not know how to write an essay. Although they know their material well, they don't know how to present it in an essay. Unfortunately, most school subjects require you to demonstrate your knowledge in this form that you find difficult. So, although you may be a full bottle on the actual content and have strong opinions and ideas, the problem is presenting it in the way required, an essay. To gain good marks, the marks you deserve, you need to know how to write an essay.

Perhaps you feel that it is unfair that writing an essay is often the format required to demonstrate your knowledge. However, being able to present your knowledge in a logical, persuasive way is an important part of demonstrating you know the content. Writing an essay is about communicating your knowledge to others.

A good essay should be good management not good luck. There are clear, simple steps to writing a strong essay. I will teach you an Essay Writing formula which you can apply to essays you write. By using this clear formula, you will have a framework which will enable you to write strong, well-structured essays in which you demonstrate convincing evidence of your knowledge and understanding.

Understanding the technique of writing essays will help you to:

- Clarify your ideas
- Form arguments
- Refine and select relevant material
- Organise your ideas in a powerful, logical way
- Write high scoring essays.

## **ACTIVITY**

Why do you want to be able to write good essays?

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What aspects of essay writing do you have trouble with?

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## WHAT IS AN ESSAY?

Literally it means an attempt or a try, but unfortunately the essay required from you by your teacher is a much more definite product. The essay you are required to write in a school situation is a quite specific form of an essay.

Traditionally, essays as a literary genre are a discursive and elegant piece of writing, providing a reflective or insightful discussion on a topic. They tend to explore or elaborate on a topic or argue a proposition.

However, the essay you are required to write in a school subject context is more in the form of a persuasive argument. You may be asked to take a proposition and discuss it or evaluate it or provide evidence.

### The Personal Approach

One important feature of the traditional essay was that it was a personal opinion. Yet, traditionally the school essay was expected to be objective, as this was thought to make it appear more authoritative and factual. However, modern critical approaches now recognise that specific contexts shape and colour each individual's perception of the 'facts', so it is now considered appropriate, even essential, to write using the personal voice, the 'I' and to acknowledge your personal viewpoint.

### School Essays

School essays are quite unique – school is generally the only situation where you need to demonstrate your knowledge in the essay form. In the workforce and everyday life people don't write essays. At work you may be required to write a report, a proposal or an expression of interest; summarise a range of information, develop a brochure or prospectus. Much communication will be done by emails. Socially you will use emails, SMS, twitter and memes. You might read or write feature articles, blogs, letters of complaint, fill in application forms, but except for at school and University, no-one asks you to read or write an essay.

Yet these highly refined writing skills (of language, structure and persuasive argumentation) will stand you in good stead in the workforce, so don't consider developing essay writing skills as a wasted competency. The ability to organise your thoughts and to present them in a clear, convincing way is a valuable skill transferrable to many school, work and personal situations. However, the more immediate issue is that in order to get good marks, you will be required to be highly skilled in the art of essay writing. Learning to be a good essay writer enables you to develop your logical and persuasive skills, to think and write clearly and convincingly, to exhibit your knowledge with skill and flair, as well as get higher marks in exams.

So, listen-up, and learn how to write the arcane and specific form of presentation, the essay, which is required to show that you know the content of the work you have studied, that you have an opinion which you can argue and, by doing so, you can meet the syllabus requirements.

## TYPES OF ESSAYS

For the record you might like a brief overview of types of essays, as sometimes adjectives like ‘analytical’ or ‘persuasive’ are added to the instruction ‘write an essay’.

Generally, an essay is ‘A short non-fiction composition that presents the writer’s opinion or analysis of a particular subject.’ (World Book Encyclopedia)

- Analytical or critical essay – provides a detailed examination of the reasoning or justification for a position or hypothesis. It presents an analysis of a particular idea, concept or text or situation. It involves breaking down the material into its functions and applications. (See the definition for ‘analyse’ in Essay Writing instructions: ‘To break up into parts to establish the nature, function and relationship of the various parts. *Give essential features and relationships.*’)
- Argumentative essay – presents arguments for and/or against a subject. The focus is on logic and reasoned thinking which takes a particular view of a topic, presents evidence and reaches a reasoned conclusion.
- Discussion essay – is more discursive. It explores a particular topic.
- Expository essay – identifies or exposes the ideas or features of a topic, outlines the details.
- Persuasive essay – defends a particular position or point of view. Uses emotive language and compelling information to persuade or convince the reader.
- Personal response – a reflective piece of writing where you present a personal account, your opinion or experience.

Generally, for your purpose, an essay requires you to discuss, argue, defend or justify a particular point of view or argument or thesis. It is acceptable, in fact, encouraged, to use the personal voice in answering a question.



## HOW TO WRITE AN ESSAY

Learning to write an essay is a skill that can be easily learnt. I will show you an essay writing formula which you can use as a template to ensure that the knowledge you have is presented in an appropriate way to gain you good marks.

**This book will show you how to follow a simple formula or plan for writing essays which will take the uncertainty out of HOW to write an essay.**

The formula is a scientific, structured series of steps for presenting material: know the formula, substitute the specific details into the formula and work through to the answer. Like a scientific model, you need to develop a thesis and follow a process to prove or disprove the hypothesis.

The essay writing formula will enable you to write powerful essays.

If you use this formula as a guide for writing an essay you will have a clear, strong structure for presenting a convincing argument.

**Here is the formula:**

It's as easy as

**1 2 3**

or

**WHAT HOW WHY**

It is as easy as

**T E T**

**T: Topic Sentence**

**E: Example Sentences**

**T: Thesis Statement**



## Introduction

**Sentence 1: Topic sentence** – explain the question. Reword it, don't just repeat it.

**Sentence/s 2: Example** – for your introduction this means nominate the topic/text, areas you will deal with, explain context, qualifying conditions.

This sentence (or sentences) outlines your plan for your essay.

**Sentence 3: Thesis** – State the significance or effect, your argument.

This is your **hypothesis** or **thesis**.

**Body** (each body paragraph)

**Sentence 1: Topic sentence** – **WHAT?**

**Sentences 2: Examples and Explanations** (a number of sentences) – **HOW?**

**Sentence 3: Tie back to Thesis** – explain the significance or effect – **WHY?**  
Why are you discussing this?

## Conclusion

**Sentence 1: Topic sentence** – refer back to the question.

**Sentence 2: Examples** – Summarise the main points.  
(no new material)

**Sentence 3: Tie back to Thesis** – Satisfy the reader.

This formula will work across a range of subjects. While specific requirements may vary from subject to subject, this basic format will provide the structure you need. Always check the exact conditions for your subject and for each essay assessment you are given (check syllabus outlines, SCSA information, specific teacher's instructions, etc). Some variations are provided and explained throughout this book, but the TET formula will provide the framework you need for your essays.

## ESSAY PLAN TEMPLATE

The Essay formula is helped by the use of an Essay Plan template which will enable you follow the **TET** model in your essay planning.

The Plan provides a space for you to outline your introduction (explain terms, write your thesis) and then shape your material around the TET structure for each paragraph.

## ESSAY PLAN

<b>Question:</b>	

<b>Introduction – Opinion/Thesis</b>	
<b>Sentence 1:</b>	<b>Topic sentence:</b> explain the question. Reword it, don't just repeat it.
<b>Sentence/s 2:</b>	<b>Example:</b> for your introduction this means nominate the topic/text, areas you will deal with, explain context, qualifying conditions. This sentence (or sentences) outlines your plan for your essay.
<b>Sentence 3:</b>	<b>Thesis:</b> State the significance or effect, your argument. This is your <b>hypothesis</b> or <b>thesis</b> .
<i>The introduction should explain/reword the question and raise the major issue/focus of the question. It should provide an outline of what will be covered in the essay, define difficult words, terminology and key concepts, possibly give some background context and provide a thesis statement for your answer/argument.</i>	

Body:			
<b>Paragraph 1</b>	Topic	Examples/Explanation	Tie back to Thesis
	Topic sentence WHAT	HOW Examples & Explanations  Examples & Explanations  Examples & Explanations	Tie back to Thesis – explain the significance or effect  WHY? Why are you discussing this? Does it answer the question?
<b>Paragraph 2</b>	Topic	Examples/Explanation	Tie back to Thesis
	Topic sentence WHAT	HOW Examples & Explanations  Examples & Explanations  Examples & Explanations	Tie back to Thesis – explain the significance or effect  WHY? Why are you discussing this? Does it answer the question?
<b>Paragraph 3</b>	Topic	Examples/Explanation	Tie back to Thesis
	Topic sentence WHAT	HOW Examples & Explanations  Examples & Explanations  Examples & Explanations	Tie back to Thesis – explain the significance or effect  WHY? Why are you discussing this? Does it answer the question?

Tie back to Thesis/Question

## ESSAY PLAN

<b>Thesis:</b>			
<b>Body:</b>			
Paragraph 4	Topic	Examples/Explanation	Tie back to Thesis
	Topic sentence WHAT	HOW Examples & Explanations Examples & Explanations Examples & Explanations	Tie back to Thesis – explain the significance or effect  WHY? Why are you discussing this? Does it answer the question?
Paragraph 5	Topic	Examples/Explanation	Tie back to Thesis
	Topic sentence WHAT	HOW Examples & Explanations Examples & Explanations Examples & Explanations	Tie back to Thesis – explain the significance or effect  WHY? Why are you discussing this? Does it answer the question?
Paragraph 6	Topic	Examples/Explanation	Tie back to Thesis
	Topic sentence WHAT	HOW Examples & Explanations Examples & Explanations Examples & Explanations	Tie back to Thesis – explain the significance or effect  WHY? Why are you discussing this? Does it answer the question?
<b>Conclusion</b>			
Sentence 1: <b>Topic sentence:</b> refer back to the question.			
Sentence/s 2: <b>Examples:</b> Summarise the main points. (no new material)			
Sentence 3: <b>Tie back to Thesis – Satisfy the reader.</b>			
<i>The conclusion draws the major points of the essay together. It restates the main ideas and relates back to the question and thesis stated in the introduction. It should satisfy the reader that you have answered the question.</i>			

Tie back to Thesis/Question

## Variations

You may be familiar with the TEE model or a similar variation. As I explained in the preface, the TET model became very popular and was adopted by many teachers. Your teacher may use a variation on the TET model; in many cases the E has been expanded or unpacked to include Explanation, Evidence, Elaboration, etc. This is part of the TET model, but condensed to E for simplicity. Another variation is the acronym TEEL or PEEL, where P stands for Point rather than Topic, but what you are writing is a Topic sentence, so it is more appropriate to use a T, and L stands for Link, reminding you that the final sentence in your paragraph provides a link, back to the question and your thesis. This is the same model, just different letters, I prefer the simpler, more specific, targeted TET.

The L can be confusing as it can mean Link to the next paragraph, a model which is sometimes taught in History. Linking sentences work with a personal, reflective essay which follows a more discursive line of thought. For an argumentative or analytical essay, the focus should be on providing a series of strong arguments, which require a strong clincher for each one. Linking is created because each paragraph is tied back to the thesis. A stronger essay effect is created by having each paragraph self-sufficient and complete. The advantage of TET is that it reminds you that your final sentence ties back to the thesis – it reminds you that the focus of your essay should be your thesis. The TEEL model and other expanded versions work, but the TET model is designed to Keep It Simple.

## THE DEBATING MODEL

The TET model is based on a debating model. You need to clearly state the topic, define and clarify terms, outline the specific areas you will focus on and state a very clear argument, or thesis for which you will be establishing proofs throughout the essay by providing strong content and evidence. For this type of essay, the stronger you state your argument, or thesis and the more you reinforce it and restate it, the more convincing your argument and essay will be. It is important to tie each topic (paragraph) back to your argument (Thesis). This will also help with keeping you on track, ensuring that you maintain your focus on answering the question.

## THE HAMBURGER MODEL

The essay writing formula has also been visually represented with the Hamburger model, which works well for both the essay as a whole and each paragraph.

For each paragraph the good substantial content of the filling must be held in place with a clear topic sentence on top and a solid thesis on the bottom, to hold the material together.

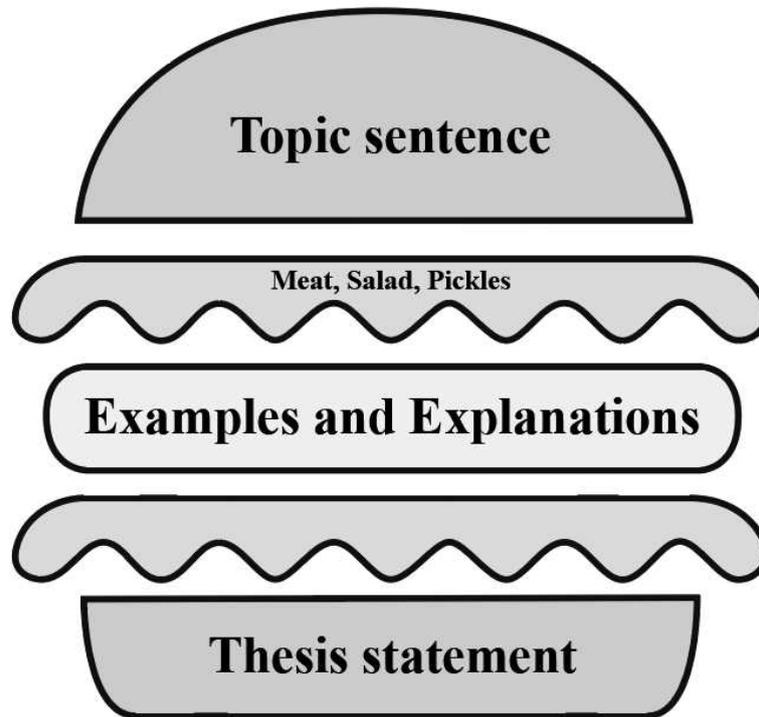
Each paragraph should be constructed ‘like a hamburger’.

**BUN:** A strong topic sentence on top.

**FILLING:** (meat, pickles, salad, sauce) Examples, explanations, the ‘meat’ and ‘dressing’ of the paragraph

**BUN:** Holding it together at the base is the Thesis or Tie back to Thesis.

# The Essay Burger



**'It takes two hands to handle a Whopper'!**

## Wait, there is more

There is more to writing an essay than just having a formula. This book demonstrates all the necessary stages to writing effective essays and achieving excellent results.

Essay writing requires specific skills, all of which can be learned.

**In this book I will take you through each of the steps involved in writing a great essay. We will work through all aspects.**

- Understanding the question
- Developing a thesis
- Planning and organising your material
- Writing strong coherent paragraphs
- Using clear, powerful introductions and conclusions
- Incorporating quotes, evidence and examples into your essay
- Editing your work
- Essays for particular subjects and situations, e.g. exams.

## WHAT MAKES A GOOD ESSAY?

- It answers all parts of the question with strong, relevant details.
- It has a strong thesis which is developed and supported throughout the essay.
- It is well organised and clearly follows the line of argument (your thesis).
- It has a logical development of ideas with 3-5 paragraphs.
- It provides specific examples, evidence, quotations and statistics.
- It uses correct, appropriate terminology and shows a good knowledge of concepts.
- It has a strong sense of a personal, engaged response. It is satisfying to read.

### The 10 Commandments of Essay Writing

1. Thou shall not answer last year's exam questions in preference to this year's
2. Thou shall not waffle or ramble about nothing
3. Thou shall always give supporting evidence
4. Thou shall not write everything you know about a subject in the hope that some of it will be relevant
5. Thou shall not create your own version of history/the text, etc
6. Thou shall write legibly
7. Thou shall not write wild statements nor give false evidence
8. Thou shall pay attention to the correct spelling of key terms, characters, places, etc
9. Thou shall not spend time writing 'Dear Examiner' letters rather than complete your essay
10. Thou shall not rely on divine intervention to help pass the exam in preference to doing the necessary study and preparation

(attributed to Margot Morcombe)



# UNDERSTANDING THE QUESTION

## 2

### Read the question carefully.

The most common cause of students getting poor marks in an essay, even failing, is that they don't answer the question.

Examiners constantly report that students:

- fail to read the question carefully,
- therefore, they fail to understand exactly what they are being asked,
- thus, they fail to answer the question.

### HOW TO ANSWER THE QUESTION ASKED

(Not the one you thought it was or would have preferred to answer). This involves unpacking and understanding the question.

Essentially questions are made up of **two** parts:

#### Instructional words (also called **Process words** or **Command words**)

These are the words that tell you **HOW** to answer the question.

They may ask you to *describe, discuss, explain, evaluate* or *prove*.

There are many lists and definitions of instructional words used in setting essay questions. This book provides a few of them.

Each subject has its own list with variations (available on the SCSA website and from your teacher). If you have a list for a particular subject, use that as it clearly states the way you are to interpret and approach questions for that subject.

#### Key words

These are the words which focus you onto the particular part of the course content you are to consider. Identify the key words and any modifiers. Modifiers may be 'to what extent', 'during that period'. Don't ignore the little words, 'or', 'but', 'until', 'and' and numbers like 'one' or 'two'. Check how much the question is worth.

## ESSAY WRITING TERMINOLOGY (INSTRUCTIONAL/COMMAND/PROCESS WORDS)

- Account for:** Give reasons for.
- Analyse:** Separate or break up into parts so that you may discover their nature, proportion, function, relationship, etc. *Give essential features and relationships.*
- Assess:** Look carefully at the situation. Point out both strengths and weaknesses and similarities and dissimilarities; *give your own judgment of the situation/issue.*
- Comment on:** Give a detailed explanatory and critical explanation.
- Compare:** Look for similar and *sometimes include* different qualities and characteristics.
- Contrast:** Stress dissimilarities, differences of qualities, events or problems.
- Critique:** Express a judgment about the factors or views presented. It is an assessment, not necessarily a negative view. *Make judgement on the merits or truth of factors or views mentioned.* Give the results of your analysis of these factors, discussing their limitations and good aspects. (It does not mean just be critical.)
- Debate:** Present an argument which provides both sides of the issue, but usually supports one side. You are expected to take a particular point of view, using relevant evidence to support the argument and refute the opposite case.
- Define:** Give concise and clear meanings. Don't go into supplementary details, state the limits of the definition.
- Describe:** Recount, write a detailed account of the particular event or factor.
- Discuss:** Examine, analyse carefully. Be comprehensive and give details.
- Evaluate:** Present a judgment of an issue by stressing both strengths and advantages, weaknesses and limitations. End with your own opinion or judgment.
- Examine:** Scrutinise carefully the known facts about a particular situation/aspect and present the findings in a balanced way.
- Explain:** Literally 'to make plain'. Clarify, give reasons for different opinions and results and try to analyse causes.
- Identify:** Recognise or establish something about a particular situation/aspect through examination of the known facts.
- Illustrate:** Use examples to explain a particular topic. Provide examples, quotes, illustrations and diagrams.
- Outline:** Organise a description of the main features or general principles under headings, and subheadings. Construct an arrangement or classification.
- Prove:** Establish something is true by citing factual evidence, or giving clear reasons.
- Relate:** Show how things are connected to one another, or how one causes the other, correlates with another, or is like another.
- Review:** Examine critically, analyse, appraise and comment on important aspects.
- Summarise:** Give the main points or facts in condensed form, omit details and illustrations.
- Trace:** Describe the progress, development or sequence of events, give a step by step account.

Here is a similar list, arranged into a hierarchy of complexity of instructions, starting with the least complex.

<b>List</b>	Write down in list form, e.g., 1 _____ 2 _____ 3 _____
<b>Define</b>	Give a concise, clear meaning. Your definition should show limits of the meaning. Don't go into details.
<b>Identify</b>	Point out, label, describe. It often means give a list of causes, processes or features.
<b>Describe</b> (an event, feature or circumstance)	Write an account of the particular item, factor or event (i.e. give a visual impression of what it looks like, its characteristics, structure etc.). Sketches and diagrams are valuable here. Note: <i>It does not ask for interpretation of the facts, just description, however, some interpretation may be expected in your answer</i>
<b>Illustrate</b>	Use an example to explain a particular topic; give a visual impression of or give examples, using diagrams if appropriate, use labels and refer to key features.
<b>Outline</b>	A brief, organised, written summary consisting of a series of essential points and sub-points. Don't go into very specific detail and omit minor points.
<b>State</b>	Present the main points in a brief, clear sequence.
<b>Explain</b>	Give a logical explanation of, reasons for why something is there or like it is. Outline the processes which have formed the pattern.
<b>Account for</b>	Give reasons for.
<b>Discuss</b>	Examine carefully, look at all points connected with the topic, consider the problem from more than one point of view, examine both sides. Be complete, give details, come to a conclusion.
<b>Examine</b>	Inspect, look at the topic closely. Break into parts and inspect each one closely.
<b>Consider</b>	With deliberate thought, examine and inspect the topic.
<b>Demonstrate</b>	Show how it applies.
<b>Compare</b>	Look for similarities and where necessary, also refer to differences. <b>If the word is used on its own, it relates to similarities and differences.</b>
<b>Contrast</b>	Indicate the areas in which points differ. Describe these.
<b>Compare &amp; Contrast</b>	Indicate similarities and differences. You need to organise this type of question very carefully.
<b>Evaluate</b>	Present a judgment of an issue.
<b>Analyse</b>	Examine the ideas, identify assumptions, show strengths and weaknesses (i.e., consider the merit or worth of each item).
<b>Assess</b>	Form an opinion based on the evidence available after providing both sides of the argument. That is, give a balanced judgment or opinion.

### **ACTIVITY** Matching Command/Instructional Words To Their Meanings.

1	Contrast	A	Give reasons for.
2	Evaluate	B	Write down in point form.
3	Define	C	Sum up; give the main points briefly.
4	Explain	D	Examine carefully and thoroughly. Give a detailed account; outline characteristics.
5	Describe	E	Recount, relate incident, give structure and appearance of object.
6	Compare	F	Give the meaning of the term or concept.
7	List	G	Discuss similarities and difference.
8	Discuss	H	Bring out points of difference.
9	Summarise	I	Appraise, assess, make a judgement.

**Answer:** 1-H; 2-I; 3-F; 4-A; 5-E; 6-G; 7-B; 8-D; 9-C

Consider the different levels of complexity required by questions which ask you to describe or outline with questions which ask you to compare and contrast or analyse or evaluate. Instructions at the first level focus on descriptive elements, however some analysis may also be required. For example: *Describe the conditions in the trenches in the battle of Somme in WW1* – the question may want more than the physical conditions – cold, wet, lack of equipment etc., it may also want you to describe the effect on the soldiers.

*Discuss* is a popular instruction used in English essay questions. Note that the definition is quite detailed and requires more than you may assume from the more colloquial use of the term, as in ‘we had an interesting discussion in class’. When you discuss a topic in an essay, you are expected to ‘examine it carefully’, ‘be complete’! You might be given an essay which asks you to ‘*Discuss how historical and cultural context can influence the production of dramatic texts.*’ In this case you need to define the boundaries of your answer; while your introduction would acknowledge how a variety of different contexts (e.g. time periods, political systems, ethnic influences, etc.) influence production and affect audience response, for most essays, you would probably need to clearly outline how your discussion will focus on one (or possible two) productions of a specific play in a specific context to provide an example of how context influences production.

(Your teacher may have recognised the breadth and complexity of this question and followed it with the instructions ‘*Discuss in relation to one performance you have seen/studied.*’)

History questions often ask you to debate a proposition, e.g. ‘*Debate the proposition: The idea of mateship and the Anzac Legend were of significant influence on Australian society during the time period.*’ (Modern History ATAR Examination 2017, Section Two, Elective 1: Australia 1918-1955, Q 3).

The Markers’ Report on responses to this question said candidates did not construct a clear debate, nor did they provide different perspectives. The definition of ‘debate’ is ‘*Present an argument which provides both sides of the issue. You are expected to take a particular point of view, using relevant evidence to support the argument.*’

Sometimes instructional words are paired:

*Compare and contrast* – look at both the similarities and the differences of a situation.

*Analyse critical* – look carefully at the essential features of a situation and give your judgement about the merits of the features.

*Describe and discuss* – provide a detailed account of the situation and then analyse it and provide an assessment of the situation.



## Essay Language

For comparison and to reinforce the importance of understanding the directions the Instructional or Command words require, here is a list of some of the terms used in Politics and Law questions. For more detail check 'Glossary of key words used in the formulation of questions' on the SCSA website. Below are the 'directive words' used most frequently in P&L (\* = used a lot):

- **Account for** – state reasons for, report on, give an account of, narrate a series of events or transactions e.g. *A major reason for the failure of 1999 Republican Referendum was . . .*
- **Analyse\*** – Identify components and the relationships between them; relate implications e.g. *Analyse the factors contributing to the changes in Federalism in Australia.*
- **Argue** – Make a case, based on appropriate evidence, for and/or against a given point of view e.g. *Argue the case for or against a 'charter of rights' in Australia.*
- **Assess\*** – Make a judgement of value, quality, outcomes, results or size; often linked to validity of a statement/thesis; how good or bad is it? e.g. *Assess the impact of the change in ALP leadership on the 2010 Federal Election.*
- **Compare** – Show how things are similar or different (can be linked to 'contrast') e.g. *Compare the results of the 2007 and 2010 Federal Elections.*
- **Contrast** – Show how things are different or opposite (can be linked to 'compare') e.g. *Contrast the results of the 2007 and 2010 Federal Election results.*
- **Define\*** – State meaning, identify essential qualities e.g. *Define the term 'election'.*
- **Describe\*** – Provide characteristics and features (what is it?) e.g. *Describe the process of a Federal Election in Australia.*

- **Discuss\*** – Identify issues, provide points for and/or against e.g. *Discuss the powers of the Governor General to dismiss Prime Minister Gough Whitlam.*
- **Distinguish\*** – Recognise or note/indicate as being distinct or different from; note differences between (use ‘whereas’, ‘however’, ‘the difference being . . .’) e.g. *Distinguish between the terms ‘parliament’ and ‘government’.*
- **Evaluate\*** – Make a judgement based on criteria; determine the value of (often linked to validity of a statement/thesis); how good/bad/accurate is something e.g. *The establishment of the Equal Opportunities Commission was a major factor in contributing to . . .*
- **Examine\*** – Inquire into, investigate, with reference to specific examples, e.g. *The key features of Terrorism legislation are . . .*
- **Explain\*** – Relate cause and effect; establish the relationships between things provide why and/or how e.g. *The main reasons for the hung parliament in the 2010 elections . . .*
- **Justify** – Support an argument or conclusion; give reasons for your statements or comments; explain a position by giving evidence e.g. *The major reason (justification) that Prime Minister Julie Gillard gave for the introduction of the Carbon Tax was . . .*
- **Outline\*** – Indicate the main features of; give an overview e.g. *Outline the voting system used for the House of Representatives.*
- **Summarise** – Express concisely the relevant details e.g. *Summarise the main features of the 2018 Federal Election.*

## USING INSTRUCTIONAL (PROCESS, COMMAND) WORDS

Using the instructional or process words in a question can help you unpack and explain the question and formulate your answer.

One way to help you write better essays which answer the question is to use the words from the definition of the term in your answer.

**Analyse:** Separate or break up into parts so that you may discover their nature, proportion, function, relationship, etc. *Give essential features and relationships.*

E.g. In *analysing* Judith Wright’s poems, it is necessary to separate out *the parts or elements* to examine their *nature and function* and to understand *the relationship* between the context and the poem.

E.g. My *analysis* of the poem ‘Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening’ by Robert Frost, will consider *the nature, function and relationship* (or interplay) of figurative language to show how Frost explores the implications of responsibility.

**Examine** the ideas, identify assumptions, show strengths and weaknesses (i.e., consider the merit or worth of each item).

E.g. **Question:** *Examine how texts construct representations of class.*

This *examination* of the representation of social difference in contemporary Australian society will assess the *assumptions* made in constructing hierarchical divisions and *consider the merit* of such categories.

**Assess:** Evaluate the nature, value, quality and outcome. Form an opinion based on the evidence available after providing both sides of the argument; *give your own judgment of the issue.*

E.g. In *assessing* the impact of COVID 19 on Australian trade deals, I will *evaluate* the *nature, value* and *quality* (strength) of the trading relations and the *outcomes* of these negotiations. My *opinion* will be based on *examining all features* and considering the *merit* of each aspect.

## **ACTIVITY** Understanding Instructional Words

1. Using the lists above, or the definitions on the SCSSA website or ones from your teacher, write the meaning of the following terms. Compare the definitions – mix and match and expand your understanding of the terms.

DESCRIBE

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ILLUSTRATE

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DISCUSS

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COMPARE

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ANALYSE

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EVALUATE

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**2. Consider the different focus or instructions for questions which ask you to:**

- **Describe** some aspects of Australian culture as presented in . . .

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- **Illustrate** some aspects of Australian culture as presented in . . .

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- **Compare** some aspects of Australian culture as presented in . . . with an American text.

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- **Analyse** some aspects of Australian culture as presented in . . .

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- **Evaluate** some aspects of Australian culture as presented in . . .

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**3. How would your introduction be changed if the command word was:**

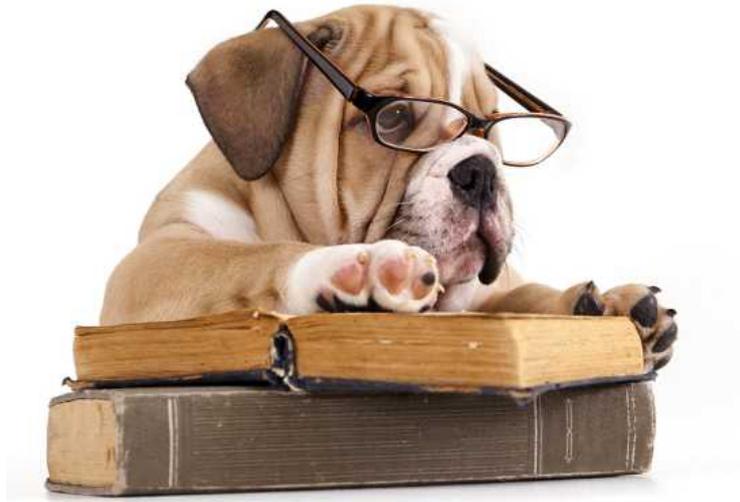
Debate . . .

Discuss . . .

Review . . .

Account for . . .

Reflect upon . . .



## UNDERSTANDING THE QUESTION

### MODERN HISTORY

**Question:** *Evaluate the effects of the Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan on the tensions existing between the two super powers in Europe from 1947 to 1955 (10 marks)*

**Circle the instructional/command words and underline the key words.**

Instructional word ‘Evaluate’ (Present a judgment of an issue by stressing both strengths and advantages, and weaknesses and limitations. End with your own opinion or judgment.)

You will need to deal with both advantages and limitations, and you will be required to state your opinion, your assessment.

Key words ‘Truman doctrine’, ‘Marshall Plan’ – this is where you go back to your notes to collect information. You will need to explain (briefly) what they are, but more importantly, their function and ‘**effects**’ (note it is plural)

‘the two super powers in Europe’ – be sure to name them

‘from 1947-1955’ – note the time frame.

Important modifiers You must evaluate the ‘effects . . . on tensions’; Focus your answer on effects (not reasons for establishing the arrangements) and define what tensions (note it is plural) you are dealing with (political, leadership, economic, etc.).

Another important modifier is how much the question is worth – don’t write more than 10 marks worth!

### Follow the Instructions

Some History questions actually define what the instructional term requires:

**Question:** *Evaluate the effectiveness, in terms of strengths and weaknesses, of the policies suggested in Source 1 and Source 2 regarding the implementation of the trade deals suggested.*

**Circle the instructional/command words and underline the key words.**

From your knowledge of the meaning of ‘evaluate’ you know that you need to discuss both strengths and weaknesses, but you also know you need to identify assumptions and make a judgement.

Notice the qualifiers ‘effectiveness’ and ‘implementation’. Consider how they will focus or direct your answer.

**Question:** *Explain the historical context of source 1. Include the relevant events, people and ideas depicted or represented in the source*

**Circle the instructional/command words and underline the key words.**

Here ‘explain’ is itemised to point you in the direction of ‘relevant events, people and ideas.’ Make sure you include the itemised aspects of ‘relevant events, people and ideas’.

**Question:** *Describe significant events in the life of one of the leaders in the period you studied and assess the impact of these events during the period of study. (25 marks)*

**Circle the command words and underline the key words.**

The requirement of the question is to synthesise what you know about the individual’s life, carefully select appropriate details and evidence to include and exclude (a vital skill) and ensure that the details you have chosen addressed the ‘impact’ of the individual on the period of study. Do not write a comprehensive biography, what is required is a thoughtful consideration of detailed, relevant events. Do not include too much superfluous ‘retell’, rather provide appropriate analysis.

## GEOGRAPHY

**Circle the instructional words and underline the key words in the following questions:**

**Question:** *SELECT two agricultural activities which you have studied:*

*ONE in the South Western Study Area*

*AND*

*ONE in another Study Area*

*COMPARE and CONTRAST the physical inputs and the cultural inputs associated with the two agricultural activities which you have selected. (10 marks)*

Instructional words (This Geography question helps you by writing the instructions in capitals). It is important that you deal with both similarities and differences.

Key words Make sure you follow the instructions – **select one SW area** and choose another. **Choose two different agricultural activities.**

You will need to define what is meant by ‘**physical inputs**’ (climate, soil/topography, etc) and ‘**cultural inputs**’ (workforce, demographics etc.)

A Venn diagram which shows the aspects these activities have in common and those that are different will help in your planning. You don’t need to make an evaluation, just describe the different features.

**Question:** *DESCRIBE and ACCOUNT for the cultural landscape which has resulted from a mineral/energy resource activity which you have studied. (10 marks)*

Instructional words (This Geography question helps you by writing the instructions in capitals). ‘Describe’ – give the specific features; ‘Account for’ – here you are being asked to give reasons, explain the process.

The marking key allocated 3 marks for describing, as this is a ‘lower order’ analysis and 7 marks for your reasoning, ‘*account for.*’. (This wasn’t explained in the question but assumed as something you know from previous work and your understanding of the degree of complexity of the instructional words, so be aware). The focus is on your understanding and analysis. The marking key also stated that to score well a student needed an integrated treatment of the comparison/contrast rather than two separate treatments of the features of each activity. That is, it is important to answer the question rather than just provide a checklist of the features.

Key words Select one mineral/energy resource area you have studied and focus on the ‘*cultural landscape*’ which you must define (perhaps ‘the social features’ or, ‘way of life’)

## ENGLISH

Questions can require the candidate to interpret, analyse, compare, contrast, reflect on and/or evaluate a studied text or texts.

**Question:** *Explore how voice in at least one text reflects the values and attitudes of a particular context.* (English ATAR Exam, 2019, Q7)

**Circle the command words and underline the key words.**

Instructional /Command words ‘*Explore*’ – Investigate, search for or evaluate

Key words

‘*Voice*’ – the distinct personality of a piece of writing

‘*Values*’ – beliefs

‘*Attitudes*’ – An outlook or a specific feeling about something. Our values underlie our attitudes. Attitudes can be expressed by what we say and do.

‘*Context*’ – can include the general social, historical and cultural conditions in which a text is created and/or read (the context of culture) or the specific features of its immediate environment (context of situation).

E.g. The *distinct personality* of Stephanie, the persona created by Leah Purcell in her semi-autobiographical Box the Pony uses *songs, dances and humour* to *investigate* with *brutal honesty* growing up in an *environment of violence and racism* on a *mission* in contemporary *Queensland*.

**Question:** *The ways in which conflicts are constructed and resolved are important in shaping our understandings of the values that the text represents. Discuss this statement with reference to at least one text you have studied.*

**Circle the command words and underline the key words.**

[A wordy question which needs to be carefully unpacked]

Instructional/Command words ‘*Discuss*’ – examine carefully, consider all aspects

Key words

'ways' – note plural – the how, techniques

'conflicts' – different views, clashes

'constructed' – what techniques are used to describe the conflict, relationships?

'resolved' – brought to a conclusion – in favour of whom?

'shaping our understandings' – positions us to respond in a certain way

'values that the text represents' – principles or beliefs espoused by the text

'least one text' – note at least one

You need to make a clear statement of the values represented in the text.

What is the nature of the conflict – is it between groups, individuals, within an individual?

There are a number of parts to this question – it is important that you discuss how the conflict is set up and resolved and how that influences your response.

Reword the Question

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**Question:** *Compare two texts of the same genre to consider how audience expectations of that genre may change over time.* (English ATAR 2019 Q 4)

**Circle the command words and underline the key words.**

This is a tricky question!

Instructional/Command words

'Compare' – remember when used on its own, it can mean compare and contrast

Key words

'same genre' – can mean form (e.g. poetry, novel, play, film) or category based on subject matter (e.g. science fiction, romance)

'audience' – what sort of texts have audiences? Note that the English Glossary definition includes readers, so any text is valid.

'audience expectations' – not reception. Note the syllabus concept 'appraise how the conventions of texts influence responses' and 'how expectations of genres have developed and the effect when those expectations are met or not met'; 'how responses to texts and genres might change over time and in different cultural contexts', could mean assumptions about content or techniques.

'how' – not why – but you should consider why. You will need to compare the features of the two texts and anticipate likely audience responses, based on their expectations. It is important to link the changes to changes in generic features.

*'expectations'* – assumptions.

*'may change'* – your conjecture, based on changes in values, context etc, or expectations because of increased sophistication of textual modes (e.g. animation, special effects, multi-modal) or audiences' acceptance of disruption to traditional generic conventions of content, structure, values (e.g. plot structure, narrative voice, magic realism, qualities of the hero, role of women)

*'over time'* – could compare classic tragedy with kitchen sink drama, or recent genre changes (e.g. audience changing expectations of science fiction, reality show TV, animation)

The focus of your answer is to explore audience expectations of a specific genre and how their expectations may change.

Your examples

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**Question:** *Discuss how the multimodal elements of a text influence your interpretation of it.*

**Circle the command words and underline the key words.**

Command words *'Discuss'* – remember to be thorough and analyse carefully.

Key words *'Multimodal'* – combination of language and structural features, consider all aspects and their synthesis or interplay. Multimodal texts include graphic novels, brochures and print advertisements, social media, etc. You need to deal with the mixture and interaction of the various elements.

*'influence your interpretation'* – your understanding, reading of the text, your response to it.

Provide reasons for your reading, the effect created by the multimodal elements. How do the elements position you to respond? How is your response mediated by the mix of modes?

What are some multimodal texts you could discuss?

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**Question:** *Discuss how you developed a more considered interpretation of a text by reflecting on at least one different reading of it. (English ATAR Exam, 2019, Q 8)*

**Circle the command words and underline the key words**

Command words *'Discuss'* – remember to be comprehensive and give details.

Key words ‘you’ – a personal response is required

‘a more considered interpretation’ – a more thoughtful, critical, nuanced understanding.

‘at least one’ – one is sufficient, but more may be better, but give depth over breadth.

‘different reading’ – consider factors which might provide a ‘different reading’ – influence of gender, ethnic background, more knowledge.

Consider a text you have studied and think about ‘different readings’ – e.g. reading Jasper Jones as a female reader, as an Indigenous student, as an overseas student.

Your comments

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## ACCOUNTING AND FINANCE

**Question:** *COMPARE and CONTRAST the partnership and company forms of business ownership.*

**Circle the instructional words and underline the key words.**

Instructional words (This Accounting and Finance question also assists you by writing the instructions in capitals). It is important that you deal with both similarities and differences. (A Venn diagram is helpful in planning this type of answer.)

Key words A straightforward question but decide how best to structure it: e.g. by using the syllabus dot points relating to the characteristics of different business ownership structures.



**Question:** *DISCUSS the historical cost principle and EXPLAIN its significance in the recording of noncurrent assets.*

**Circle the instructional words and underline the key words.**

Instructional words Note the Accounting and Finance glossary of key terms defines DISCUSS as *Identify issues and provide points for and/or against* and EXPLAIN as *Relate cause and effect; make the relationships between things evident; provide why and/or how*.

Key words Note ‘*significance*’ and ‘*recording*’. Relate your answer to the syllabus points regarding recording and evaluating financial information. ‘*The most important aspect of business financial management is the analysis and interpretation of financial reports for decision making. Appropriate sources of finance and internal controls are examined, and these are evaluated against various goals and objectives. The concepts of risk, return and capital growth are compared, and other long-term investments considered.*’

## POLITICS AND LAW

(Material from Creelman Exam Questions: Politics and Law published by Academic Group)

**Question:** *Evaluate the extent to which Australia and one other country uphold the democratic principles of political representation and judicial independence. (25 marks)*  
(ATAR Political and Law, 2017, Q10)

**Circle the instructional words and underline the key words.**

Instructional words Your evaluation should incorporate and include your judgement of the extent (significant/high/moderate/low)

Key words Your answer must define/explain ‘*political representation*’ and ‘*judicial independence*’. You must explain the way and extent to which Australia AND ONE OTHER COUNTRY *practise political representation AND judicial independence*, using specific, relevant examples.

Your evaluation must incorporate and include your judgement of the extent and significance.

**(Markers comment:** Candidates did not give detailed evidence in their analysis of the topic and too many went beyond the topic. The lack of detailed definitions of particular terms meant that the analysis was on the whole quite limited.)

**Question:** *The provisions of the Commonwealth Constitution (Australia) does not accurately describe the reality of executive and legislative power in Australia today. Evaluate the validity of this claim. (25 marks)*

**Circle the instructional words and underline the key words.**

Instructional words ‘*Evaluate*’ Consider the assumptions of the Constitution and their relevance today. How valid/strong is this power, how accurate are the provisions for contemporary Australian political and social situations? Note you are evaluating the validity of this claim – validity means factually, legally or officially true. Your answer would be quite different if you focused on ‘*factually*’ or on ‘*legally*’.

Key words ‘*The provisions*’ Your answer should include a detailed outline of the relevant section of the Constitution, outlining what areas of control and law-making ability are accessible to the federal government and what areas are outside their control.

*'the reality'* You should acknowledge that our structure of government is different to that in operation when the Constitution was drawn up.

*'power in Australia today'* The constitution does not take into account political parties, the changed function of the Senate, contemporary areas of legislation (e.g. asylum seekers, NDIS, balance of power between states and federal government, how it relates to emergency powers used due to COVID 19, such as closing borders).

**Question:** *Over time particular groups within the Australian political and legal system have been disadvantaged.*

*Evaluate this claim with specific reference to the experiences of one group in Australia* (25 marks)

**Circle the instructional words and underline the key words.**

Instructional words *'Evaluate'* Your evaluation should incorporate and include your judgement of the extent (significant/high/moderate/low and why).

Key words *'Over time'* show the changes, evolution, different emphasises due to political or social changes.

*'groups'* could be women, aborigines, non-English speaking migrants, children, asylum seekers.

*'disadvantaged'* basic human rights denied, discriminatory laws, lack of access to legal systems (due to language, money, social confidence or lack of understanding of the system).

*'specific reference to the experiences of one group in Australia'* Your answer must describe the experiences of one group and their treatment by the *political and legal system* e.g. Indigenous Australian – remember *over time* – provide historic details, such as early settlement, *'terra nullius'*, Native Welfare Act, 'stolen generation', 1967 Referendum, number of Indigenous representatives in parliament and judiciary. Remember that disadvantages include discriminatory laws and lack of access, so include education, poverty, health aspects.

**(Marker's comment:** The most common mistake was to write a narrative of the topic, without examining all of the various elements of the question and for students to merely make an assertion regarding the claim.)

## RELIGION AND LIFE

**Question:** *Discuss how and why there are differing ways in which religion is viewed in society.* (25 MARKS) (ATAR Exam, 2019, Q 9)

**Circle the command words and underline the key words.**

Instructional word *'Discuss'* be careful to obey the instruction discuss, that is to describe carefully and give detail, explain why. According to the marking key, you receive less marks if you merely outline, list or just provide detail.

You need to write in essay form, with a well-structured essay to *'discuss how and why'*

Key words Don't just list examples – you must deal with 'how' and 'why'

*'viewed'* looked on, considered – NOT necessarily its stated religious function.

Name the society you are discussing.

## ECONOMICS

(Material from Creelman Exam Questions: Economics published by Academic Group)

**Question:** *Using an appropriate diagram(s) and recent examples, discuss how microeconomic reform (MER) can contribute to an increase in both productivity and efficiency, thereby raising living standards (20 Marks)*

**Circle the instructional words and underline the key words.**

A complex question, with lots of parts. Read it carefully and follow all instructions.

Instructional words

‘Discuss’ Examine, analyse carefully. Be comprehensive and give details

Key words

**Define** ‘microeconomic reform’, ‘productivity’ and ‘efficiency’

Make sure you use diagrams – plural – there are two appropriate ones you should use. Explain them.

**Show ‘how’** give recent examples

Discuss **both** ‘productivity’ and ‘efficiency’

Give the **effect** ‘raising living standards’.

Better answers would discuss the qualifiers and the effects.

‘can contribute’ what might prevent that happening? what additional factors might be involved?

## LITERATURE

**Question:** *‘Discuss how the aesthetic qualities of at least one text have been used to support or challenge ideologies’ (Literature, ATAR Exam, 2018 Q 6)*

**Circle the command words and underline the key words.**

Instructional/Command words

‘Discuss’ Examine, analyse carefully. Be comprehensive and give details.

Key words ‘aesthetic qualities’ The Glossary of key words for Literature defines aesthetic as ‘A sense of beauty or an appreciation of artistic expression’, so an analysis of a text’s language, style, its use of generic convention is required, as well as an appreciation of the effect. Ensure you give a brief description of the way you are using any concepts and terms associated with ‘aesthetic qualities’.

‘ideologies’ a system of beliefs and values.

This is a very broad, general question – you need to focus your answer; select some aesthetic qualities, be specific about the ideologic concerns. Show how certain literary techniques have been used to support (promote) or challenge (critique) a specific ideology, e.g., Winton’s use of colloquial language to valourise an ‘ocker’ culture, or Jane Austin’s irony to critique the social and economic values of Georgian England in relation to marriage.

**Question:** *Explain how narrative point of view has been used to explore social controversy in at least one prose fiction text.*

**Circle the command words and underline the key words.**

Instructional/Command words

*'Explain'* Explore and give reasons for the choices made.

*'Explore'* This term isn't in the lists of instructional words included in this book, but it is in the Literature Glossary of key words used in formulating questions, on SCSA website, so become familiar with these terms; *Explore* is 'to investigate, search for or evaluate'.

Key words

*'Narrative point of view'* consider the different effects of using a third person, first person or multiple points of view.

You must discuss *'social controversy'* not just social issues, Consider the context – how does time and place influence the controversial nature?

**Question:** *Explain, in relation to at least one text, how the conventions of the text influence the meanings readers make of it.*

**Circle the command words and underline the key words.**

Instructional/Command words

*'Explain'* 'to make plain'. Clarify, give reasons for different opinions and results, analyse how and why.

Key words

*'at least one text'* very open in relation to text type and number.

*'conventions'* Note it is plural. Know the terminology of your subject. 'Conventions' include point of view, structure, characterisation, setting, language. Be careful to not just list a grab bag of conventions but show how particular use of specific conventions shape your response, e.g. Presenting the text from first person point of view helped you identify with the main character.



Conventions can also include the ‘gaps’ or silences in the text (from which you might create meaning), physical structure of the writing on the page e.g. lack of use of punctuation, or quotation marks for speech, the spaces between sections, etc.

(Marker’s comment: Higher marks will be awarded to answers which are sensitive to the relationship between conventions and textual nuances, such as the use of structure, physical look on the page, pauses, changes in tone, shifting perspective etc.)

‘*influence*’ the relation between the techniques used by the text and the reader’s response.

‘*meanings*’ note it is plural. Your answer might also consider such aspects as different readers, and the influence of context on response to the meaning you make. You might also consider aspects such as ideology, audience, and cultural context. For example, you might focus on gender, or make a post-colonial reading, or you might consider how a young female might read the passage as opposed to a middle-aged male. Make sure you define the concepts you are using. For example, explain what a particular reading practice means and how you are using it. A short sentence will show the marker your understanding and help ensure that you and your reader have a common understanding.

**Cf Question:** *Explain, with reference to at least one text you have studied, how the conventions of a text influence the meanings you make from it.*

**Circle the command words and underline the key words.**

Note the change to the question – from ‘*readers*’ to ‘*you*’ – a personal response is required. This changes the focus and the content. Rather than discussing different theoretical reading practices, the focus is on how you make meaning – what prejudices, assumptions, skills do you bring to the text, how do your reading practices interact with the textual conventions?

### **ACTIVITY** Understanding the Question.

(The purpose of this activity is to get you to think about what questions are actually asking, what the words in the question mean. You do not have to ‘do’ the subject, you do not have to know the subject content, in fact, it is an advantage if you don’t, because I want you to focus on unpacking the question, focus on the words, what are the key areas to consider and provide a restatement in your own words.)

(a) **Question:** *Discuss the ways a character in one or more texts challenges dominant assumptions about what it means to be Australian.*

Instructional/Command word

‘*Discuss*’

Key words

‘*the ways*’

‘*a character*’

‘*assumptions*’

‘*Australian*’

Things to consider

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The question in my own words

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(b) **Question:** *Analyse two ways human rights are protected in Australia and in one other country*

Instructional words (NB – remember the definition of analyse)

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Key words

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Things to consider

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The question in my own words

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(c) **Question:** *Outline a role for public participation in implementing the steps of methodical environmental planning*

Instructional/Command word

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Key words

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Things to consider

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The question in my own words

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(d) **Question:** *Assess the impact of wheat/sheep farming and extensive pastoralism on the environment*

Instructional word

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Key words

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Things to consider

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The question in my own words

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(e) **Question:** *Identify the significance (short and long term) of at least one political event, crisis, or development from the perspective of a participating individual or group.*

Instructional/Command word

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Key words

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Things to consider

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The question in my own words

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(f) **Question:** *Evaluate the extent to which there is access and equity in Australia's legal system.*

Instructional/Command word

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Key words

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Things to consider

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The question in my own words

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(g) **Question:** *Consider how your response to a text has been influenced by your own context.*

Instructional/Command word

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Key Words

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Things to consider

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The question in my own words

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## UNPACKING QUESTIONS

Unpacking the question means taking it apart and explaining the instructional and key words to show what you understand the question to mean.

Developing strategies to unpack a question quickly and effectively will enable you to plan an effective, engaged response.

Unpacking the question in your Introduction is strengthened if you provide a brief description of the ways you are using concepts and terms. For example, if you are doing a *'gendered reading'* write a few words outlining what this means and what you will be doing. You could explain that reading practices provide strategies for interpreting a text, so a gendered reading enables the reader to unpack or deconstruct the assumptions made in the text, for example, about women.

Words and phrases in questions such as *'shaped your understanding'* and *'explore an issue'* are designed to direct your response. Words like *'shaped'* suggest that techniques used by the writer helped form your opinion, or maybe it's your context which influences your response.

E.g. *What factors shaped your values and beliefs* – You might consider how your upbringing has influenced your values.

If you *'explore an issue'* you are surveying or looking at all aspects rather than presenting one side or aspect. E.g. *Explore how language is acquired by children*.

English and Literature questions can be complex and challenging. Sometimes they seem to delight in multiple, ambiguous or disconnected parts.

**Question:** *Explore how patterns of language or structure are used to represent a complex idea in at least one text* (English ATAR Examinations 2016, Q 6).

**Circle the command words and underline the key words.**

Instruction/Command words *'explore'* 'to investigate, search for or evaluate', to survey, investigate.

Key words *'patterns of language or structure'*

Important features to note in unpacking this question are:

You are not asked to consider just language or structure, but *patterns of language or structure*. That means an analysis of repeated techniques or a sequence of techniques used to give a shape or framework to language features; this could include (for language) a recurring motif or symbol, the use of colloquial language or dialect to establish one character, or a group of characters' identities. Patterns of structure could include the chapter patterns (different narrators, time period) or the traditional narrative structure (exposition, crises, climax, resolution), or the breaking of the traditional pattern. A text may follow the traditional pattern or may establish its own.

*'complex'* English questions like to use the word 'complex' – you should work out what meaning you want to give to this term and ensure that your answer addresses the requirement of discussing 'complex ideas', which could mean 'many interconnected parts', making it complicated or intricate, or you could focus on 'complex' as referring to the variety and different aspects which make the issue 'hard to understand' or not straightforward or one dimensional.

Note *'or'* – you only need to discuss one, either language or structure

Do not simply repeat the terms 'patterns' or 'complex ideas', rewrite the question, using different words to show your understanding of what it is asking.

Reword the question:

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[A possible rewording of the question: ‘Writers often use recurring motifs and images to show the interplay of various strands in their narrative in order to explore difficult and contentious issues.’]

**Unpack this Question:** Explain how at least one text manipulates the conventions of genres for a particular purpose and context (ATAR English, 2017 Q 4)

**Circle the command words and underline the key words.**

[NB – define ‘*explain*’, clarify ‘*manipulates*’; choose a text, the plural ‘*genres*’ suggests the mixing of genres, genre can mean form of texts (novel, film, documentary, etc.) and also the type (science fiction, dystopic, romantic comedy, etc.), outline the relevant features of that genre in relation to the question, that is examine how the techniques of form and/or style have been manipulated, provide a specific purpose and context, consider how the context of production or reception may have influenced the representation, leading to ‘*manipulation*’.]

**E.g. 1** By challenging and redeploying the traditional form and techniques of a particular genre, a writer can confront their readers and encourage them to view a situation from a new perspective. Art Spiegelman, in The Complete Maus (1996), use of the graphic comic form to present the confronting history of the Holocaust is both dazzling and shocking . . .

**E.g. 2** Rewriting traditional fairy stories, to challenge their stereotyped characterisation and pat moral messages, invites readers to re-evaluate their assumptions about heroes and villains within the genre. Through the manipulation of the conventions of the fairy tale genre, Angela Carter creates multifaceted and morally complex female characters who defy the stereotypes and moral platitudes of traditional bedtime tales . . .

Your version:

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### Questions which start with a quotation.

This type of question can be tricky. The quote is supposed to provide an insight into the meaning of a question, a prompt to give you an angle to view the issue. However, the quotation often makes the question ambiguous or more complex. The best approach is to pay lip service to the quote, but to use the attached question as the ‘real’ question.

1. **Question:** *‘The things a text does not say can sometimes be as significant as what it does say’.* Discuss this idea in terms of your viewing of ONE FEATURE FILM.

### Circle the command words and underline the key words.

This question, from English, highlights two common features of English questions. First, ‘the Instruction words’ appear to be deceptively simple. ‘Discuss’ is in fact a detailed, complex instructional word, you are required to be analytical and comprehensive: *‘examine, analyse carefully to be comprehensive and to give details’*.

Secondly, while it starts with a quote, so it is important that you paraphrase and explain, the meaning of the quote, what you are being asked to discuss is in the accompanying instructions.

You are required to apply this instruction to ‘your viewing’ (personal) of one film.

But what does the quote mean? This is an example of an ambiguous, confusing question – it is your job to clarify and state clearly your understanding of the quote. Consider the various ways a text ‘does not say’ as well as ways it ‘does say’.

‘does not say’ – could be interpreted as ‘silences and gaps, or the political and social context, the wider historical situation’, or unstated assumptions or absences, such as the role of women, the ‘missing’ references to perhaps the mother/father in the family, the social class; another interpretation is that it could refer to the use of symbols and recurring motifs; or, since it is a question which relates to films, it could be focusing on visual techniques, compared to the actual scripted dialogue. Since it does ask for you to reference a feature film, that is the most likely option, but the others are also valid (and would probably generally be relying on non-verbal techniques to convey them). The important point is that you need to clearly state what your understanding of the quote is and how you are going to apply it.

Possible ways of approaching the question:

**E.g. 1** *The visual impact of a film is at least as important as the story.* The bleak, barren setting and the visual symbolic image of the road creates a strong dystopic point about the context in which the relationship between father and son is developed in the confronting film *The Road* (2009), directed by John Hillcoat. The images of the deserted houses and the ruined wasteland are as important as the actions and speech of father and son in constructing their desperate journey. *The ‘unsaid’ visual images of the post-apocalyptic world are at least as significant as the father and son interaction in conveying the desolate blighted savagery of a world divested of human love and civilisation.*

**E.g. 2** *Ideological beliefs provide the unstated underpinning for the construction of a story.* Assumed, but unspoken gender and class expectations form the basis for the clever dialogue and polite behaviour of the society constructed in the 2005 film version of Jane Austin’s *Pride and Prejudice*. While the text is known for its witty dialogue and ironic statements, as well as the mannered behaviour of its characters, all beautifully visualised in the film, the power in both filmic and written form comes from the unsaid assumptions, encapsulated in the text’s famous opening statement ‘It is a truth universally acknowledged that that a single man in possession of a good fortune must be in want of a wife’, that is, an ironic reference to the economic dependence of women on men in that society. The visual recreation of mannered, polite demeanour and behaviour provides a context for the clever dialogue; both said (verbal) and unsaid (visual) are important in conveying the text’s message. **However,**

it is the unstated rigid constraints of class and gender which are more significant than the formal language and actions in restraining and disempowering women in the society depicted in Jane Austin's world of Georgian gentry, controlled by social hierarchy and wealth.

[And, of course, your essay would make reference to the famous scene of Mr. Darcy emerging from the lake with a wet shirt, with its **unsaid** sexual message!]

Rewrite the question to show your understanding of it, applying it to a text of your choice:

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2. **Question:** *'To read a poem is to hear it with our eyes: to hear it is to see it with our ears' – Octavio Paz*

*With reference to at least **two** poems, discuss how **poetry** is a multi-sensory experience. (Literature ATAR Exam, 2016, Q9)*

The question actually asks you to consider the 'multi-sensory experience' of poetry. Don't get bogged down with the quote, don't specifically deal with it, use it as a segue into the auditory and visual elements of poetry, because 'multi-sensory' goes beyond the quote, it could involve all the senses. You need to consider the figurative elements of poetry, the use of imagery, rhyme and rhythm, etc. You could also focus on the appearance of the poem on the page and the effect of punctuation on sound.

You need to consider the 'multi-sensory' elements, their various and possibly simultaneous interplay. It is important to note that the question draws attention to 'experience' – the *affect* of the poem on you, your response.

Rewrite the question:

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Choose a poem and list 3 multi-sensory features:

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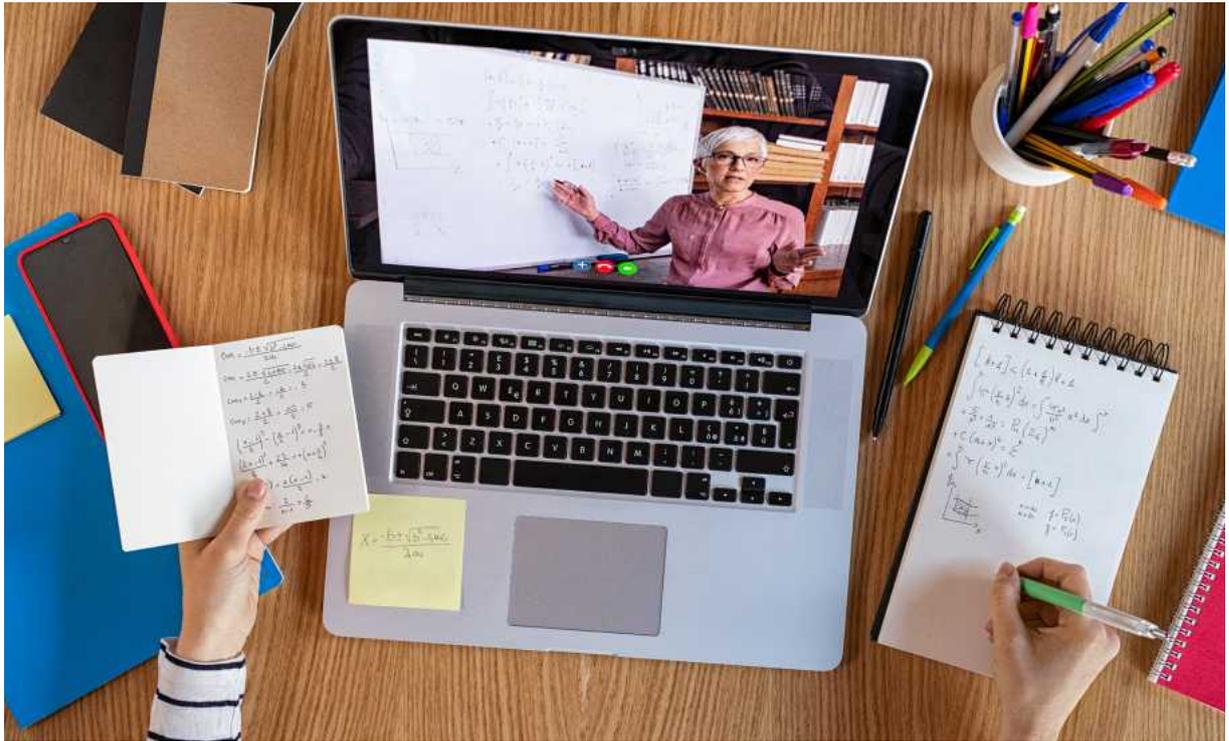
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Describe how it is a ‘multi-sensory experience’ for you.

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**ACTIVITY** Unpack the following questions – Break them up, dig out their meaning, restate them.

1. **Question:** *Reading poetry involves filling in the gaps. Discuss with reference to one or more poems. (Literature, TEE Exam, 2003, Q3)*

(a) List at least 3 meanings that ‘gaps’ could have.

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(b) Notice the emphasis is on ‘reading poetry’, that is the reading process. How do you, as a reader ‘fill in the gaps’? Is it different for different readers?

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A sample beginning of an introduction which explains the question:

Poetry is possibly the most concise of all literary genres, requiring the reader to ‘unpack’ the statements and interpret what has been written. In this way the gaps in a poem take on a particular significance as the reader actively makes meaning by finding links between apparently unrelated ideas. This involves bringing to the poetry the reader’s own cultural understandings and reading practices. By placing so much emphasis on the reader’s interpretation, the poet empowers readers who share the poet’s own cultural context or opens the interpretation up to the possibility of multiple readings. This suggests that the gaps required to be filled by the reader include not only those resulting from the fragmented or elliptical nature of the poetry, but also from the unpacking of ideological assumptions. In . . . (Complete the paragraph by showing what this might mean for particular poems and end with a thesis, possibly one which argues for the importance of understanding cultural context.

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- (c) A similar question, **but different:** **Question:** *Many texts work by allusion, compressing images and connections, asking us to make links. Discuss the ways in which one text asks for our collaboration to make meaning.*

Consider how you, as a reader, might *collaborate* with your knowledge and experience, or your emotional experiences.

The question in my own words

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- (d) Another similar, but different question:

**Question:** *Explore how the economical and sometimes ambiguous use of language can allow for multiple interpretations of a text (ATAR Literature 2019 Q 8)*

Instructional/Command word

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Key words

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Things to consider

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The question in my own words

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2. Explain the terms used in the following variations on this question:

(a) . . . *'allows experience to be represented in an intense and compressed way'*

My rewording

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(b) *'the language of poetry is richly suggestive'*

My rewording

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(c) *'Highly patterned language'*

My rewording

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## INTERROGATING THE QUESTION

Teachers and markers frequently exhort students to ‘interrogate the question’. What does this mean?

It means taking the question apart to understand and define the words used and to address the terms of the question and to investigate (and possibly challenge) the intent or implications of the question. To ‘shake it up’.

Markers frequently comment on student’s lack of critique or challenge to questions. Don’t passively agree with the statement. Engage with the question, interrogate and challenge it.

Markers also encourage students to focus on developing a personal voice, to give their response to the question, rather than a flat, formulaic prepared, standard one. Respond personally to the question, relate it to your own context. Show how you are influenced by the construction of the text or the historical context and your own values and context.

A key criterion in assessing essays is **engagement with the question** rather than the reproduction of memorised information about a text or event or issue. Engagement with the question means responding to the question asked, which involves a careful unpacking and explanation of the wording of the question and writing a considered, thoughtful, personally engaged response. An individual response, the use of the personal voice, a strong thesis or point of view makes your answer stand out and the task becomes interesting for you rather than a bland repeating of information or the use of a prepared essay.

E.g. **Question:** *How have language or structural innovation been used to unsettle an audience in at least one text?* (ATAR English, 2018, Q9)

**Key words** Go to the English glossary to check the definitions of ‘language’ and ‘structure’ and ‘audience response’.

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Note ‘or’

‘*innovation*’ Clarify what ‘innovation’ might mean – not just language or structural devices, but innovative, unique, distinctive, unconventional, unfamiliar use of the techniques. It is important that you choose a text that meets this criteria.

‘*unsettle*’ – could mean challenge, make you question, feel uncomfortable, shocked, uncertain, fearful, angry.

Multimodal and hybrid texts offer excellent examples of innovative techniques – e.g. the hybrid *Sea Prayer*, a short multimodal cartoon, adapted from a novel by Khaled Hosseini. The text deals with the issue of refugees which can be unsettling for an audience, causing them to feel uncomfortable, guilty, angry, questioning etc. It is important that you are specific in how the innovative techniques unsettle you and detail your specific disquiet.

Your example:

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## REVIEW – Steps to Understanding the Question

1. Choose your question carefully – unpack each question, what does it ‘mean’? Consider alternative approaches before you start writing – in an exam do a quick mental brainstorm of all the questions before choosing one.

Often your first choice isn’t the best choice – you may have an immediate response, but not enough material to develop a full argument, you may react to a particular word which can take you on a tangent, or you may be confused into thinking it is the same as a previous question you have answered (a common trap in exams). Dissect the question carefully, it is unlikely to be exactly the same – there will be some difference or focus that will change your answer.

2. Read the question carefully. Analyse the wording carefully, ensure you understand the question and deal with **all** aspects.

Know the different meanings and emphasis of the instructional words, their different focus. Use the definition in your rewriting to unpack the question.

Understand the terminology of the syllabus. Be completely familiar with the language used in your subject. Use it wisely. Understanding the meaning of key terms and concepts will help you to not misinterpret the question.

Clarify words you don’t understand. Where possible use a dictionary, refer to syllabus outlines and subject glossary. Be clear about each part of the question.

Each word in a question has been carefully selected to direct you to the appropriate area and approach, to assess your knowledge and understandings, to enable you to construct a thoughtful, knowledgeable answer. Words and phrases embedded in questions such as ‘can reveal’, ‘the ways we think about’ and ‘has encouraged you’ are designed to help you answer the question.

3. Reword the question in your introduction, provide a clear statement of how you will answer according to the instructional, command or process words (You will describe, compare and contrast, etc.). Define, or show by paraphrasing, that you understand any technical terms that are used. If there is a word you are not completely sure about, or which you think is ambiguous or unclear, or has a contested meaning, provide *your* understanding of how you interpret the term, then be sure to use *your* understanding of the term in your response and justify your interpretation.

4. Ensure you think carefully about *all* the words of the question – often the ‘little words’ can make a big difference. Note directions like: ‘to what extent’, ‘influence’, ‘contribute to’, ‘consider the impact’, ‘consequences’, etc.

If a question has a number of parts make sure that you answer all parts (although each section may not require the same amount of coverage).

5. In interpreting the question be analytical rather than descriptive. Don’t just paraphrase the question, explain your understanding of what it is asking – in this way, if you have taken a slightly different interpretation, you have set out your understanding of the question and your answer can be judged according to how well you answered **your** interpretation of the question.

However, the breaking down of the question is to help you understand the intent of the question, so your explanation of what the question is actually asking should clearly state the meaning of the question **as asked**. Recognise the assumptions and implications underlying the question.

6. Address specifically the key terms in the question and clarify your focus – e.g. if the question asks about power relations, specify which particular power relations you will deal with. In English and Literature, be wary of listing a string of techniques which will become the topics for paragraphs. Be more sophisticated than that. The techniques are not the main idea, they are ways of constructing or conveying an idea. Likewise, generally the question will be focused on exploring an idea (e.g. the construction of gender, the influence of context etc.), using the text/s to support your argument. Generally, the text/s is to be used to provide examples or illustrations, rather than the focus of the

answer. Your answer should be driven by dealing with the syllabus point being tested. This is why a strong thesis is so important.

7. Answer only the question asked – don't go off track; Answer the question EXPLICITLY – focus on the key terms; Address all parts of the question. Don't use the question as a jumping off point for a prepared answer or a diversion to an area you know better.

Answer the question asked, not the one you thought it might be, or wish it was. Don't be led astray by some key words in the question and jump in with the answer to last year's question.

8. Try to select a question which provokes a strong response from you, so you can argue your opinion vigorously and be engaged with your answer. Your strong engagement is worth marks. Select a topic that you have good information on or are able to research to gather sufficient relevant material.

9. Choose a question which you can engage with rather than chose what appears to be the easiest one. Those 'easy' questions are often the most chosen ones, so you have a harder job of making your answer stand out.

10. Use your introduction to explain fully what you understand the question to mean and how you intend to answer it. This provides a clear framework for your approach to the question and how you are responding to it. Outline your steps – this is your plan. State your thesis.

**Understanding the question and responding to the question being asked is the foundation of a great essay.**



# CONSTRUCTING A THESIS

## 3

Students are constantly being told that to answer a question they need to begin by establishing a thesis. Unfortunately, many students don't do this, many are uncertain of just what a thesis is. Here is a guide to developing a good, strong, interesting thesis.

A thesis is your argument, your contention, what you are trying to prove. It is your answer to the question being asked.

**A thesis states your purpose, provides a hypothesis, an argument or idea which you will outline, explain and defend in the body of your essay.**

**A thesis is your particular 'angle' or approach to the issue.**

**It is the controlling idea which will give your essay purpose and direction.**

It acts as a guide or the backbone of your essay; it provides the structure and direction which will shape and control your answer.

**It is the central line of argument which will flow through the essay and be supported by each paragraph and clinched with each 'Tie back to Thesis' statement at the end of each paragraph.**

A 'thesis' statement normally appears at the end of your introductory paragraph and the rest of the essay is built around it. In some ways your whole introductory paragraph is setting up your thesis, but your concluding sentence should direct your reader to your specific argument.

### Why do I need a thesis?

Many exam questions are in the form of a proposition and you are asked to agree or disagree, to support or reject a view. It is not enough to begin 'I agree with the proposition . . .' You must construct a thesis and then support it.

Your thesis is the hinge which controls your essay, it is your guide as you plan and write your essay and it is the tie back to thesis statement needed at the end of each paragraph to keep you on track and to demonstrate to the examiner that you are answering the question.

### HOW TO DEVELOP A THESIS

Clarifying your ideas and making yourself focus your argument and state your thesis in a single clear sentence challenges you to consolidate in your own mind what you are going to be writing about and why you are writing about it. Developing a thesis statement can be difficult, but necessary to help you refine your thoughts and enable you to produce a clear, strong contention to prove.

In developing your thesis statement ask yourself:

- Does it answer the question? – it should use key words from the question to show how you are addressing the question.
- Does it explore the main areas of the topic, highlighting the key issues/areas, does it address the focus or intent of the question?
- Does it allow you to explore your particular concern or ‘take’ on the issue, allowing you to demonstrate your opinion and understanding?
- Does it form a scaffolding for your ideas and knowledge about the topic?
- Is it an argument or contention that you can prove?
- Is it interesting, encouraging the reader to read on and follow your line of thought?

While it is important that the opening sentence of your introductions does not repeat the words of the question, because you are rewording it to show your understanding, **your thesis statement should repeat the words of the question to demonstrate that you are answering the question.**

Here are some examples of thesis statements:

## ENGLISH

**Question:** *Discuss how at least one text you have studied represents a social group.*

Time and place are an essential element in establishing individual and social identity. Small, poor ranches in rural Montana in 1960 provide the physical and social context in which the film, Brokeback Mountain, directed by Ang Lee, is set and it is this conservative, masculine culture of an insular rural community which creates, then destroys, the lives of Jack Twist and Ennis del Mar. The archetypal masculine cowboy, the rough rural farm hand is the way of life Jack and Ennis are expected to conform to. The setting, characterisation and memories of Jack and Ennis are used by Ang Lee in the film Brokeback Mountain to represent the social group of the cowboy community of Montana, which enabled me to understand how the lives of Jack and Ennis are controlled and restricted by a conservative rural community and its hyper-masculine values.

**Question:** *Explain how one text you have studied transformed or adapted genre to unsettle readers.*

William Golding’s schoolboy adventure novel Lord of the Flies rifts on the classic ‘school boys lost on a desert island’ story but is informed by the sense of despair and possibility of annihilation felt by society in the Cold War period of 1950s. The desert island setting and the characters, an apparently stereotypical group of English schoolboys, are overlaid with symbolism and biblical allusions which subvert the conventions of a traditional school boys’ own adventure story to expose the dark threat of evil and violence lurking under the veneer of civilisation and apparent innocence. Golding’s innovative transformation of the traditional schoolboy adventure story unsettles his readers by showing that humanity has lost its innocence and, without the restraints of civilisation, violence and evil, which are at the heart of human behaviour, can destroy society.

## GEOGRAPHY

**Question:** *To what extent is erosion the result of bad farming practice?*

Activities which remove vegetation, disturb the ground or allow the soil to dry cause erosion, which is the wearing away of topsoil on slopes. Agriculture is probably the most significant activity that cause soil erosion because of the amount of land cleared and the farming practices used. Other sources of erosion are grazing where animals dig up the land

and destroy plants. **Logging and mining** contribute to erosion as does **construction** which often razes the native vegetation and allows top soil to be blown away. **Weather conditions such as wind, flood and fire** also cause erosion. \*This essay will argue that poor farming practices are the most significant cause of erosion, because overstocking and large-scale clearing of the land for farming leaves it vulnerable to the conditions that enable high winds and floods to erode soil that has sparse vegetation.

[Note this essay begins with a definition.]

\*It is not necessary to state ‘This essay will argue’ – statements like that are ‘essay writing with trainer wheels’, where you help yourself keep on track with guides. Soon you will be racing and you won’t need those trainer wheels.

## ECONOMICS

**Question:** *Describe the factors facilitating globalisation and describe the economic effects of globalisation on the Australian economy. (20 marks) (ATAR Economics Exam 2015)*

(Answer based on material in Creelman Exam Questions: Economics by Andrew Tibbitt, published by Academic Group)

In economic terms globalisation is the trading interdependence of people, products, business and government throughout the world, fostered by free trade agreements. [Definition] **Three factors** have been significant in facilitating globalisation: they are Government policy, advances in transport technology and increased communication, all of which have contributed to changes in business operations and consumer spending. Globalisation is having a considerable effect on the Australian economy. Some **benefits** include a more efficient use of resources, leading to higher growth and standards of living, increased tax revenue for public spending, higher levels of employment and multicultural exchanges on many levels. **Negative aspects** include loss of economic and national sovereignty, changes in production methods and processes which can lead to labour exploitation and environmental damage and the growth of multinational companies which exploit tax advantages and gain exorbitant profits.

[Thesis 1] At the heart of the process of globalisation is the desire for higher material living standards and bigger corporate profits, which can benefit both workers and companies, but also lead to uneven distribution of wealth.

[Thesis 2] At the heart of the process of globalisation is the desire for higher material living standards and bigger corporate profits, which can benefit both workers and companies, however, as the COVID 19 pandemic has shown, globalisation leaves individual countries vulnerable to both trade and sovereignty attacks which has adversely affected Australia’s economy.

[Economics questions don’t always require a thesis in the traditional sense. Sometimes what is required is a summary of the factors. You can also see that a lot of material needs to be covered. It is important that you are selective, focus on specific examples and statistics rather than glib generalisations.]

## LITERATURE

**Question:** *Show how the interaction of a small group of characters in at least **one** drama text can be used to draw attention to significant social issues. (Literature, ATAR Exam, 2018, Q10)*

Drama usually focuses on specific individuals and their conflicts; however, the ongoing appeal of most plays is usually due to the wider social implications they raise. Jack Davis’ play No Sugar centres around the impact of Government regulations on the Millimurra family and their attempt to keep their family and culture intact. Our sympathy is engaged by the individual resistance shown by Jimmy and Mary and Gran’s resilience on behalf of

her family, while our anger is aroused by the depiction of the patronising aloof behaviour of Neville and the brutal way Neil controls the Moore River Native Settlement. The dramatisation of the Millimurra's family's personal and domestic experiences and the conflict raised in their interaction with various white bureaucrats functions to draw attention to significant social issues, such as the legislative and social discrimination suffered by Aboriginal people and the attempt by white social policy to eradicate Aboriginal culture.

[Note the rewording of the question in the topic sentence, the use of the words of the question in the thesis to show that you are answering the question, the specific thesis for this student; the legislative and social discrimination suffered by Aboriginal people and the attempt by white social policy to eradicate Aboriginal culture. This will be argued with examples throughout the essay]

**Question:** *A person's or a society's cultural identity is often complex and hard to define. Discuss how one or more texts reveal and explore problems of cultural identity.*

(Note the varying attempts to define 'complex' in the following examples.)

Thesis 1

Culture can be difficult to define because of the complex nature of society and an individual's interaction with their society. The Irish poet Seamus Heaney explores issues such as his childhood, family, religion, Irish nationalism and myths to reveal his cultural associations. He uses techniques of narrative, and figurative language to reveal and explore his cultural characteristics and to show his Irish nationalism. Heaney's poetry reveals that he has a strong sense of identification with Ireland and that he is proud of his Irish culture. [Does this thesis fully address the question? What is missing?]

Your comments:

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Thesis 2

Classifying the way of life of a specific group of people can be difficult because of the multi-faceted nature of society and an individual's interaction with their society. The Irish poet Seamus Heaney explores issues such as his childhood, family, religion, Irish nationalism and myths to reveal his strong association with his Irish culture. He uses techniques of narrative and figurative language to reveal and explore his cultural links and to show his Irish nationalism. Heaney's poetry reveals that he has a complex, problematic sense of identification with Ireland; while he is proud of his Irish cultural heritage, he often feels alienated and angered by bigotry and narrow-minded traditions. Because of the complex nature of Heaney's cultural identification, his choice of poetic techniques helps him explore his response to his cultural identity.

Your comments:

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## Thesis 3

Culture can be difficult to characterise because of the multifaceted nature of social groups and an individual's engagement with their society. The Irish poet Seamus Heaney explores issues such as his childhood, family, religion, Irish nationalism and myths to show how they contribute to his cultural identity. 'Requiem for the Croppies' uses techniques of contrasting imagery to reveal Irish resilience against British military power, while 'The Tollund Man' deploys myth and imagery to explore the bitter consequences of rebellion and the desire for national independence. Heaney uses techniques of narrative, imagery and mythical allusions to reveal and explore his cultural identification and to show his Irish nationalism. Heaney's poetry reveals that he has a complex, problematic sense of identification with Ireland; while he is proud of his Irish cultural identity; his poems explore how he often feels alienated and angered by the bigotry and narrow-minded traditions.

Your comments:

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[Thesis 2 and 3 provide more depth to the thesis, thesis 2 relates his exploration more directly to poetic techniques, thesis 3 gives more detail about the problems.]

How effective is their unpacking of 'cultural identity' and 'complex'?

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How would you rate the three thesis – what might you change or add?

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## ENGLISH

**Question:** *'There is often a complex relationship between the title of a novel and its theme.'* Discuss.

## Thesis 1

The title of a novel can be used to reveal the main theme or concern of a text and also to subtly position the reader to accept the views or attitude of the writer. Tim Winton's Cloudstreet deals with the lives of two apparently 'typical' Australian families who share a house. Intertwining and holding this narrative together is the story of Fish whose body and mind/spirit have become separated. This complex interrelationship of everyday issues and imaginative, spiritual concerns is suggested by the linking of the two terms 'cloud' and 'street' in the title.

## Thesis 2

The title of Tim Winton's novel, Cloudstreet creates a normalising of the strange, the inexplicable and irreconcilable. The linking of the word 'cloud', which represents the ethereal, the insubstantial, the dream-like with 'street', which represents the mundane, the everyday, familiar, encourages a reading of the text as magic realism. The paradoxical title which creates an oxymoron, a binary opposition in the title, positions the reader to

accept the extraordinary as part of everyday life. The acceptance of the complex mix of the everyday and the unusual, suggested in the title, is vital to understanding the issues of identity, class and gender which are explored in the text.

[Both theses give a clear explanation of their understanding of the ‘meaning’ of the title. From the thesis statement both indicate what areas will be covered in the essay. Although the opening statement of 2 presents a strong tantalising indication of approach, I wonder how issues of class and gender will be dealt with in terms of ‘magic realism’. Perhaps after the essay is drafted the writer may go back and reconsider and modify their introduction – always a good move.]

### Thesis 3

The name of a text can be tantalising and suggestive, encouraging the reader to explore the issues and ideas to be treated in the text. The title Heart of Darkness is multivalent, evoking complex and inter-related references to Africa as the ‘dark continent’, the dark and evil heart or nature of man [sic] and exploring the imagery of light and dark, primordial and civilised. Thus, the ambiguous title Heart of Darkness invites multiple readings which can position the reader to accept Conrad’s critique of colonialism, to read the text as an exploration of the nature of evil and also function to allow a post-colonial reading.

[Fine thesis if the student is going to discuss all three readings – which could make the essay quite long, or perhaps rather superficial. If they are going to discuss just one reading, they need to indicate this in their thesis.]

### Thesis 4

What’s in a name? In Joseph Conrad’s Heart of Darkness a complex\* relationship exists between the title and the theme. The cleverly chosen title, suggests both a figurative description of a geographic place and a psychological state. It can also be linked to contrasts and symbols employed throughout the novella to highlight the European appropriation of the African Congo. (Develop an appropriate thesis – if you are unfamiliar with the text use the ideas suggested in the previous introduction . . .

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Complex\* – what is wrong with using complex here?



**ACTIVITY** Choose a text and write an introductory paragraph with a thesis statement explaining the significance of the title.

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## WRITING A THESIS

### POLITICS AND LAW

**Question:** *Provide an evaluation of why the Republican Referendum failed.*

Referendums are polls held in Australia to approve parliament's proposed changes to the Constitution of Australia. The Australian Republic Referendum which was held on 6 November, 1999, was not passed. Only eight of 44 proposed Referendums have been accepted. The Republican Referendum contained two questions: the first asked whether Australia should become a Republic with a President appointed by Parliament using a bipartisan appointment model; the second question asked whether Australia should insert a preamble to the Constitution. The confusion caused by the two questions contributed to the failure of the referendum. Further issues responsible for the NO vote were lack of bipartisan support and confusion and disagreement about the proposed Republican model. Despite a strong groundswell of republican sentiment amongst Australians, all of the above factors contributed to the NO vote, however, through an evaluation of the statistics, political propaganda and promotional material used to present the Yes and No case and public opinion polls, it would appear that lack of popular engagement and public resistance to change, may have been the strongest deciding factor in the failure of the Republican Referendum.

[Note the approach of a political science essay – a definition, outline of relevant political and legislative factors, an objective rather than a personal voice, an evidence-based thesis]

### HISTORY

**Question:** *Describe and evaluate the main policies of President Herbert Hoover and Franklin Roosevelt in attempting to solve their country's economic problems in the period 1929-1939. (25 marks)*

The political agendas of Hoover and Roosevelt provided very different approaches to the economic depression of 1930s. Hoover's lack of experience and his Republican policies of letting the economy run its course with limited government involvement, and his attempts to curb unemployment with work programs rather than government relief, caused great hardship and made him very unpopular with the people. By contrast, Roosevelt came to power in 1932 with his 'New Deal' which offered relief, recovery and reform. He provided

Government assistance, large scale public works programs and banking, industry and agriculture reforms. Although Roosevelt was not successful in controlling unemployment, he restored the public's faith in government and the economy through his 'fireside chats.' Hoover's 'laissez faire' and 'trickle down' policies failed to quell the depression or stem the country's suffering, while Roosevelt's strong, multi-stranded economic and legislative reforms and assistance for those suffering hardship, were important factors in restoring the public's faith in government and the economy and boosting economic growth. The on-going effects of Roosevelt's policies are still evident in America's social security system, collective bargaining and government intervention in the economy.

[Note the clear opening statement, the indication of what will be covered (*described*) in the essay and the *evaluation and effects* indicated in the thesis]

## ENGLISH

**Question:** *Discuss the extent to which your response to the attitudes and values presented in a text was influenced by the techniques of that text's construction.*

### Key words

The *extent* (how much?) . . . *your response* (which was what?) . . . *attitudes and values* (which were what?) . . . *techniques* (which ones?)

Writers construct their texts to position the readers to agree with the principles and beliefs endorsed in the text. The expository text A Secret Country by John Pilger uses statistics, emotive description, interviews and juxtaposition to present a convincing indictment of secretive and corrupt official behaviour. Through his construction of incidents Pilger uses a personal perspective to show that he values honesty and truth and has strong critical attitudes towards the violation of human rights. He argues from a very compelling anti-colonial position. The techniques Pilger used persuaded me to accept his argument and condemn the abuse of human rights and the silencing of what Pilger claims is the 'truth', however, my response was not complete agreement as I recognise that Pilger, with his manipulation of techniques, is presenting his particular ideological version of the truth.

[Note '**not complete agreement**' in response to the question '*to what extent*']

Also note the what? when? where? will need to be dealt with.

## **ACTIVITY** Politics and Law

(material from previous editions of Creelman Exam Questions: Politics and Law, published by Academic Group)

1. Which thesis is more effective and why?

**Question:** *'In the Australian legal system, Parliament is the main law-maker, but the Courts also have a legitimate role'. Discuss the validity of this statement.*

Thesis 1

'In the Australian legal system, Parliament is the main law-maker, but the courts also have a role'. Parliament is the main body of law-making, they introduce and pass (or dismiss) new legislation. Courts also have a role in applying the law and, in some cases, creating new law.

[What is wrong with the opening statement and thesis? What is missing from the thesis?]

## Thesis 2

The political and legal system of Australia is such that two arms of government serve a similar purpose: to legislate. The judiciary, or the body of the courts, play a major role in creating law, called the body of common law, created through case law. On the other hand, Parliament is the legislature whose original intention and role was to legislate on behalf of the electorate to protect their fundamental rights and freedoms. The relatively new phenomenon of courts increasingly assuming the role of 'de facto' Parliament has sparked some outrage amongst legalists and conservatives, however in a complex society such as we have today, common law and statute law are both legitimate bodies of regulation necessary for maintaining the peace and security of society.

Your comments:

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**ACTIVITY** English

2. Use the checklist at the beginning of this chapter (**How to develop a Thesis**) to evaluate the strength of the following thesis statements:

**Question:** *Discuss how stylistic choices made by a writer influence your response to the text.*

(These thesis statements have been lifted from their introductory paragraph, where, as you know, the whole paragraph would have been part of the complete thesis statement)

- (a) Effective narrative techniques used in Never Let Me Go by Kazito Ishiguro encouraged me to consider what 'identity' might mean if you have been cloned to supply replacement parts for others.

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- (b) Powerful narrative strategies used in All Quiet on the Western Front persuade readers to accept Remarque's strong anti-war message which shows the senseless suffering caused by war, but, nevertheless, the way it may be endured through the comradeship of the soldiers.

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- (c) While the plot and setting play a part in constructing the narrative, the most important convention in The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time by Mark Haddon is the point of view of the autistic Christopher because it engages the reader and encourages us to explore the experience of living with autism.

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3. Choose a text and write your thesis statement for the question.

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4. Developing a Thesis statement:

Here are some bones of a Thesis Sentence, from your reading can you add the specifics of text, examples and the issues. (It is important that you name a specific ideology.)

**Question:** Explore how the textual features of at least one text have been employed to support or challenge an ideology.

E.g. **The textual features** of a variety of examples, personal stories and emotive language in the feature article 'The Mankind Project' by Oliver Bennett was powerfully effective **in challenging social stereotypes of gender**, thus allowing me to explore and expand my understanding of **the ideology of toxic masculinity**.

(a) The contrasting characters (or \_\_\_\_\_) and **the textual features** achieved through manipulation of language in \_\_\_\_\_ challenged me and positioned me to **reassess** my views of \_\_\_\_\_ and to be **sympathetic** to \_\_\_\_\_.

(b) The **textual features** of \_\_\_\_\_ used in the text \_\_\_\_\_ gave me a vicarious understanding of \_\_\_\_\_ which I would never otherwise have experienced, which I found **challenged my ideological position on** \_\_\_\_\_.

(c) My reading of \_\_\_\_\_ exposed me to variety of different opinions about \_\_\_\_\_, each conveyed through the **textual features such as** \_\_\_\_\_ which worked to convey a **variety of ideological positions** regarding \_\_\_\_\_, as my ideas were both supported and challenged by the different points of view presented in the text.

(d) The **textual features** of \_\_\_\_\_ manipulated language to provide a **challenging perspective on the ideological issue of** \_\_\_\_\_ and enabled me to understand the power of persuasion through language.

Your version: (Choose a text)

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**PUTTING IT TOGETHER:** developing an introductory paragraph which breaks down the question and develops a thesis.

**Question:** *Examine how a text uses point of view to shape readers' responses.*

Circle the instructional/command words and underline the key words in the question.

**Topic sentence** The voice or perspective used in narration positions the reader to view the issues from a particular perspective.

**Example sentences:** In Ken Kesey's One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest the first person narration of Chief Bromden provides a powerful viewpoint on the mental institution, its patients and staff, as the construction of the narrator as a 'deaf and dumb' American Indian is used as a vehicle to give the disempowered asylum inmates a voice. As an inmate himself, the Chief's use of the metaphor of the Combine and his descriptions of McMurphy and Nurse Ratched encourages the reader to view the institution from the inmates' perspective.

**Thesis statement:** *Thus the first person point of view of Chief Bromden is a powerful device which positions the reader to despise the cruel, depersonalised treatment of the patients and shapes our response to admire the loud bumptious behaviour of McMurphy as he challenges the institutional rules and practices.* [Note how the thesis statement picks up the words of the question as it develops the particular argument or thesis of the essay]

### **ACTIVITY** Putting it together: understanding the question and developing a thesis.

**1. Question:** (English) *Texts attempt to bring about action or social change. Discuss this statement with reference to at least one text you have studied.*

The question in my own words:

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What are the key words I should repeat in my thesis?

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My Thesis

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**2. Question:** (English) Show how a text you have studied explores the idea that identity is a complex mix of social factors.

The question in my own words:

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What are the key words I should repeat in my thesis?

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My Thesis

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**3. Question** (English) The people, or characters, within texts have a way of making us think about ourselves. Explore how at least one text you have studied has made you think about yourself.

The question in my own words:

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What are the key words I should repeat in my thesis?

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My Thesis

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**4. Question:** (English) Explain how visual techniques may be manipulated to construct ideas about gender.

The question in my own words:

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What are the key words I should repeat in my thesis?

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My Thesis

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**5. Question:** (Literature) *Explain how literary texts can capture points of cultural change with reference to at least one literary text you have studied.* (Literature ATAR Exam, 2017, Q3)

The question in my own words:

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What are the key words I should repeat in my thesis?

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My Thesis

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**6. Question:** (History) *Analyse the influence of one group, movement or event on community attitudes and government policy.*

The question in my own words:

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What are the key words I should repeat in my thesis?

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My Thesis

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**7. Question:** (Literature) *Different reading practices can change a reader's response to a text. Discuss with reference to one or more texts you have studied.*

The question in my own words:

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What are the key words I should repeat in my thesis?

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My Thesis

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## USING YOUR THESIS AS A PLANNING TOOL

Your thesis statement forms the basis of your plan. It provides the hooks for you to explore the various aspects of your argument and it is necessary to **tie each point back to your thesis**.

Here are some examples of how a thesis can be used to form the basis of the plan for the essay. It shows how the **TET** model structures your paragraphs.

**Question:** *Discuss the ways in which one or more novels represent the interior lives of characters in relation to their actions in order to present a social critique of the society.*

### Introduction

Texts often explore the disjunction between the constraints placed on a character by their social environment and their personal, psychological search for identity. Margaret Atwood's novel The Handmaid's Tale characterises the struggle of a woman repressed by a totalitarian regime in a dystopian environment. The protagonist Offred is constructed on two levels: Her 'outer' self has a physical existence as the conforming, Gilead handmaid; however, Offred's 'inner' life follows a very different path. Her 'inner self' has a psychological existence which Atwood represents through Offred's behaviour in the settings she is associated with, through her relationships (past and present) and her survival strategies. The construction of Offred's interior life is used to reveal her resistance to the repressive regime of Gilead.

### Body

**Paragraph 1:** Serena Joy's Garden

**(Topic sentence)** Offred's inner life is established through the settings which she occupies; these settings take on symbolic significance and are used to highlight Offred's inward rebellion against the fundamentalist regime.

E.g. Serena Joy's garden is a realm of serenity, fertility and femininity in contrast to other areas of Gilead, such as the house, the Gym and the streets.

E.g. In the garden Offred is able to 'forget' her role as a handmaid of service to the state (i.e. break-free from her 'exterior life') and escape to her thought and memories (interior life)

E.g. Offred absorbs the sensuality of the garden – she enjoys the physical pleasure of the garden, she ceases to be a 'two-legged womb' which only functions as an organ of

procreation, instead she sensuously describes her body as a ‘melon on a stem-this liquid ripens.’

**(Tie back to Thesis)** The garden as a setting is represented as providing a space for Offred’s personal reflection and ‘subversive’ resistance, suggesting a passive, hidden rebellion against the regime; the garden is a place where Offred is able to differentiate between her exterior world as a handmaid and her interior world as a woman.

#### Paragraph 2: Offred’s Room

**(Topic sentence)** Offred’s room, where the ‘Night’ sections of the novel occur is a place where Offred constructs her inner life through reflection.

E.g. Unlike the garden, her room is a direct contrast to her character – sparse/minimal

E.g. It offers another subversive setting where Offred uses survival strategies to establish her ‘inner’ self.

E.g. Offred tunes into her memories, remembering her ‘past-life’ as a means of surviving the present – her relationships with Luke, her mother and her child and her sense of self in pre-Gileadean time. She is able to contrast her interior world with her exterior world and is thus given stimulus to fight the system.

E.g. Her inner rebellion is highlighted through the motto ‘*Nolite te bastardes carborundorum*’ (‘Don’t let the bastards grind you down’), engraved in the bedroom’s closet by a previous handmaid.

E.g. Offred’s inner self contrasts with her actions – such as the act of procreation in the ceremony which shows the Commander – the ‘bastard’ ‘grinding’ her down, as he is ‘fucking the lower part of her body.’ Offred’s interior world, which is constructed and maintained in her bedroom, is a refuge from her outer life, thus a differentiation can be made between Offred’s inner self and her actions.

**(Tie back to Thesis)** The reader is able to understand how Offred’s creation of an inner world enables her to survive in a totalitarian, repressive, soul destroying system.

#### Paragraph 3: Relationships past and present

**(Topic sentence)** The representation of Offred’s current and past relationships is the main way her interior life is represented.

E.g. Relationships with Luke, her mother and her daughter only exist in her memories. Offred’s inner self is enriched as she thinks about her past life, as she remembers more details, she comments – ‘I’ve filled in the time I lost.’

E.g. Past relationships are contrasted with the absence of love in Gilead – passion, love and spiritual connection are contrasted with the biblical obligation to multiply – ‘Love is not the point.’

E.g. By falling in love with Nick, Offred develops an area of herself which cannot be exercised in the outside world where she is an object of service to the state. Atwood use the love affair with Nick to represent the interior life of Offred.

**(Tie back to Thesis)** Offred’s inner life, constructed through reflections on past relationships and her affair with Nick, suggest a way of subverting the system by reclaiming personal relationships, offering a critique of a society which substitutes procreation for relationships.

#### Paragraph 4: Offred’s language

**(Topic sentence)** The varying discourses used by Offred establish the difference between the outer world and her inner world.

E.g. She conforms to the old testament discourse used in Gilead by using ‘Blessed be the fruit’ – which establishes Offred’s outer self and her exterior life as a handmaid

E.g. On an inner level, Offred employs lyrical, personal language of the ‘old world’ as a means of maintaining her individuality in order to survive in the controlling exterior world where most of her actions take place.

E.g. While bathing Offred describes her body in soft, lyrical tones as she becomes aware of ‘each tingle, each murmur of slight pain’. Such self-awareness is fundamental to her survival, as Offred says – ‘these are the things I need to know about.’

E.g. The language used in the description of her bathing contrasts with Offred’s actions:

E.g. When she partakes in the ‘making a baby’ ceremony, she is not aware of her body, as it is being exploited as an organ of procreation.

E.g. Wearing the red garments assigned to the handmaids she is not individualised and her body has no personal identity she is just a ‘two-legged womb.’

E.g. In the STUDY, language takes on a subversive meaning – it is a way of breaking free of her roles as a functionary and enables her to engage her inner self through language play.

E.g. By playing Scrabble with Commander words become a means of rebellion from the regime – her puns which are in defiance to the protocol ascribed to women in Gilead become a means of differentiating her ‘inner self’ from her exterior world.

**(Tie back to Thesis)** – you develop your own tie back to thesis. . .

**Paragraph 5:** Offred’s Name (optional paragraph) – try writing this as a paragraph

**(Topic sentence)** A name establishes an individual’s identity.

E.g. Remembering name = key element to survival, development of interior life, personal identity.

E.g. Patronymic ‘Of – Fred’ is not the protagonist’s real name – it is the Gileadean name ascribed to her by the patriarchal society in which she lives. Exterior sign.

E.g. Offred’s real, hidden name becomes symbolic of her interior life – the life she lives on a psychological level.

E.g. Offred’s real name is a guarantee of her identity and she keeps the knowledge of her name ‘like something hidden – some treasure’ with the hope that one day she will be able to use it again.

E.g. The passive rebellion which takes place in Offred’s mind and establishes her interior life is juxtaposed with her actions which take place in her exterior world, when, despite her refusal to identify with it, she responds to the name (Offred) ascribed to her.

**(Tie back to Thesis)** While the reader identifies the protagonist as Offred, her ‘real identity’ remains secret and hidden. Her resistance is fuelled by her desire to maintain her inner self within the confines of Gilead.

## Conclusion

The Handmaid’s Tale is a novel which represents the interior life of a character as a contrast to her actions. The main protagonist, Offred, is constructed on two levels and, as she occupies these two spaces simultaneously, she is able to make the distinction between her ‘outer self’ represented by her actions and her ‘inner self.’ Offred’s interior life is represented in a number of ways – through setting, language, and her relationships, past and present.

The contrast between the silenced, controlled handmaid of the exterior narrative and the rich, evocative inner world she constructs creates an effective social critique and warning about the repressive power of totalitarian regimes while also showing language as a powerful tool of resistance.

### **ACTIVITY** Develop these essays.

1. Write one of the above paragraph outlines in full, paying careful attention to how your final sentence ties back to the thesis.

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2. Use the following outline to develop an essay. You fill in the missing parts.

**Question:** *Describe how narrative conventions influence your reading response.*

Sample Outline for an answer for Tim Winton's short story 'Neighbours' in his collection of short stories *Scission* (McPhee Gribble/Penguin, 1985)

Try and find a copy of this short story to enable you to write this essay. If you can't, adapt the outline to apply to another short story you are familiar with.

In the short story 'Neighbours' Tim Winton deals with a young couple moving from a typical middle class neighbourhood where no one knows their neighbours, to a more open, multicultural suburb where neighbours engage with one another.

#### **Introduction**

**(Topic sentence)** In the short story 'Neighbours', Winton presents the issues of living with one's neighbours in an entertaining way by constructing a short story concerned with understanding how to negotiate these relationships.

**(Example sentence)** He uses the generic conventions of fiction, such as narrative structure, point of view, characterisation and setting to convey the gradual acceptance by each group of neighbours of the others.

**(Thesis Sentence)** The effect of using fiction techniques is to encourage readers to increase their engagement in the story, with the narrative techniques showing the growth of a sense of community which thus persuade us to accept Winton's view that living in a mixed community, although it may involve some problems with communication, is an enriching experience.

## Body

### Paragraph 1

**(Topic sentence)** Winton uses the narrative structure to show the gradual change that occurs amongst the neighbours.

**(Example sentences)** E.g. The young man and his wife are initially frowned on by the neighbours because. . .

E.g. 'Relations were uncomfortable for many months'. . .

E.g. Learning from the neighbours – planting vegetables, the Polish widower rebuilds their henhouse... incorporate the quote: 'the young couple found themselves smiling back at the neighbours'

E.g. When the baby is born. . .

**(Tie back to Thesis) Version 1** The development of the changing relationships through the story encourages me to. . .

**(Tie back to Thesis) Version 2** The contrast between the beginning (exposition) and the end (resolution) of the passage positions me to. . .

### Paragraph 2

**(Topic sentence)** The point of view is third person, but is sympathetic to the young man, which means that the reader understands the different experiences of each family but grows in understanding through identifying with the young man.

**(Example sentences)** On one hand, the newlyweds are shocked by the loud behaviour of their neighbours; 'The Macedonian family shouted, ranted, screamed.' However, the third person point of view also shows how the Macedonians disapprove of the newcomers' unconventional behaviour; there are 'raised eyebrows' at their late rising and suspicion about the young man's wife working while he stays home.

E.g. The final sentences, using the third person point of view show. . .

**(Tie back to Thesis)** The effect of this is to enable the reader to see both points of view and. . .

### Paragraph 3

**(Topic sentence)** The characterisation uses stereotypes to briefly outline the difference in the neighbours.

E.g. The young couple

E.g. The Macedonians

E.g. The Polish widower

**(Tie back to Thesis)**

#### Paragraph 4

**(Topic sentence)** Construct a topic sentence involving the changing seasons and how they are used to shape the story.

**(Example sentences)**

E.g.

E.g.

E.g.

**(Tie back to Thesis)** The passage of time and the birth of the baby, representing the young couple's integration into the community, were effective in influencing me to see the different attitudes which the various groups have towards getting along with one's neighbours and other cultures.

#### Paragraph 5

**(Topic sentence)** My values and attitudes also influence my response to this short story. . .

**(Example sentences)**

E.g.

E.g.

E.g.

**(Tie back to Thesis)**

#### Conclusion

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## WHY DO YOU NEED A THESIS?

A thesis is a statement or contention that your essay will address. Starting with a thesis before you begin planning or writing your essay challenges you to clarify what you are going to be writing about and why you are writing about it.

Formulating a thesis statement can be difficult. It forces you to develop a level of thought and engagement that can significantly improve your essay.

A thesis acts as a guide for you as you are writing your essay; it provides the plan for developing your essay. You can keep referring back to your thesis to ensure that you are on track in relation to the question and your response.

A thesis directs your reader/the marker to your main idea, so they know what your essay is going to be about. It should be engaging and thought provoking, so they will want to read on.

Developing coherent and powerful thesis statements takes practice. It can be challenging to clearly express your main idea in a single sentence.

Many students find that while thinking of a thesis statement is hard at first, it becomes easier with time. It is an important skill that significantly enhances the overall persuasiveness and clarity of your essays.



# PLANNING YOUR ESSAY

## 4

Planning is important as it helps you organise what you know.

A plan keeps you on track, provides structure, helps prevent digressions or omissions.

In an exam, a quick plan impresses the marker and helps you organise your time.

**The initial step is gathering information.**

There are many ways to gather and begin the organising of the content for your essay:

Brainstorm, branching, a key word concept, a mind map.



## HOW TO BEGIN

Your planning and preparation for writing an essay begins when you are first given the essay assignment in class.

Listen carefully to your teacher and make a note of the introductory instructions, background information and pointers for direction provided when the assignment is given. Too often students don't listen carefully, as they don't realise the significance of those initial directions. When your teacher gives you the assignment they usually indicate the focus, set guidelines, exclusions; all details that are important for how your essay will be marked, so make notes and follow the directions.

Usually, the assignment grows out of what have you been covering in class, so that can provide a guide to the focus or direction of the question/s. Jot down some preliminary ideas when you are first given the topic – your impressions, the teacher’s comments – this can help with context, highlight the intended focus or significant concerns. It also documents your first thoughts on the topic.

Ask your teacher to clarify any terms or conditions that aren’t clear. Be very sure about the length, any qualifications or exclusions (e.g. ‘don’t deal with events before the invasion’, ‘don’t cover the international response, just the local situation’, ‘don’t treat poems we have studied in class’, is it preferable to write on only one text, or do they want you to make comparisons with other texts?)

Clarify the instructions before you begin writing – read all the information provided. Be sure about the length of the essay and the due date.

Determine how much research you will need and how long that might take (How available is the material you want? What other commitments do you have?)

If you have a choice of essay topics, consider each one carefully before you make your final selection. Unpack each question to make sure you understand it and then sketch out a quick 5-10 minutes plan. This is excellent future exam preparation as well as, in this case, helping you select the best question for you to answer, rather than jumping in and selecting the one with immediate superficial appeal.

Make sure you understand the question and respond to exactly what is asked. Answer all parts of the question. Don’t add to the question, don’t get side-tracked, answer what you are asked.

## FIRST STEPS

Start your preparation early – That evening, while the teacher’s instructions are still fresh in your mind, examine the question/s. Unpack them – what does each term mean? was there a special emphasis given to any aspects in the teacher’s comments? Consider what areas you will deal with.

Read carefully any accompanying material – it contains important information, suggesting areas to include or exclude, stipulating an approach, giving word length, areas for research, assessment criteria, etc. Read carefully and highlight important instructions. Note the marking criteria and the relevant weight given to different parts or aspects of the question.

Understand the question – exactly what is the question asking, how many parts, are some parts more important than others?

What are the key words – what part of the syllabus will you focus on?

What are the instructional words – how will you answer this question: discuss, evaluate, compare and contrast etc?

Jot down your initial response and areas to develop.

Plan your timetable for the essay – how much time for rereading, research, etc.; develop your thesis and plan; first draft, reworking, additional research; write essay; edit your work; final presentation. Keep careful notes on any research, be meticulous in recording reference details, including page numbers for future checking.

Planning continues while you write your first draft of the essay. Keep the essay topic alongside you as you write. Ensure each paragraph is relevant and answers the question. (If not, do you need to delete it, change it or rework it to get the focus right?)

## PLANNING

Planning involves the collecting and organising of your ideas. You can use a variety of ways:

Free association – a brainstorm of everything that comes into your mind in relation to the topic. This two minute ‘brain spew’ is an attempt to get your mind working.

Definitions – go to the dictionary, subject glossaries, textbooks and collect accurate definitions of all the relevant terms This will help you shape and control your material.

Subdivision – break the subject into relevant areas, e.g. social, political, economic, generic conventions, etc.

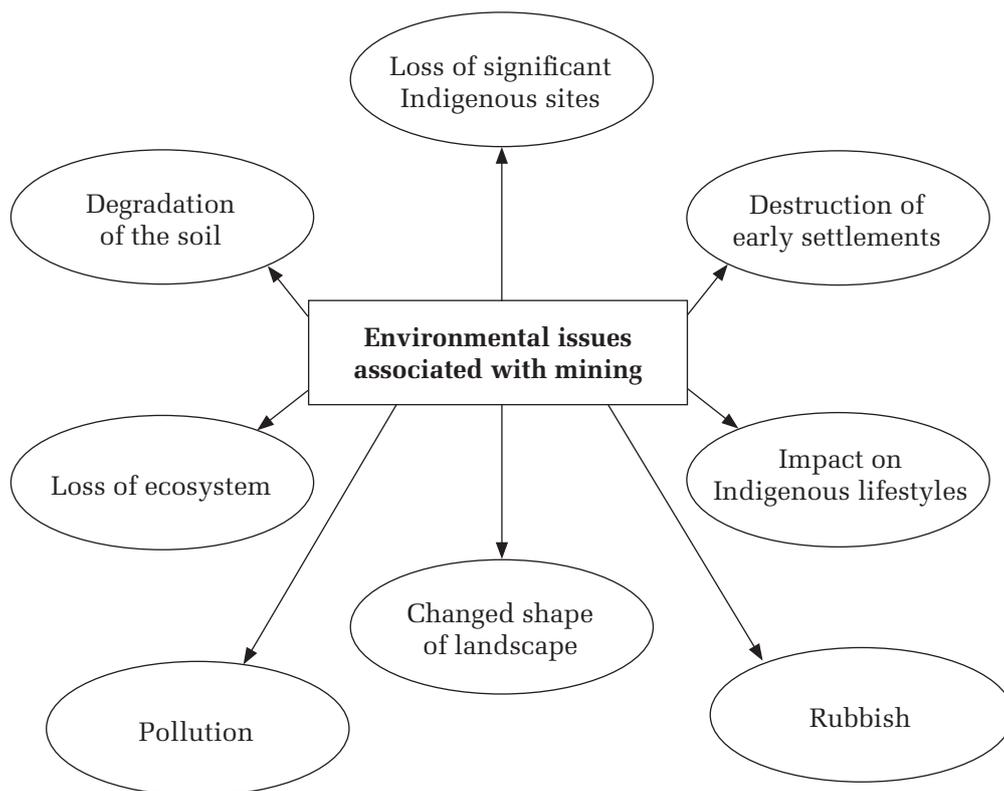
Chronological – beginnings, present, future developments.

## BRAINSTORM

Brainstorming is a creative, problem solving strategy. It is useful as it helps you gather what you know about a topic and it gives you a starting point to organise your ideas.

Having understood what the question is asking, apply the question to the course content of your particular subject. Brainstorming involves providing a scatter gun approach to as many ideas as you can think of. The next step is selecting and organising the relevant material.

Here is a simple brainstorm:



There are a number of steps to brainstorming:

- Step 1 Jot down your thoughts randomly (as they occur to you).
- Step 2 Group ideas using the ‘mind map’ or clustering method.
- Step 3 Sequence the clusters (put them in order).

**E.g. Brainstorm – Question:** ‘Discuss the importance of good health for students.’

1. First, examine the question.

‘Discuss’ means what sort of response?

What is meant by ‘good health’?

Why is it *important*? – What effect does it have in relation to studying?

Consider whether to write a personal response – after all *you are a student*.

**What is your thesis? Why is good health important for students?**

Your Thesis:

2. Brainstorm areas or topics related to ‘good health.’

(you can add to the list)

food – fresh	vitamins	exercise	drugs
sport	sleep	pain	eyesight
coffee	good attitude	weight	posture

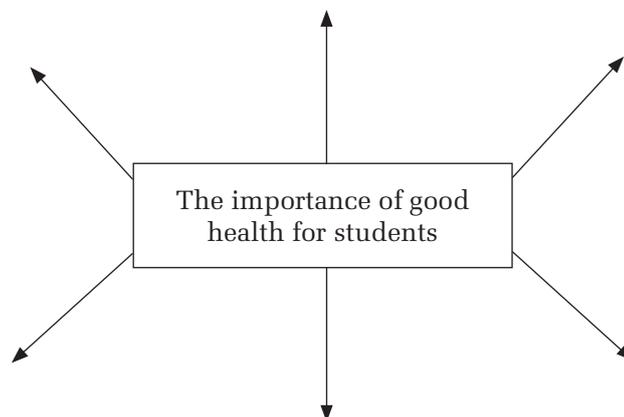
3. Now organise them into common categories (some categories that might be appropriate are listed below but choose what areas you think relevant for your list. You may start with a number of different areas, but then refine your choice down to 3-4 areas, which will become the basis of your paragraphs. Use a brainstorm/mind map format)

Possible categories: Food, Physical activity, Sport, Attitude and Wellbeing, Physical Disabilities, Sleep, Drugs and stimulants, Mindfulness and Meditation, Mental Health. Place them on the diagram below.

**For each category add the reason Why – your thesis**

Food

(Why? gives energy)

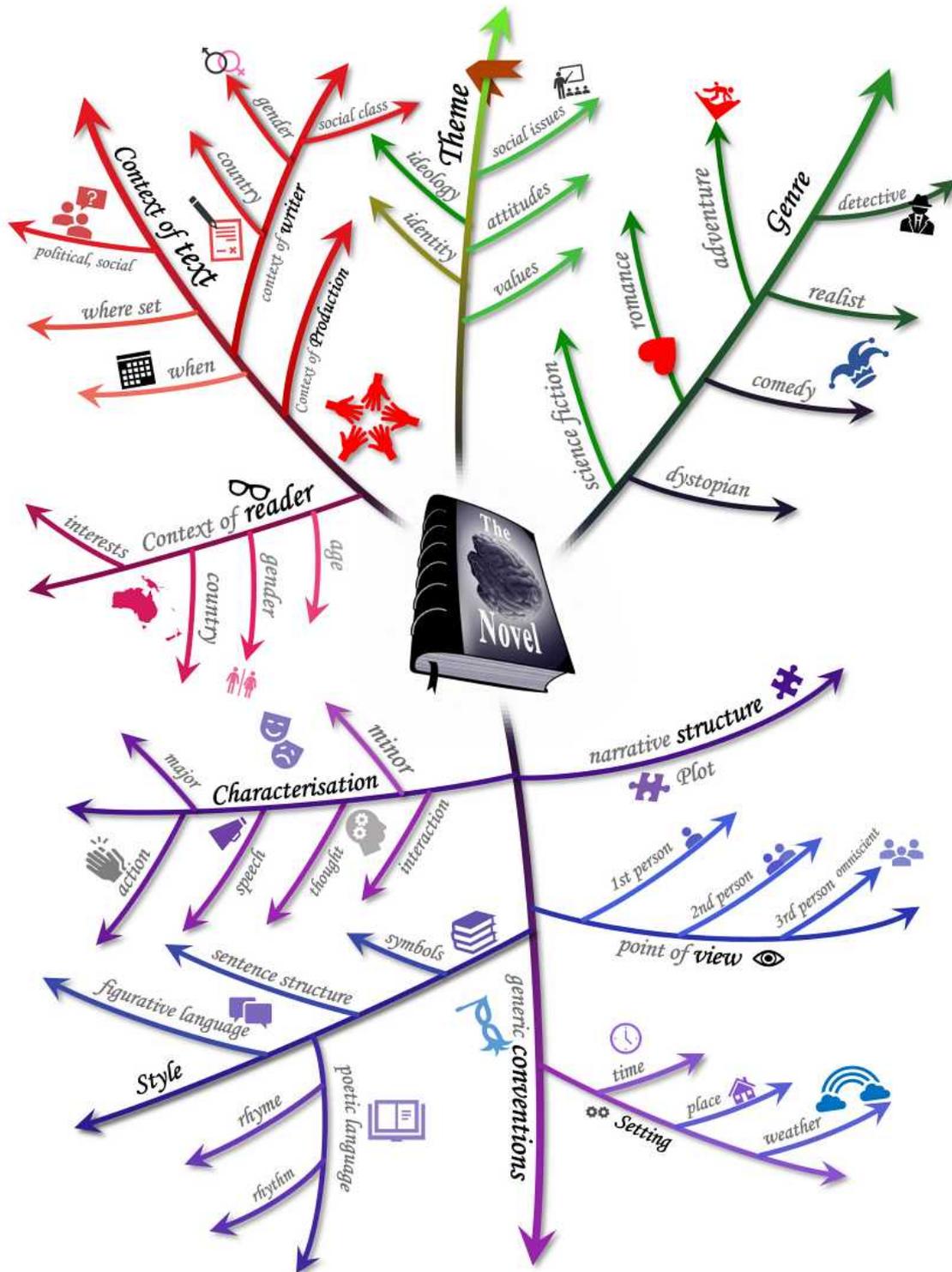


Choose the 4 strongest areas for your paragraphs.

## MINDMAPS

Mind mapping is a freer, more personal way to generate ideas. The mind map allows a range of ideas to be generated. However, for an essay this needs to then be structured like the branching formula with a central idea and subsidiary ideas, organised into a coherent thesis and argument.

**Question:** Outline the factors contributing to the construction of a novel.



## ACTIVITY

Brainstorm or Mind Map the following question:

**Question:** *Outline the stylistic choices made by a writer in a text of your choice. What effect is achieved by those choices? (You can choose the genre)*

## NEXT STEP

Organise Your Material

Brainstorming or mind mapping can be likened to checking the land, surveying the potential site, putting in survey pegs to mark your claim, stepping out the outline of the building.

Then comes the actual plan, the architectural design of the house – understanding the brief/question, conforming to the regulations and requirements (assessment criteria, marks), making your design statement (thesis), then developing the structure – entrance façade, number of rooms etc (your paragraphs), the actual build.

**Use the TET formula.**

It's as easy as

**1 2 3**

or

**WHAT      HOW      WHY**

It is as easy as

**T E T**

## AN EXPANDED TET PLAN OUTLINE

### Introduction (about 60-100 words)

**Sentence 1:** **Topic sentence:** explain the question. Reword it, don't repeat the question. Sometimes called a syllabus statement; relate to concepts from the syllabus, define terms or give definitions.

**Sentence/s 2:** **Example** – describe what you are going to discuss, how you intend to deal with it. Set the context, the parameters of your discussion

Outline the examples you will develop in your essay

(For your introduction try to confine this to 1-2 sentences)

**Sentence 3:** States your **thesis**. Why you are discussing this? What effect does it have?

*A thesis statement outlines YOUR argument or approach. It is a statement which you will defend or explain in the body of your essay. It is the controlling idea, which gives your essay purpose, direction and structure.*

Use words of the question in your thesis to show that you are answering the question.

**YOUR INTRODUCTION SHOULD ATTRACT AND HOLD THE READER'S INTEREST.**

### Body (3-6 paragraphs)

The body of your essay should consist of a number of paragraphs each of which contains a separate idea which develops your thesis statement. Use connective words to link your statements.

**REPEAT THE KEY WORDS FROM THE QUESTION TO KEEP YOU ON TRACK.**

Each body paragraph should follow this formula:

**Sentence 1:** **WHAT?** – Topic sentence.

**Sentences 2:** **HOW?** – Examples and Explanations. (3-4 sentences)

**Sentence 3:** **WHY?** – Tie back to the Thesis-Effect or Significance.

### Conclusion

Students find conclusions difficult because they try to think of something new. A conclusion must restate what you have already said. **It does not contain any new material.** Signal the end without using statements like 'to conclude'. Link your conclusion back to the introduction. Summarise your argument. Make a general statement and evaluation of the topic. Leave the reader feeling satisfied.

**NOTE:** When using a structured outline like this there is a tendency to use markers such as 'The effect is . . .', 'An example of this is . . .', 'In conclusion . . .'

While you are learning how to write an essay these signposts help keep you balanced and on track. This is like writing with your training wheels on. However, as you become more experienced and fluent, try to be more sophisticated in your sentence structures, provide examples and consider the effect etc without beginning sentences with those terms.



## THE PLAN IN ACTION

See how this plan works for the following essay topic:

**Question:** *Characterisation is the key to successful fiction.*

*Write an essay supporting this proposition on the basis of your reading.*

Let's work through this question, using the well-known traditional tale of *Cinderella*, with which you should be familiar. You can, of course, do a resistant reading!

Step 1: **Understanding the Question** – Reword the question to show your understanding.

'*characterisation*' – this refers to the technique, how characters are created. You are not being asked to discuss characters, but characterisation, that is, the way characters are constructed.

'*key*' – most important, significant, way of opening up story, achieving desired effect.

'*successful fiction*' – engages readers' interest, achieves its purpose, conveys its message.

'*supporting*' – you are asked to agree with this statement.

DO NOT WRITE, AS YOUR OPENING STATEMENT: 'Characterisation is the key to successful fiction. This is true in the case of the Cinderella.' (WHY?)

### T – Topic sentence

**Possible Topic Sentence for your Introduction** (Note the statement is reworded and explained, not just repeated),

**(Version 1)** The way characters are constructed is often the most important factor in making a story interesting and meaningful.

**(Version 2)** Interesting, well-developed descriptions of characters can bring a book to life, helping to engage the reader and convey the text's message.

**(Version 3)** The development of characters through effective techniques is the most significant element in engaging the reader's interest.

**(Version 4)** Characters are important in the reader enjoying a story. (this statement is unsatisfactory as it discusses characters rather than characterisation.)

**(Version 5)** Fairy tales have enduring popularity because of their powerful evocation of traditional, recognisable stereotypes of good and bad characters.

Your version:

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**E – Example sentences.** The techniques used to construct characters in the traditional tale of Cinderella, are appealing and engaging because they rely on stereotype of the beautiful, but badly treated heroine, the wicked sisters, characterised by their ugliness and mean spirit, the dashing prince coming to the rescue and the protection/machinations of the fairy godmother.

(In these sentences you outline the plan for your body paragraphs.)

### T – Thesis statement

**(In your thesis statement repeat the words of the question to show how you are going to answer the question.)**

**(Version 1)** Characterisation is pivotal in Cinderella, making it a successful story because the stereotypes of the traditional fairy tale characters enable children to identify with Cinderella and delight in her transformation from a badly treated servant to a beautiful princess who is rescued by a handsome prince.

**(Version 2)** The construction of contrasting characters enables the reader to delight in the way Cinderella overcomes evil (bad influences/selfish intentions), represented by the ugly sisters, to demonstrate that good triumphs.

**(Version 3)** Cinderella is a very successful children’s story because children can relate to the characters and feel happy when Cinderella becomes a princess.

**(Version 4)** Cinderella is a successful children’s story because it teaches children how to behave in order to get approval and rewards in society. (Note this thesis doesn’t answer the question because it is not related to characterisation)

**(Version 5)** Cinderella is a successful children’s story because it teaches children how to behave to gain approval and rewards in society using the construction of stereotypical ‘fairy tale’ gender roles and behaviour which indoctrinates children into accepting traditional, socially compliant behaviour and values.

Your version:

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## ESSAY PLAN OUTLINE

You can use the Essay Plan outline to build up your plan.

There is a space for you to write your introduction (explain terms, write your thesis) then shape your material around the TET structure for each paragraph.

## ESSAY PLAN

<b>Question:</b>	<p><i>Characterisation is the key to successful fiction.</i></p> <p><i>Write an essay supporting this proposition on the basis of your reading.</i></p>
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<b>Introduction – Opinion/Thesis</b>	<p>The way characters are constructed is often the most important factor in making a story interesting and meaningful.</p> <p>E.g. Fairytale-Cinderella stereotype easily identified characters, Cinderella, Ugly sisters, handsome prince, fairy godmother.</p> <p><b>Cinderella is a successful story because the stereotypes of the traditional fairy tale characters enable children to delight in the transformation of Cinderella from a badly treated servant to a beautiful princess.</b></p> <p><i>The introduction should explain/reword the question and raise the major issue/focus of the question. It should provide an outline of what will be covered in the essay, define difficult words, terminology and key concepts, possibly give some background context and provide a thesis statement for your answer/argument.</i></p>
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<b>Body:</b>			
<b>Paragraph 1</b>	Topic	Examples/Explanation	Tie back to Thesis
	Construction of Cinderella’s persona	e.g. Actions – cleaning e.g. Friend of animals e.g. Kind to ugly sisters e.g. Clothing – old rags, beautiful ball gown e.g. Significance of glass slipper	Transformation of Cinderella from a badly treated servant to a beautiful princess.
<b>Paragraph 2</b>	Topic	Examples/Explanation	Tie back to Thesis
	How the ugly sisters are constructed	e.g. Appearance  e.g. Actions proud – greedy – cruel –	The ugly sisters’ proud behaviour and mean treatment of Cinderella encourages the reader to feel sorry for Cinderella and want a ‘fairy tale ending’.
<b>Paragraph 3</b>	Topic	Examples/Explanation	Tie back to Thesis
	Handsome Prince	e.g. Clothing e.g. Falls in love with Cinderella  e.g. Devotion and persistence in finding her – the hero’s quest	In the tradition of fairy tales, Cinderella is rescued by her handsome prince and rewarded for her goodness and beauty, thus providing a satisfying ending.

Tie back to Thesis/Question

## ESSAY PLAN

Thesis:			
Cinderella is a successful story because stereotypes of the traditional fairy tale characters enable children to delight in the transformation of Cinderella from a badly treated servant to a beautiful princess.			
Body:			
Paragraph 4	Topic	Examples/Explanation	Tie back to Thesis
	Fairy Godmother [Paragrph 4 is the one up your sleeve, if you need it, if time permits]	e.g. Actions – Magical powers e.g. Friend of animals, Nature e.g. Values – befriends Cinderella, ‘good mother’	Transforms Cinderella from a badly treated servant to a beautiful princess.
Paragraph 5	Topic	Examples/Explanation	Tie back to Thesis
Paragraph 6	Topic	Examples/Explanation	Tie back to Thesis
Tie back to Thesis/Question			
Conclusion			
The fairy tale Cinderella has enduring success because the traditional, but clever construction of ‘good and ‘bad’ characters delights children. They are able to identify with the poor, powerless, ‘picked on’ Cinderella who is rescued from her torturers by a magical fairy godmother and a handsome prince. Cinderella is a successful story because its stereotypes of the traditional fairy tale characters enable children to delight in the transformation of Cinderella from a badly treated servant to a beautiful princess.			
The conclusion draws the major points of the essay together. It restates the main ideas and relates back to the question and thesis stated in the introduction. It should satisfy the reader that you have answered the question.			

**ACTIVITY** Let us see how the TET essay plan works for another sample essay such as:

**Question:** Discuss how manipulation of language in at least one text positions the reader to respond in specific ways.

**Planning:**

Choose a text:

**1. Understanding the Question**

Instructional words Discuss: Examine, analyse, give details

Key words In what ways is *language manipulated*? (use of language devices, such as metaphor, symbols etc; dialect; colloquial language; different levels of formal, informal, the choice of voice, etc)

What particular focus do you think the use of the word ‘*manipulated*’ gives?

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**2. Brainstorm**

Choose 3 techniques for 3 paragraphs:

Manipulation of language technique 1

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Manipulation of language technique 2

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Manipulation of language technique 3

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Who is the reader – presumably you, but are you going to adopt a persona?

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What is your response? What specific ways – (nominate particular ideas or values, or characters and whether you are positioned to accept or reject them)

**3. Thesis**

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## ESSAY PLAN

<b>Question:</b>	<p><i>Discuss how manipulation of language in at <u>least one text</u> positions the reader to respond in specific ways.</i></p>
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<b>Introduction – Opinion/Thesis</b>	<p><i>The introduction should explain/reword the question and raise the major issue/focus of the question. It should provide an outline of what will be covered in the essay, define difficult words, terminology and key concepts, possibly give some background context and provide a thesis statement for your answer/argument.</i></p>
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<b>Body:</b>			
<b>Paragraph 1</b>	Topic	Examples/Explanation	Tie back to Thesis
<b>Paragraph 2</b>	Topic	Examples/Explanation	Tie back to Thesis
<b>Paragraph 3</b>	Topic	Examples/Explanation	Tie back to Thesis

Tie back to Thesis/Question

## ESSAY PLAN

<b>Thesis:</b>	
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<b>Body:</b>
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	Topic	Examples/Explanation	Tie back to Thesis
Paragraph 4			
Paragraph 5			
Paragraph 6			

Tie back to Thesis/Question

<b>Conclusion</b>	
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*The conclusion draws the major points of the essay together. It restates the main ideas and relates back to the question and thesis stated in the introduction. It should satisfy the reader that you have answered the question.*

**ACTIVITY** Use the following Essay Plan template (and possibly also a Venn diagram) to develop this plan for the following essay.

**Question:** Compare the effects on Australian society of the two World Wars

### Introduction

(Topic sentence) The Prime Ministers were patriotic, people uncertain.

E.g. WW1 – Fisher’s patriotic response anticipated unity and support, but the result was social disunity.

E.g. Cf WW2 – Menzies, sombre, anticipated unrest, but result unity.

**THESIS** – divisive social elements, but both wars led to growing sense of Nationhood

### Body

(Paragraph 1) (Topic sentence) WW1 Divisive issues – but Fisher wanted unity of purpose, ‘last man, last shilling’

E.g. conscription debate, class warfare

E.g. Return of Hughes to PM

E.g. war responsible for social disunity, high death rate, decimated country

E.g. BUT Gallipoli – ANZAC, unity, nationhood

(Tie back to Thesis) WW1 was a test of the Australian nation, but social disunity meant strong nationalism didn’t develop until WW2.

(Paragraph 2) Impact post WW1, many deaths, impact on population, family life and prosperity – mechanisation, industry, but then depression. – you provide details

(Paragraph 3) (Topic sentence) WW2 Potentially divisive elements

E.g. rationing, conscription – but accepted

E.g. Australia’s involvement in war close to home – Japanese threat-unified resistance.

E.g. Australian alliances with Britain, America

E.g. disunity due to black-market, ‘Brisbane line’, Americans in Aust.

E.g. why sense of unity despite elements of conflict? perhaps sense of nationhood?

(Tie back to Thesis) Despite divisive elements, closer involvement in the war and its effects led to sense of Nationhood

(Paragraph 4) Impact post WW2 – growing prosperity and national identity and confidence – you provide details

### Conclusion

(Topic sentence) WW1: early enthusiasm, but strong social divisions, bitterness, but Gallipoli, beginning of Anzac legend-groundwork for nationalistic unity; WW2: Some disunity, but closer conflict, developing maturity and wealth.

(Examples sentence) – summary of details

(Tie back to Thesis) WW1 was a test of the Australian nation, divisive social elements, so strong nationalism didn’t develop until WW2, Post WW2 growing prosperity and nationalism.

## ESSAY PLAN

<b>Question:</b>	
<i>Compare the effects on Australian society of the two world wars</i>	

<b>Introduction – Opinion/Thesis</b>	
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*The introduction should explain/reword the question and raise the major issue/focus of the question. It should provide an outline of what will be covered in the essay, define difficult words, terminology and key concepts, possibly give some background context and provide a thesis statement for your answer/argument.*

<b>Body:</b>	
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	Topic	Examples/Explanation	Tie back to Thesis
<b>Paragraph 1</b>			
<b>Paragraph 2</b>			
<b>Paragraph 3</b>			

Tie back to Thesis/Question

## ESSAY PLAN

<b>Thesis:</b>			
<b>Body:</b>			
	Topic	Examples/Explanation	Tie back to Thesis
Paragraph 4			
	Topic	Examples/Explanation	Tie back to Thesis
Paragraph 5			
	Topic	Examples/Explanation	Tie back to Thesis
Paragraph 6			
<b>Conclusion</b>			
<p><i>The conclusion draws the major points of the essay together. It restates the main ideas and relates back to the question and thesis stated in the introduction. It should satisfy the reader that you have answered the question.</i></p>			

Tie back to Thesis/Question

**ACTIVITY** For the questions below:

1. Unpack the question
2. Brainstorm options
3. Develop a thesis
4. Write a Plan outline (in the Essay Plan)
5. Write an introduction

**Question:** Describe how at least one text you have studied uses voice to enable you to understand an individual or a group from a context different from your own.

OR

**Question:** How has an Australian text you have studied shaped your understanding of the Australian way of life?

1. Understanding the **Question:**

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2. Brainstorm

3. Thesis

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4. Plan (use Essay Plan)

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5. Write your Introduction here:

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## ESSAY PLAN

<b>Question:</b>	

<b>Introduction – Opinion/Thesis</b>	

*The introduction should explain/reword the question and raise the major issue/focus of the question. It should provide an outline of what will be covered in the essay, define difficult words, terminology and key concepts, possibly give some background context and provide a thesis statement for your answer/argument.*

<b>Body:</b>			
<b>Paragraph 1</b>	Topic	Examples/Explanation	Tie back to Thesis
<b>Paragraph 2</b>	Topic	Examples/Explanation	Tie back to Thesis
<b>Paragraph 3</b>	Topic	Examples/Explanation	Tie back to Thesis

Tie back to Thesis/Question

## ESSAY PLAN

<b>Thesis:</b>	
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<b>Body:</b>
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	Topic	Examples/Explanation	Tie back to Thesis
<b>Paragraph 4</b>			
<b>Paragraph 5</b>			
<b>Paragraph 6</b>			

Tie back to Thesis/Question

<b>Conclusion</b>
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*The conclusion draws the major points of the essay together. It restates the main ideas and relates back to the question and thesis stated in the introduction. It should satisfy the reader that you have answered the question.*

## HOW TO PLAN YOUR ESSAY

Use the TET formula.

It's as easy as

**1 2 3**

or

**WHAT HOW WHY**

It is as easy as

**T E T**

**T:** Topic Sentence

**E:** Example Sentences

**T:** Thesis Statement



# 5

## WRITING YOUR ESSAY USING THE TET PLAN

Let's remind ourselves of the TET formula:

**T** – Topic sentence

**E** – Example sentences

**T**– Tie back to Thesis

### OUTLINE OF AN ESSAY USING THE TET STRUCTURE

**Question:** *'Plays are written to be performed on stage.'*

*Discuss one play you have seen or read where an awareness of its performance aspects is necessary to understand how it presents themes or issues.*

#### Understanding the Question

Command word:

*'Discuss'* Examine, be comprehensive, give details.

Key words:

*'performed on stage'* consider the actual staging details;

*'seen or read'* you don't have to have actually seen it performed, but, as you read it you should envisage how it might be performed, how the stage directions might be interpreted;

*'an awareness of its performance aspects'* – if you haven't seen a performance you need to imagine how it could be staged. Use the written stage directions to consider where actors move, how they deliver a particular line, how the lighting and music contribute to the effect.

*'necessary'* strong word, indicating that staging aspects are very important, essential;

*'themes or issues'* what specific ideas and views of human experience are presented?

#### Points to consider

You are being directed to agree with this statement and to show **how** this is done. You need to demonstrate how stage techniques contributed to your appreciation of the issues.

Performance aspects involve verbal and non-verbal techniques used, such as how the lines are delivered, stage setting, movements of actors, props, costumes, lighting, sound effects and music. You must show **how** they function to enhance your understanding of the play and its themes.

**It is not necessary for you to have seen your play performed**, although it is certainly helpful if you have. In class, you study a play as a drama script, which means in your reading you

need to be aware of and consider how the stage directions might be produced.

NOTE: Stage directions in themselves are not techniques, rather they indicate what techniques should be used, e.g. the tone of voice, the action, the musical background.

A suggested outline for an answer based on *Away* by Michael Gow:

## Introduction

Michael Gow's play, *Away*, begins and ends with a school production of a play, drawing our attention to the constructed nature of drama and the way plays create a fantasy world but also function as a comment on issues in the everyday world. Throughout the play Gow uses highly stylised performance elements to convey his message. The opening scene, the representation of the difference in class between the three families and the campfire scene rely on dramatic elements of production to achieve their effect. While reading the play it is necessary to envisage how it would be performed to achieve the full impact of the presentation of ideas. **By considering the performance aspects the readers/audience are made aware of Gow's theme of the need to step outside our everyday lives and allow the power of dramatic enactment to change and renew life.**

## Body

**(Paragraph 1) (Topic sentence)** The opening scene of *Away* makes the audience aware of the performance aspects of drama by presenting an audience on the stage who is watching a play and by drawing our attention to the staging elements.

E.g. The speech by Roy, the Principal highlights the ironic contrast of the performance of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and its staging in a school hall which is emphasised by the visual image of the stage audience sitting in a sparse space on uncomfortable chairs while watching the school performance.

E.g. The reader/audience is made aware of the performance aspects by reference to the sound effects, lighting and costumes.

E.g. 'The Mendelssohn soundtrack blares from a tinny loudspeaker'

E.g. 'Kids dressed as fairies scurry about in garish light'

E.g. These staging aspects are juxtaposed with Tom's speech as Puck which focuses on the creation of a fantasy world in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and comments on the function of drama.

E.g. quote from Tom's speech 'While these visions did appear . . . No more yielding but a dream'

**(Tie back to Thesis)** The school performance, especially through Tom, in his role as Puck, reminds the audience of the constructed nature of drama and its ability to create a fantasy, dream-like world which has restorative, healing benefits.

**(Paragraph 2) (Topic sentence)** Performance aspects of the play related to the setting make the class differences between the three families very obvious and highlight their specific ways of dealing with problems.

E.g. The visual impact of the different settings for each holiday ('A Gold Coast Luxury Hotel' for Coral and Roy, A 'tent and caravan city' for Gwen, Jim and Meg and 'just the basics' for Tom, Harry and Vic.)

[For your examples you need to think about what props and backdrops could be used to create these settings]

E.g. The clothing and accents of the characters. [Be specific, suggesting possible outfits and you need to discuss the effect of hearing the various accents]

E.g. Diverse ways of dealing with their problems are accentuated by visual techniques: Coral talking to a stranger on the roof of the hotel with the sounds of a New Year's Eve party off stage; Gwen and Jim packing for a camping trip, with a fake Christmas tree and no gifts; Tom, Vic and Harry's bright, gaudy clothing and happy manner.

**(Tie back to Thesis)** The performance aspects of setting and characterisation effectively convey the differences in the three families when dealing with problems, while also showing their common need for healing.

**(Paragraph 3) (Topic sentence)** The dramatic techniques used to portray the beach setting and campers' concert performance enable the audience to understand how they act as catalysts for the healing of hurt and conflict.

E.g. The audience is positioned to accept the magic realism of this scene through attention being drawn to the constructed nature of the dramatic conventions such as the fairies, the stage effects used to create the storm and the sound effects of Mendelssohn's music.

E.g. The healing Gwen needs is achieved without dialogue, so if the reader skipped the stage directions, they would miss the visual effects of Gwen and Vic going for a walk along the beach and their return, their tears and now supporting one another.

E.g. Tom and Coral's play at the campers' concert allows Coral to deal with her pain and grief and move on. The symbolism of her as the little mermaid who learns to walk must be 'seen' to create the necessary emotional impact.

E.g. The scene ends with the campfire, a visual image of community.

**(Tie back to Thesis)** The visual effect of the setting of the beach and the campfire help the audience understand that a mood of healing and acceptance has been created.

## Conclusion

Michael Gow's play *Away* constructs a powerful representation of the effect of conflict and pain on family relationships. The device of structuring his text within the context of two school performances draws the assumed audiences' attention to the constructed nature of drama and positions us to accept Gow's view that drama can provide the opportunity to 'act out' problems and resolve issues. The heavily theatrical nature of the play emphasises how performance aspects are a means of elucidating the issues and resolving crises.

### **ACTIVITY** Sample Essay (You fill in the missing parts)

**Question:** Discuss the effect post-war immigration has had on the culture and lifestyle of Australian society.

#### Introduction

The waves of post-war immigration, firstly from Europe immediately after World War II, then from Asia since 1970s and the subsequent diversity of migrants from the Middle East and other areas, has had a significant effect on the way of life and attitudes in Australian society. The influence can be seen in the areas of food, cultural activities and education. In assessing the effect of post-war immigration from around the world, it can be shown that Australian lifestyle has benefited from the diversity of cultures and has become more multi-cultural and accepting of difference. However, despite the influence of immigration, Australia is still racist in many ways and some cultural conflict occurs.

#### Body

**(Topic 1)** One area where Australian lifestyle has been influenced is food; a wide variety of international cuisines are now common and popular with Australians.

**(Examples and explanation)**

E.g.

E.g

E.g.

**(Tie back to Thesis)** The variety of food now eaten in Australia has led to a healthier diet and more interesting and varied menus and possibly contributed to developing a more open minded and tolerant attitude to different practices.

**(Topic 2)** Australians have become more aware of and accepting of a diversity of cultural practices.

**(Examples and explanation)**

E.g. 1 Chinese New Year

E.g. 2 . . . . .

E.g. 3 wearing of cultural clothing, e.g. hijab

**(Tie back to Thesis)**

**(Topic 3)** – Education (you write the topic sentence)

**(Examples and explanation)** (You give examples)

E.g. 1 . . . . .

E.g. 2 . . . . .

E.g. 3 . . . . .

**(Tie back to Thesis)** (Show how this relates to your thesis)

**(Topic 4)** Despite the benefits accruing from the mixture of cultural backgrounds in Australian society, there are also some problems.

**(Examples and explanation)**

E.g. Cronulla riots

E.g. rise of White Nationalist groups

E.g . . . . .

**(Tie back to Thesis)**

**Conclusion**

Post-war immigration has changed Australian lifestyle in many ways. Australian diet, cultural activities and education are all now more diverse and, despite some areas of conflict, Australian society has benefited from the variety of cultural groups now living in Australia.

## ACTIVITY

1. **Question:** *Discuss how one text you have studied challenges or endorses a controversial issue.*

Choose a text:

What is the controversial issue? – make sure it is **controversial**

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Does it challenge or endorse the issue?

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How – techniques

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Your thesis:

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Write your plan in the first Essay Plan template.

2. **Question:** *Discuss the influence of the idea of mateship and the Anzac Legend on Australian society.*

(You can respond in terms of your reading or viewing or your response to social, political or historical situations)

Will you discuss contemporary society or a specific historical context?

Write your plan in the second Essay Plan template on the following pages.

3. Choose one of these essay topics and write a full essay after your two plans.



## ESSAY PLAN

<b>Question:</b>	<i>Discuss how one text you have studied challenges or endorses a controversial issue.</i>
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<b>Introduction – Opinion/Thesis</b>	
<p><i>The introduction should explain/reword the question and raise the major issue/focus of the question. It should provide an outline of what will be covered in the essay, define difficult words, terminology and key concepts, possibly give some background context and provide a thesis statement for your answer/argument.</i></p>	

<b>Body:</b>			
<b>Paragraph 1</b>	Topic	Examples/Explanation	Tie back to Thesis
<b>Paragraph 2</b>	Topic	Examples/Explanation	Tie back to Thesis
<b>Paragraph 3</b>	Topic	Examples/Explanation	Tie back to Thesis

Tie back to Thesis/Question

## ESSAY PLAN

<b>Thesis:</b>	
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<b>Body:</b>
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	Topic	Examples/Explanation	Tie back to Thesis
Paragraph 4			
Paragraph 5			
Paragraph 6			

Tie back to Thesis/Question

<b>Conclusion</b>	
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*The conclusion draws the major points of the essay together. It restates the main ideas and relates back to the question and thesis stated in the introduction. It should satisfy the reader that you have answered the question.*

## ESSAY PLAN

<b>Question:</b>	
<i>Discuss the influence of the idea of mateship and the Anzac Legend on Australian society.</i>	

<b>Introduction – Opinion/Thesis</b>	
<p><i>The introduction should explain/reword the question and raise the major issue/focus of the question. It should provide an outline of what will be covered in the essay, define difficult words, terminology and key concepts, possibly give some background context and provide a thesis statement for your answer/argument.</i></p>	

<b>Body:</b>			
	Topic	Examples/Explanation	Tie back to Thesis
<b>Paragraph 1</b>			
<b>Paragraph 2</b>			
<b>Paragraph 3</b>			

↑  
Tie back to Thesis/Question  
↓

## ESSAY PLAN

<b>Thesis:</b>			
<b>Body:</b>			
<b>Paragraph 4</b>	Topic	Examples/Explanation	Tie back to Thesis
<b>Paragraph 5</b>	Topic	Examples/Explanation	Tie back to Thesis
<b>Paragraph 6</b>	Topic	Examples/Explanation	Tie back to Thesis
<b>Conclusion</b>			
<p><i>The conclusion draws the major points of the essay together. It restates the main ideas and relates back to the question and thesis stated in the introduction. It should satisfy the reader that you have answered the question.</i></p>			





**Question:** *The power of a text lies in the stylistic choices of its construction rather than its content. Respond to this statement by referring to at least one text.*

Command Word:

‘Respond’ open term which encourages you to take a particular position in response to this statement, to present an argument.

Key Words:

‘power’ persuasiveness, impact, force, sense of authority, influence, could refer to its ability to engage the audience;

‘stylistic choices’ techniques or conventions used;

‘content’ story or selection of detail, ideas and arguments;

(Text used is the documentary text Bowling for Columbine (2002) by Michael Moore.)

You could agree and argue that the style (the ‘how’) is more important than the content (the ‘what’); you could disagree and argue that content is more important; you could suggest that both are equally important; or you could claim it is something else makes a text powerful, e.g. context; although Michael Moore uses clichéd techniques and superficial arguments, Bowling for Columbine provoke a powerful response because of the context of post September 11 and the power of the gun lobby in American politics.

If you argue that style is more important it is not necessary to give equal weight in your answer to content, make a brief reference to the content and then focus on style.

**NB** Although Michael Moore’s documentary Bowling for Columbine was produced in 2002, he employs the same approach and techniques in his documentary Planet of the Humans (2020), so, after reading this outline, apply it, with relevant examples to Planet of the Humans or another documentary of your choice. *Use the Essay Plan template.*

A suggested approach to a plan:

## Introduction

**Thesis:** Michael Moore’s documentary Bowling for Columbine forcefully persuades viewers of the dangers of a gun culture in American society by both the weight of its content and his effective style of presentation, such as the construction of his naïve good guy persona, humour and the juxtaposition of incidents to discredit advocates of gun ownership.

## Body

**Paragraph 1:** Content – statistics

**(Topic sentence)** Moore establishes credibility in his documentary by the use of statistics, however, it is not just these factual details, but also how they are presented which makes the documentary effective.

E.g. gun ownership figures and gun related deaths (but note the filmic background which strengthens this point by the way it is presented.)

E.g. media coverage of violence (but note effect of ‘how’ it’s done with interview)

E.g. juxtaposition of American violence statistics and American bombing of other countries. (note the background song ‘What a Wonderful World’, with Moor’s facetious tone and cleverly constructed filmic style for **how** the ‘facts’ are presented.)

**(Tie back Thesis and Question)** Moore presents a powerful message about the gun culture and the acceptance of violence in America, but it is made more effective by his stylistic choices of a deceptively simple, highly constructed filmic style.

### Paragraph 2: Construction of the Moore persona

**(Topic sentence)** Moore's provocative filmic style is established in the opening scene which forcefully and humorously conveys American's acceptance of violence with the easy availability of guns when Moore is given a gun as a reward for opening a bank account.

E.g. Opening scene. A normal day in America, with shots of the church, farmer, Americans bombing 'another country whose name we can't pronounce', statue of Liberty and the patriotic American song 'The Battle Hymn of the Republic' (what effect is created?).

E.g. Moore's persona – clothing, demeanour and his 'dumb' questions, 'Isn't it a little dangerous to be handing out guns in a bank?' (what effect is he trying to create?)

E.g. Give further examples of this behaviour throughout the documentary.

**(Tie back to Thesis and Question)** The film's message is powerfully conveyed to the audience through effective filmic techniques; in particular Moore's construction of himself as an inoffensive, every day, naive 'dude', who the audience can like, trust and believe, but who should never be given a gun.

### Paragraph 3: Interviews

**(Topic sentence)** The filmic technique of clever editing increases the impact of Moore's documentary.

E.g. Analyse how the interview with Jack Nichols is structured so that the setting, his demeanour and comments make him appear like the 'whackos' he criticises.

E.g. Brent and DJ's interview in the pool parlour is constructed to discredit them.

E.g. What other interviews could you use?

**(Tie back to Thesis and Question)** Moore's powerful personal style and filmic technique choices, rather than the content of the highly selective and cleverly edited interviews are effective in constructing an image of gun owners as 'whackos' to show the dangers of gun ownership.

### Paragraph 4: The Shooting at Columbine.

**(Topic sentence)** The power of the actual film footage of the shooting at Columbine is increased by the way it is presented.

E.g. Archival black and white footage – realism of factual content from the surveillance camera.

E.g. Filmic techniques shape this material, e.g. the split screen, the slow tracking shots, the voice over reporting, and the background guitar music.

E.g. The close-ups of faces and the agitated comments.

E.g. The juxtaposition of this scene with the pro-gun rally.

**(Tie back to Thesis and Question)** The powerful, disturbing sequence of the actual shooting at Columbine, using cleverly edited surveillance camera footage, shows how content and film style work together to create the frightening effects of an acceptance of a gun culture.

## Conclusion

Although Moore does present statistical evidence to support his arguments, the most powerful persuasive effect is the way he presents this material. (you could then provide a brief summary of your arguments and restatement of your thesis.)

## ESSAY PLAN

<b>Question:</b>	
<p><i>The power of a text lies in the stylist choices of its construction rather than its content. Respond to this statement by referring to at least one text. (Your choice of text)</i></p>	

<b>Introduction – Opinion/Thesis</b>	
<p><i>The introduction should explain/reword the question and raise the major issue/focus of the question. It should provide an outline of what will be covered in the essay, define difficult words, terminology and key concepts, possibly give some background context and provide a thesis statement for your answer/argument.</i></p>	

<b>Body:</b>			
<b>Paragraph 1</b>	Topic	Examples/Explanation	Tie back to Thesis
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<b>Paragraph 3</b>	Topic	Examples/Explanation	Tie back to Thesis

↑  
Tie back to Thesis/Question  
↓

## ESSAY PLAN

<b>Thesis:</b>	
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<b>Body:</b>
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	Topic	Examples/Explanation	Tie back to Thesis
<b>Paragraph 4</b>			
<b>Paragraph 5</b>			
<b>Paragraph 6</b>			

Tie back to Thesis/Question

<b>Conclusion</b>
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*The conclusion draws the major points of the essay together. It restates the main ideas and relates back to the question and thesis stated in the introduction. It should satisfy the reader that you have answered the question.*

**Question:** *‘The way a novel’s ending is constructed can reveal how the values of individuals are shaped by circumstances.’ Discuss this statement by referring to at least one novel.*

**Command Word:** *‘Discuss’* remember this requires a detailed, careful analysis.

**Key words:**

*‘way . . . constructed’* a consideration of the techniques, how the ending is presented, consciously crafted to achieve a specific purpose.

*‘ending’* conclusion, denouement, resolution. Is it a conventional ‘happy resolution’ with plot and character, ‘tied up’?

*‘values’* the ideology, belief system or world view that is being espoused in the novel. It is not necessarily articulated or stated, but is the implied or assumed basis of the views presented.

*‘shaped by circumstances’* what events are crucial, what events have changed or shaped the individuals?

Points to consider:

Your answer needs to begin with the ending, but other paragraphs could show how these values were foreshadowed or developed earlier in the novel. The ending may highlight or make more explicit the values of the text, but it is necessary to consider how they are presented throughout the text, what circumstances led to them.

**A suggested sample plan for Cloudstreet:**

## Introduction

Beginning and ending almost the same – circular, holistic, where the family and the two parts of Fish’s life are brought together. The circumstances of his accident lead to Fish’s actions throughout the story.

Values: The ending emphasises the importance of family unity and spiritual wholeness.

**Your Thesis:**

## Body

**Paragraph 1: (Topic sentence)** *The conclusion shows Fish’s physical and spiritual selves united.*

E.g. Beginning – Fish’s accident – ‘not all Fish Lamb came back’

E.g. Ending – Fish’s feeling of being whole: ‘I recognise myself whole and human. I burst into the moon and stars of who I really am. Being Fish Lamb. Perfectly. Always. Everyplace. Me.’

E.g. The underlying value throughout the text has been Fish’s desire to be whole. Compare this with the beginning and his ongoing sorrow and yearning to have the physical and the spiritual parts of himself united.

E.g. Show how this has been developed throughout the circumstances described in the text, e.g. In the boat on the river with Quick – stars and moon imagery used to represent Fish’s desire to be united with his spirit.

(Tie back to Thesis) *The ending shows Fish’s two selves, united which endorses the value of spiritual wholeness.*

**Paragraph 2: (Topic sentence)** The families are brought together at the end through the picnic at the river. In the initial sharing of the house, it is partitioned. Events throughout the text lead to the reader understanding that the value of the family sharing together is strongly endorsed.

E.g. The initial sharing of the house, ‘Lamb and Pickles’.

E.g. The marriage of Quick and Rose, birth of Wax Harry.

E.g. The meal the family share after the birth of Wax Harry.

E.g. Taking down the fence.

E.g. The description of the picnic by the river in the opening/closing scenes – analyse the language.

(Tie back to Thesis) The ending reinforces the value of and the celebration of family unity and sharing.

**Paragraph 3: (Topic sentence)** Throughout the text Fish desires to make other family members whole, both spiritually and, despite circumstances, he brings them back to the family. By the end of the novel he has achieved this.

E.g. Earlier in the novel, Fish has grieved when the family was separate, e.g. when Quick and Rose leave the family.

E.g. Fish works to bring Quick back to the family when he is in the wheat, through the apparition of Fish in the crate and the experiences with religious connotations which follow, used to represent Quick’s conversion.

E.g. Fish brings Rose back home;

(Tie back to Thesis) Fish is able to leave the family when he is whole and has accomplished his mission of bringing the family together, despite circumstances, which has been the motivating force of the novel and reinforces the underlying values of family unity and spiritual wholeness which have driven the events in the text.

**Paragraph 4: (Topic sentence)** Postscript to ending. Now that Fish is whole and he has brought the family back together, Oriel can return to the family.

E.g. Why Oriel went to live in the tent

E.g. Imagery of tent folding, mulberry tree – religious connotations.

E.g. Oriel and Dolly’s shared experience.

(Tie back to Thesis) Oriel’s return to the house suggests that she is now at peace with herself and her family, reinforcing the underlying values of family unity and spiritual wholeness.

## Conclusion

(You provide a conclusion)

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**ACTIVITY** Write your plan for the following question applying it to a text of your choice

**Question:**

The way a novel's ending is constructed can reveal how the value of individuals are shaped by circumstances. Discuss this statement by referring to at least one novel.

**Introduction – Opinion/Thesis**

*The introduction should explain/reword the question and raise the major issue/focus of the question. It should provide an outline of what will be covered in the essay, define difficult words, terminology and key concepts, possibly give some background context and provide a thesis statement for your answer/argument.*

**Body:**

	Topic	Examples/Explanation	Tie back to Thesis
<b>Paragraph 1</b>			
<b>Paragraph 2</b>			
<b>Paragraph 3</b>			

Tie back to Thesis/Question

## ESSAY PLAN

**Thesis:**

**Body:**

	Topic	Examples/Explanation	Tie back to Thesis
<b>Paragraph 4</b>			
<b>Paragraph 5</b>			
<b>Paragraph 6</b>			

Tie back to Thesis/Question

**Conclusion**

*The conclusion draws the major points of the essay together. It restates the main ideas and relates back to the question and thesis stated in the introduction. It should satisfy the reader that you have answered the question.*





# WRITING INTRODUCTIONS

## 6

A major problem many students face is writing interesting, clear introductions to their essays.

Your introduction is where you make sure that you get all the marks you deserve by indicating to the marker how you are going to answer the question and confirming your understanding of the topic. Your introduction must be clear, engaging and provide a road map of what you will develop in your essay. It sets you up. It makes you look good.

Use the **TET** model to frame your introduction: Your **Topic sentence** states the question in your own words to show your understanding. Your **Example sentence** (you should only need one or two sentences here) outlines the areas you will cover – this is your plan. Your **Thesis statement** clearly and strongly shows what you will prove.

Begin your introduction by clarifying what the question is asking – define technical terms and difficult terms, ensure that you explain your understanding of contentious terms.

Follow this with the **Example sentence**, state what areas you are going to cover in this essay, again, ensure they are relevant to the actual focus of the question. Provide a clear outline of how you will develop your argument, this will become the basis of your topic sentences for body paragraphs.

End your introduction powerfully with a strong **Thesis statement**.

Your introduction should make your understanding of the question clear, define difficult or ambiguous terms; provide a strong, interesting thesis; engage the reader.

You need to provide some context in your introduction; when, who, where – the text you are writing about, issues and techniques, people (characters), main events, time period if relevant, but don't go into too much background or explanation. If more clarification or background is needed provide it in an explanatory second paragraph.

For **History** introductions you need to state the historical period (time and place). Explain key terminology. You don't need to provide full historical details of the situation, only those relevant to your particular argument.

For some subjects, including **Politics and Law** and **Economics** essays, you need to start by defining the relevant terms, legislation or parliamentary Acts.

In **English and Literature** essays your introductory paragraph should not include a summary of the text. You are assuming that you are writing to an educated, informed reader (the marker) who knows the text. Don't waste valuable time outlining details of the plot. If you are dealing with an obscure text a very brief outline may be in order, but it is quite appropriate to expect your marker to familiarise themselves with the text if they are going to assess the quality of your response.

Don't make your introduction too long (four sentences are sufficient). Don't give too much background, don't make too many general statements.

## Examples of Introductions

**Question:** *Conflicts in a stage drama are essential for the audience to enjoy that text.*

*Evaluate this statement with reference to at least one stage drama you have studied this year.*

Instruction/Command words *evaluate.*

Key words *Conflicts . . . stage drama . . . essential . . . enjoy.*

## Introduction

**Struggles and clashes** are important elements in all texts, but particularly in stage dramas, as this **creates suspense, entertainment and interest for the audience**. The play No Sugar by Jack Davis involves many conflicts between the Millimurras and white authority figures. Through the use of **dramatic techniques such as characterisation, contrasts and humour** [in the scene between Jimmy and the Sergeant, the scenes at Moore River Native Settlement with Neal and Jimmy and Neal's whipping of Mary] **the audience is positioned to support the Aborigines in their conflict with white authority, thus creating an enjoyable drama.**

### 1. Has the question been well explained?

A clear introductory sentence which explains the question: 'Conflicts' has been reworded as 'struggles and clashes', 'enjoy' has been explained as 'creates suspense, entertainment and interest for the audience'. Provides details of text and techniques.

### 2. What would the topics of the body paragraphs be?

The introduction suggests that the three body paragraphs will deal with the techniques of **characterisation, contrasts and humour**, however, a more appropriate approach might be to deal with three scenes of conflicts and show how the techniques of characterisation, contrasts and humour are used in the scenes to create enjoyment and engagement, as added in the square brackets.

### 3. How effective is the thesis?

The thesis argues that the conflict creates an enjoyable drama – **a more developed thesis could have been provided.**

Your version:

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### 4. Is the introduction interesting, engaging?

It is clear and well explained, adequate, but it is rather pedestrian and ordinary.

**Question:** *Examine the factors which led to the First World War. What do you consider to be the main cause?*

Instruction/Command words *examine.*

Key words *factors . . . led to. . . you consider . . . main cause.*

Many circumstances contributed to the outbreak of the First World War in 1914. Opinions vary between historians from various countries as to what were the major causes thus context and national and political bias needs to be considered when investigating this historical event. The basic causes go back as far as the early 1800's with the growth of Nationalism, Imperialism and Militarism. These were further complicated by the complex system of alliances and secret diplomacy that were readily sparked into open conflict with the assassination of Archduke Ferdinand. In the context of growing national powers, the alliance system provoked tension; although it was neither the underlying basis nor the trigger for war; it became the main factor which created conflict between European countries on a scale which led to the first World War.

1. Has the question been well explained?

A straightforward rewording of the question. Good details about the various factors and other opinions.

2. What would the topics of the body paragraphs be?

P1 Assessment of various theories from historians.

P2 The growth of Nationalism, Imperialism and Militarism.

P3 The complex system of alliances and secret diplomacy.

P4 The assassination of Archduke Ferdinand.

3. How effective is the thesis?

Well argued, qualified, reasoned thesis, weighing up factors, arguing the main cause was the alliance system because of the conflict it caused. Note that another student might choose another main cause and argue for that.

4. Is the introduction interesting, engaging?

It is reasoned, carefully thought out and engaging.

**Question:** *Enjoyment of a novel can be enhanced when you make connections with other texts of the same or of a different genre. Discuss this statement with reference to a novel you have studied this year.*

Instruction/Command word *Discuss*

Key words *Enjoyment . . . enhanced . . . connections (not just comparisons) . . . same or different genre.* This is a question about reading intertextually.

The novel Lord of the Flies by William Golding is a text which relies on the reader making links between other texts and it also fosters [the reader's appreciation through] intertextual references within the text. Lord of the Flies is a modern allegory which takes the stereotypical schoolboy adventure story of being shipwrecked on a desert island and interrogates the reader's romanticised assumptions about the idyllic life and resourceful behaviour of boys marooned on an isolated island. While the theme is interesting in its own right, the

connections made to traditional boys' own adventure texts such as Coral Island and The Swiss Family Robinson, as well as more contemporary connections with TV reality shows such as Survivor deepen the reader's understanding of Golding's critique of an unspoilt natural world with the revelation that violence is not very far below the surface in humans, even in apparently innocent children in idyllic surroundings. **By making connections between the texts mentioned and Lord of the Flies my enjoyment of the text was enhanced, and I was positioned to challenge romanticised assumptions about childhood innocence and consider how violence and barbaric practices are easily aroused and enacted.**

1. Has the question been well explained?

Yes, it is well explained – it is improved by the addition of the reader's response with the comment 'the reader's appreciation through'.

2. What plan is outlined, what would the topics of the body paragraphs be?

Hard to say, the introduction implies a more wholistic view of the topic, rather than suggesting it will make a point by point connection with the schoolboy adventure stores mentioned, but it does provide a clear idea of the approach; 'interrogates the reader's romanticised assumptions about the idyllic and resourceful behaviour of boys marooned on an isolated island'.

It would be interesting to see if the contemporary reference to Survivor was developed.

3. How effective is the thesis?

Answers the question 'Appreciation strengthened by making connections'. Presents a strong thesis '**I was positioned to challenge romanticised assumptions about childhood innocence and consider how violence and barbaric practices are easily aroused and enacted**'.

4. Is the introduction interesting, engaging?

Sounds interesting – I would like to read this essay.

### **ACTIVITY** How effective are these introductions?

(a) **Question:** *Discuss the extent to which your response to the attitudes and values presented in a text was influenced by its structure and content.*

Instruction/Command word *Discuss*

Key words *the extent* (how much?) . . . *your response* (which was what?) . . . *attitudes and values* (which were what?) . . . *structure* (techniques used?) *content* – ideas and evidence

Film making techniques used in documentary production can create a strong visual recreation of events to accompany the commentary. Blackfella Films production of The Tall Man (2011) presents a chilling account of the death in custody of Aboriginal man, Cameron Doomadgee and the ensuing controversial repercussions. Interviews with Palm Island residents, giving multiple, personal perspectives, intertwined with interviews with officials who offer legal, political and police viewpoints, are presented in the context of archival footage of the mission days and current powerful scenes of community outrage. The actual footage of participants and the multiple perspectives, mediated through long slow shots of life on the island, encourage a reflective consideration of a tragic event and highlight the complexity of the issue. **The structure and content of the documentary encouraged me to consider the multiple factors involved, but also reaffirmed the importance of giving voice to indigenous experiences and values and attitudes.**

1. Has the question been well explained?

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2. What plan is outlined, what would the topics of the body paragraphs be?

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3. How effective is the thesis?

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4. Is the introduction interesting, engaging?

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(b) **Question:** *The construction of national identity is a complex mix of place, time and character. Discuss how one writer has shaped Australian national identity.*

The Australian bush tradition, created by writers such as Banjo Paterson and Henry Lawson, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century was one which praised the outback and disparaged the city. Contemporary poet, Les Murray, sees himself as continuing that tradition in his poems which represent rural Australia and its people as more grounded and 'dinkum' than city dwellers. Murray uses the Australian stereotype of the 'down to earth' bush folk and the disengaged city dweller in his poems 'The Mitchells' and 'Absolutely Ordinary Rainbow' to establish his representation of Australian national identity. Despite the modern setting, Murray draws on a bush tradition grounded in time, place and characters from Australia's past to continue to construct Australian identity as coming from the country not the city.

1. Has the question been well explained?

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2. What plan is outlined, what would the topics of the body paragraphs be?

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3. How effective is the thesis?

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4. Is the introduction interesting, engaging?

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### DIFFERENT WAYS OF BEGINNING AN ESSAY

1. Repeating the question. **Don't repeat the statement** – it is a waste of time and it is boring. The examiner already knows the question. Write the number of the question and **reword the question to show you understand what it means**.
2. Explain the topic – give definitions of words. Important, but don't just repeat the words in the question – really explain them, use different words, tease out what the topic means in a clear reworded statement. Demonstrate your understanding of terms and concepts, the implications of the question.

**Question:** *To what extent does **narrative structure** influence the **meaning readers make of texts**?*

The **sequence of events** in a text is chosen by a writer **to shape our responses**. The **ordering of incidents positions** readers to accept the plot development and resolution and thus is **significant** in persuading us to **respond to the ideas** presented in the way the author desires.

3. Specifically defining important terms works well for a scientific question:

**Question:** *Discuss how a child acquires language.*

E.g. Language is an extremely complex system, yet young children seem to learn it effortlessly. (Definitions) The term 'child' is taken to refer to an infant from birth; 'acquisition' is different from language learning, it refers to the way a baby and toddler 'absorbs' language from those around them; and the term 'language' will be used to cover all forms of communication, including body language and silence. There are many theories which attempt to explain the development of language: Chomsky believes it is innate, behaviourists like Skinner believe it is a learned behaviour, while the social pragmatist theory (Tomasello) demonstrates how it is based on imitation and modelling. **Critical to all attempts to explain acquisition of language by a child is the need for continuous interaction with others.**

4. Some students try to use a standard introductory sentence which uses a quotation, thinking it makes them appear knowledgeable – but be wary of this, as a prepared quotation may well sit uncomfortably on your essay.

Examples of the use of a ‘prepared’ quote to introduce an essay:

E.g. Coleridge once wrote: ‘An idea, in the highest sense of that word, cannot be conveyed but by a symbol’ Tim Winton’s *Cloudstreet*, although a realist text, relies on symbols to develop its meaning . . . [the ‘patched on’ quote serves no purpose and sits uncomfortably with the rest of the statement].

**Question:** *Explore how the writing of a text can be interpreted as an act of rebellion and/or empowerment.* (Literature, ATAR Exam, 2018, Q5)

E.g. Brecht once wrote, ‘To think, to write, to produce a play also means: to transform society, to transform the state, to subject ideologies to close scrutiny.’ Euripides, known as the ‘Brecht of the Ancient World’, appears to be trying to do just that in *Medea*: to catalyse transformation in his world and question its values. The character Jason who is misogynistic, xenophobic and proud, falls to Medea by the end of the play. Thus, Euripides’ *Medea* can be interpreted as an act of rebellion by questioning Hellenic ideology.

[Although the quote is effective, it still requires quite a leap from it to the actual question and in doing so, some steps are lost – How is this scrutiny explored in the actual text? What ideologies are actually examined? The use of a prepared quote can lead you to glossing over the actual terms of the question and the issues which need to be discussed]

[Note the boring sentence structure of ‘Author’s name once wrote . . .’]

E.g. **Question:** *Discuss the function of the setting in the representation of values in one or more novels.*

‘A woman’s place is the kitchen’. This idea that a physical setting can define a society’s ideas regarding class and gender issues is, whilst a stereotype, true. Margaret Atwood’s *The Handmaid’s Tale* was written in America in the 1980’s at the time of the emergence of The New Right, a fundamentalist Christian political force concerned with America’s declining Caucasian birth rate and the returning of women to their traditional domestic roles as wife and mother (confined to the bedroom and kitchen). Atwood extrapolates these social anxieties in her construction of a theocratic society called Gilead in which men rule and women are defined by their ability to procreate. Within this setting are several others, such as the house, the gymnasium and Jezebels, which reveal the patriarchal class hierarchy of Gilead and women’s role as handmaids.

[A serendipity alignment of a quote and a question!]

5. Begin with a syllabus statement which contextualises your response. A clear, relevant syllabus statement can be a good lead into a question. A relevant background statement, or a curriculum statement can set the parameters and tone of your essay. It can be effective in providing a broad defining statement, containing terminology and concepts from the syllabus, or giving a context for the issue.

**Question:** *Different reading practices can change a reader’s response to a text. Discuss with reference to one or more texts you have studied.*

E.g. The interdependence of language, culture, identity and values means that, for readers, it is possible to attribute a range of meanings to texts.

E.g. The conventions of the sonnet form in poetry not only determines the generic structure used, but also suggest a dominant or normative reading, based on courtly love conventions. However, a contemporary reader may challenge the assumptions underlying the text and produce a resistant reading.

E.g. The process of making meaning of a text draws on a repertoire of social, cultural and cognitive resources. A reader may read for pleasure, make a close reading for study, as a member of a particular social or ethnic group or read with a feminist, psychoanalytical or political bias. Different reading perspectives alter the reader's response to the text. (syllabus statement)

6. Start with an interesting, attention grabbing point. It is important to gain the reader's interest, but make sure your comment is relevant. A thought-provoking statement can gain the readers' attention, so they are engaged and want to read on.

'Three passions, simple but overwhelmingly strong, have governed my life: the longing for love, the search for knowledge, and unbearable pity for the suffering of mankind. These passions, like great winds, have blown me hither and thither, in a wayward course, over a deep ocean of anguish, reaching to the very verge of despair.' (Prologue to *Autobiography* by Bertrand Russell, Simon and Schuster and George Allen & Unwin, 1951)

**Question:** *Explore how ambiguous and evocative language has illuminated the values underpinning the text in at least one text you have studied.*

We desire to accept the extraordinary. The popularity of texts such as *Lord of the Rings*, the Narnia series and Harry Potter testify to this. These texts, which start as being firmly grounded in the ordinary, everyday, expand to reveal an alternate universe. Tim Winton's *Cloudstreet*, the 'left of centre' chronicle of two everyday families, employs 'magic realism', which blends the ordinary and the extraordinary, to lead the reader to an exploration of Australian cultural values and spiritual experiences. The use of Fish as the narrator, who is 'caught between worlds' and the mix of everyday and surreal events, the colloquial language and the poetic symbolism position the readers to reassess our acceptance of the ordinary and the extraordinary and to add another dimension to our understanding of Australian cultural values.

[both these examples show a strong personal engagement and arouse our interest, we want to read more.]

## ACTIVITY

### 1. How effective do you think the following opening sentences are and why?

- (a) **Question:** *Discuss the ways minor characters can reveal social values in a text.*

Famous author Margaret Atwood once wrote 'Context is all as it enriches the meaning the reader receives from the text'.

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- (b) **Question:** *Explore how, from your reading of at least one text, that the values and attitudes of individuals are shaped by their social environment.*

It is definitely true that the values and attitudes of an individual are shaped by their social environment.

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- (c) **Question:** *Discuss the part played by the setting in the representation of identity in one or more novels.*

The representation of identity in many poems are importantly represented through the author's use of setting.

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- (d) **Question:** *The construction of the ending of a novel reveals the underlying values of the novel*

Threaded throughout a novel should be a foreshadowing of the ending that is only revealed in retrospect. While the writer doesn't want the reader to predict the ending from the beginning (how boring is that?), they do want the reader to look for clues to how this ending was always going to happen.

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**2. Possible Opening sentences: How effective are they? Which one would you choose and why?**

**Question:** *'Any work of narrative fiction gives us a story and the telling of the story'.*

*Discuss this statement showing how at least one text employs narrative conventions to construct meaning and engage readers.*

- (a) A work of narrative fiction gives us a story and the telling of the story.

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- (b) While some texts may be read just for the actual story or 'what happens', in order to maintain readers' interest and encourage reflection on the themes explored, a text needs to be effective in the ways it constructs the narrative.

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- (c) How a text is constructed encourages particular responses in the readers and can be used by the writer to alter our attitudes. (syllabus statement)

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- (d) The key to a successful novel, like a successful joke, is in the telling.

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**3. Assess the following opening statements:**

**Question:** *The representation of the 'other' within a text can be a political and/or social comment*

- (a) Being different can be difficult; it can mean being discriminated against because of the way you look, what you wear, how you speak.

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- (b) Exposure to difference is an important experience for everyone, it can make us examine our social and political values.

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- (c) Representation of the 'other' in society are often used to make political or social comment. The 'other' can be defined as a group that is marginalised in society.

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**4. Comment on the effectiveness of these introductions:**

**Question:** *A text can express specific attitudes and values by encouraging the reader or viewer to identify with a central character.*

*Discuss the ways in which techniques of construction promote this identification. Refer to at least one text you have studied.*

Remember: Don't just repeat the words of the question in your first sentence. Rephrase the statement to show that you understand what it means. Usually the question is stated in general term, using words such as 'specific issues', 'arguments', 'responses', 'thinking in particular ways', 'values'. Do not just repeat these general terms in your introduction. Identify the specific issues that you will deal with, the particular techniques, and your personal response.

e.g. Do not say 'The writer wants the reader/viewer to adopt the same attitudes and values as their own to the issues presented.' BE SPECIFIC

[Introductions are based on the Australian film, *Shame* (1988), directed by Steve Jodrell, set in outback WA and starring Deborra-Lee Furness.]

- (a) A film can express specific attitudes and values by encouraging the viewer to identify with a central character. In *Shame*, directed by Steve Jodrell the viewers are encouraged to identify with Asta, the outsider who discovers the shameful secrets of a small country town. The feature film uses techniques such as camera angles, characterisation and symbolic codes to encourage the viewer to accept the specific attitudes of the film.

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(b) By identifying with the main character, a film can encourage the audience to accept specific attitude. By identifying with Asta in Shame we are positioned to accept the producer's attitudes.

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(c) A central character in a text, for example a film, can be used to position the viewer to view events in a certain way. Through the use of techniques such as characterisation, symbolic codes and camera angles and audio codes we are encouraged to identify with Asta and feel angry as she uncovers the town's hidden scandal.

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(d) Texts encourage us to identify with the main character and imagine ourselves in their position. Through this process of identification, we are persuaded to adopt the values and attitudes of the creator. In the film Shame, directed by Steve Jodrell and starring Deborra-Lee Furness, characterisation, camera angles and symbolic codes position us to identify with Asta and support her desire for justice and honesty as she battles the sexism and abuse that she discovers in a small outback Australian town.

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## HOW TO WRITE INTRODUCTIONS

**Question:** *Consider how a text you have read uses voice to encourage you to understand others outside of your own context.*

### Unpacking the question:

This question focuses on the syllabus concepts of ‘voice’ and ‘empathy’.

Voice can be said to convey the personality of the persona delivering the text. It can be the persuasive voice of the writer of an expository text or the narrative voice used in fiction. Narrative voice encompasses the use of first, second or third (omniscient) person, as well as the values and beliefs espoused by the ‘voice’.

You are asked to consider ‘*others outside of your own context*’ – that could be different age, gender, cultural background, historical period.

You need to discuss how *what techniques have been used* to position you to understand, (*empathise with, identify with, relate to*).

### Planning

- Choose a text
- What is the ‘voice’ (use adjectives to construct the persona)
- What is the context?
- How is it different from your own?
- How has voice been used to create understanding – what techniques?
- What has been the effect?

**Sample introduction** (You could build on this or use it as an exemplar for developing your own introduction – the one below is rather dry and reliant on syllabus speak, try to add some life to it.)

A writer’s choice of ‘voice’, that is the persona they construct to ‘speak’ their story, has a powerful effect on a reader’s response. A distinctive, well defined voice can enable a reader to engage vicariously in the recounted experiences, even when the character is from a different situation than the reader. My reading of . . .

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**HISTORY:** Compare these introductions for a History essay. (don’t worry about knowing the content, it is the technique we are considering.)

Is the question reworded; are terms explained; is a plan outlined; does it have a thesis; is it clear and engaging?

**Question:** *Evaluate the proposition that political crisis or significant political events have a divisive impact on Australian society.*

- (a) In this essay I will evaluate the proposition that political crises or significant political events have a divisive impact on Australian society. There are many reasons why political crises are divisive in Australian society. During WW1 there was a lot of argument over whether Australia should introduce conscription. In the end they didn’t but a lot of people got upset along the way.

[Repeats question, too wordy and general, colloquial expression, no thesis]

Your comments:

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- (b) The conscription debate caused major divisions in Australian society during WW1. The Hughes' government tried to introduce conscription through two referendums, in 1916 and 1917. While these were both defeated, a major political crisis developed over whether Australians should be forced to fight overseas in a distant war. These divisions were based on political, social, economic, religious, racial and ethnic differences. The pro-conscription group included non-Labour parties, Protestants, capitalists, British migrants, while the anti-conscription group was consisted of mostly Labor politicians, Catholics, workers, non-British migrants, pacifists and conscientious objectors. The repercussions of the conscription debate were to have divisive long-term consequences for both the Labor Party and Australian society.

[Defines the crisis, outlines issue and the parties involved to be covered in the body of the essay, but too much of a list approach, provides a thesis]

Your comments:

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## **ACTIVITY**

1. **POLITICS AND LAW – Evaluate these introductions** (examples from previous editions of *Creelman Exam Questions: Politics and Law*, published by Academic Group)

What are their strengths and weaknesses? Which is more effective? How could they be improved?

**Question:** *Analyse, in depth, the problems of access and equity faced by one group of Australian society.*

- (a) Access and equity is a serious problem in Australia. We have some serious issues with people not getting the access to the system and not treated with equity. This is because the government isn't doing the right thing and giving them enough money and making them available for those who need the help. Or the courts are tending to favour white people. This essay will be about how people are not getting what they need because the system is against them.

Your comments:

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- (b) Whilst the political and legal system of Australia is based on the rule of law, in practice there are some serious issues with access and equity. The rule of law is the principle that all people are equal before the law and the law is applied equally to all. This includes a number of rights such as the right to trial by jury, the presumption of innocence (being innocent until proven guilty) and the right to a fair trial. Access to the law refers to the concept of the ability of people to exercise their rights within the legal system but things such as cost and language difficulties present significant almost insurmountable challenges for some. Equity refers to the notion that citizens are treated fairly by the procedures, processes and personnel of the system. Many believe that the system does not meet these needs and that the system is in fact 'stacked against' many minority groups.

Your comments:

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## 2. LITERATURE – Evaluate these introductions

**Question:** *Explore how social groups are constructed to endorse or challenge particular ideologies.*

- (a) The way in which particular social or cultural groups are represented in texts reveals the ideological underpinning of the text. William Shakespeare's *Othello* deals with the representation of two cultural groups, the Venetians and the Moors. The Venetians are represented as a white, patriarchal, militaristic Christian society which values military skill, rationality and masculine power. By contrast Moors are represented as black, pagan, irrational and exotic. This representation of the Moors reveals white society's xenophobic fear of the 'other'. Othello inhabits both worlds: while he conforms to the white model of behaviour he is accepted, but his 'fall from grace' is marked by a change in his language and behaviour which is represented by the animalistic and irrational characteristics associated with the outsider, the demonised black 'other'. The tragedy of Othello endorses the dominant white Christian society accepted by the Elizabethan audience.

Your comments:

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- (b) The context in which a text is written impacts on and affects the manner in which the texts represent different ethnic and social groups. Shakespeare's Othello is shaped and moulded by the ideologies and value systems which existed during Elizabethan times, and this affects the representation of Othello and his cultural identity. The associations of blackness to sin and evil, and the common superstitions and suspicions of witchcraft during these times are crucial in informing the 'Elizabethan audiences' response to Othello and the representation of his identity as foreign and 'other'.

Your comments:

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- (c) Tim Winton's Cloudstreet, which is set in Perth in the post-World War II period, deals with two apparently 'typical' Australian families. Through the use of setting, characterisation and symbolism a romanticised version of Australian working-class family life is constructed. Winton's depiction of the Lambs and Pickles reveals a value system which valorises the social group of the working class, with the values of mateship, family life and the life of the spirit.

Your comments:

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**Question:** Consider how a text you have studied represents a particular social group.

- (d) Social behaviour is a complex integration of practices, values and beliefs operating within a particular community. While it is used to identify one group from another, within that community some members may have different experiences of that society, because of their gender, class, race or ethnicity. In Joseph Conrad's Heart of Darkness the white European middle class males of the late nineteenth century, who dominate the text, are represented as having a very different experience and understanding of white imperialistic power than the white European women who passively wait at home for their men. Class is also a factor; the novella mainly concerns the middle class. The black Africans have an identity constructed for them by the white male explorers and exploiters. Conrad constructs the different social identities by contrasts between groups and the language used to describe each group. Through this construction the representation of social grouping functions as a way of consolidating white European patriarchal, imperialistic power by 'othering' women and natives.

Your comments:

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**Question:** *Discuss how the historical context of production influences the representations of a particular group. Discuss in relation to at least one text you have studied.*

(e) In Heart of Darkness representations of African people are certainly influenced by the historical conditions in which the text was produced. Conrad was influenced by his context of early 19th Century European imperialism. While he offers some interrogation the colonial praxis of the European nations and the 'scramble for Africa' in the 1870s, the text nevertheless naturalises his representations of 'the black races' and draws on the contemporary ideology of social Darwinism to legitimate colonialism. Heart of Darkness constructs the African people in terms of the 'other', through the use of bestial terms, by representing them as mad and incomprehensible and, significantly, while describing the people in terms of their bodies, denies them the important human characteristic of speech.

Your comments:

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### 3. Writing good introductions

**Question:** *Discuss the ways that marginalised groups in at least one text are made to submit to OR attempt to challenge dominant ideologies.*

Underline the key words

This is a complex question – you need to understand and explain '*marginalised*', outline specific values and practices of the '*dominant ideologies*', discuss '*ways*', decide if the characters submit OR challenge (you could argue they do both) outline how they are '*made to submit*', '*attempt to challenge*'

Write your understanding of what the question is asking:

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**Examine these introductions below and comment on them.** What good features do they have? How could you improve them? What is missing? What might you change?

- (a) In a world of unequal power relations marginalised groups in society are often forced to follow the dominant group's practices and beliefs in order to survive. However, acts of resistance may be overt or covert. This can be seen in the text No Sugar by Jack Davis, where the white society attempts to 'assimilate' or 'exterminate' the Aboriginal culture and subdue individual characters. The Aborigines are forced to adopt white practices and beliefs, as can be seen in their move to the mission, the rations, the use of the English language and religion. However, throughout the play it is also evident that the Aborigines use their culture, their language and beliefs to subvert white authority.

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- (b) Many social groups maintain their power by ostracising individuals and suppressing dissident ideas in their society, because of their practices and beliefs are different from those of the dominant group. These alienated individuals and groups are often forced to present an outward appearance of consent to the dominant ideology in order to survive, while secretly rebelling. In Margaret Atwood's The Handmaid's Tale the dominant social hierarchy acts to suppress females and persecutes those having different beliefs. Although the marginalised individuals and groups in The Handmaid's Tale appear to conform and are often forced to submit, Atwood shows how some members of that group resist the prevailing ideology and rebel against the dominant culture.

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- (c) In the play Hedda Gabler, by Henrick Ibsen, there are two characters, Hedda Gabler and Ejlert Lovborg, who do not fit into the late 19<sup>th</sup> century bourgeois Norwegian society's dominant, conservative, patriarchal culture. As a result, they are marginalised and eventually die, because society cannot accommodate those who do not conform.

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#### 4. Comment on these introductions

**Question:** *Examine how everyday experience can acquire greater significance through the use of effective language conventions. You should refer to two or more texts. [Change the poet and the examples if you don't know Harwood's work]*

- (a) Gwen Harwood uses many poetic techniques to develop the meaning of her poems 'Home of Mercy' and 'Price Giving.' The meanings of these poems can be seen as showing how ordinary, everyday experiences reveal examples of power being dispersed between the different genders.

How could you improve this introduction?

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[One reworked version] Gwen Harwood employs a variety of expressive techniques in her poetry to enable the reader to see an event or feeling in a new way, revealing depth and meaning in the mundane. Harwood creates strong images, using visual and aural images to provide new insights into everyday experiences. The technique of juxtaposing the **mundane** commonplace with the extraordinary often defamiliarises the reader to an event which they might have preconceptions about. In the poems . . .

[Much better, now you take over and apply it to two specific poems – if you don't know Harwood's poems, change it to a poet you are familiar with]

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**Question:** *How can texts from another historical or cultural context have relevance for you, the reader? Refer to one or more poems in your answer.*

- (b) It is often said that literature, be it a novel or a poem, is a product of its society. It is difficult for a poet to be detached from the values and attitude of their society, and these are often portrayed through their work. When reading poetry, it is important to recognise the context in which the poem was produced, as often it provides a reader with insight into the poet's values, attitudes and beliefs. When I read poetry from another historical and cultural context, it is important that I understand the context and the values of the poet and seek to recognise those values and attitudes that are still relatable to me today. When reading the metaphysical poems 'Going to Bed' and 'The Flea' by John Donne and 'To This Coy Mistress' by Andrew Marvel, I gain understanding from these poems by the interest I get from entering, briefly, the world of another context. The poems provide me with insight into the society's attitudes to sex and virginity, and to the position of men and women in relation to each other in society.

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**Question:** With reference to **one or more** texts, discuss the ways in which particular minority groups are represented.

- (c) No Sugar written by Aboriginal playwright Jack Davis, follows the trials and tribulations of the Millimurras, an Aboriginal family, in rural WA, between 1929 and 1934. There are a variety of different ways in which the Aboriginals are shown as marginalised or oppressed by the white Australians because of their race, in the play, including, through the language, power and law, and the inclusion and treatment of particular Aboriginal characters. Through these aspects in the play, the reader can identify that the Aboriginals were a trapped race, who suffered terribly, especially in those depression years.

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### **ACTIVITY** Politics and Law

(examples from Creelman Exam Questions: Politics and Law, published by Academic Group)

#### 1. Which is the better introduction?

**Question:** Assess the extent to which a Bill of Rights would strengthen the protection of human rights in Australia.

Both of these introductions were written in-class under test conditions with no notes. Which is more effective? Why? (They are copied exactly as they were written)

- (a) Human rights are those that relate to the dignity and wellbeing of the individual and ensure that all people are treated equally and fairly. They apply from birth to death and are an inherent part of human experience, Australia has many sources of protections of rights which include constitutional, statute, common and international law. The 1982 Canadian Charter Rights and Freedoms is a constitutional bill of rights that will be assessed. By examining these protections, it will be determined whether a constitutional bill or rights would strengthen human rights in Australia.

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(b) The debate surrounding the introduction of either a statutory or constitutional bill of rights (BOR) has been present since federation with recent discussions arising at the 2008 '2020 summit' and through the Brennan Committee's investigation and the Rudd Government's response to that committee. By enacting a BOR, which can be defined as a law stating what is considered to be the fundamental civil, political and other civil liberties (Willmott, 2010, p440) Australia will be by law protecting the rights and freedoms of individuals. However, in order to accurately assess whether such a law would strengthen human rights protections, it is first necessary to evaluate the effectiveness of the current protections. It will then be necessary to discuss the various arguments for and against a BOR. This will then provide a wider foundation of knowledge for a judgement to be made on whether a BOR would be beneficial for the nation and overall strengthen human rights protections in Australia.

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**2. Sample Introductions** – which is more effective? What is good/inadequate with these introductions? How could they be improved?

**Question:** *'Australia's system of government is not a true reflection of the will of the people but rather a reflection of the will of the political parties, lobby groups and the media'. Discuss this statement.*

(a) One of the functions of parliament and government is to be 'representative' and thus reflect the will of the people. Many people argue that the Australian Government does not truly perform this function but rather is a reflection of the will of the various political parties, lobby groups and media outlets. However, whilst elements of this statement might be accurate, the government can certainly claim a mandate from the people when performing its function.

Your comment:

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(b) Political parties, lobby groups and the media do have a big impact on the performance of government in Australia. They basically run the country and the people have little impact except at elections. Elections in Australia are the best way to have your voice heard because the media is often biased and can do much damage and whip up support for an issue and do not report accurately all the time. They often blow things up. Lobby groups represent particular groups in the community and lobby for them, but they are specialised and too can be powerful at times. There are also political parties that are supposed to represent interests, but they are only interested in winning at all costs. The government spends a lot of time on issues that don't mean anything to people and waste Question Time shouting at each other rather than debating what is important.

This is a shame because it is important for political parties, lobby groups and media to make sure they are following the government.

Your comments:

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**3. Question:** *'Constitutional change in Australia has been a difficult and often contentious process'. Examine the means of constitutional change over time and evaluate this claim.*

- (a) The Constitution is an important document as it provides the guidelines to power and governance in Australia. However, even though provisions were made for its alteration, very few changes have been made since its inception at Federation. Referendums have a notoriously low success rate which has meant that other methods such as High Court interpretation have been used more often and with greater success. These two processes of constitutional change have been somewhat contentious (more so at different times) and evaluating the variety of reasons for this factor.

Your comments:

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- (b) The Constitution of the Commonwealth of Australia is the document that sets out the roles and powers of the Federal Parliament. It was written in the 1890s in the lead-up to Federation and much of it was based on the Westminster System of Responsible Parliamentary Government adopted from the UK. However, the writer's of the Constitution recognised the need for the possibility for changes to the document in the future and included Chapter 8 (section 128) which clearly outlines the process for Referendums. Since Federation this process has been put to the people on a number of occasions, but it has been very unsuccessful. Other methods of constitutional change have been employed such as High Court Interpretation. Any changes to the constitution can have enormous repercussions on the political and legal system and are thus contentious although the extent to which varies. It is important to evaluate the process of constitutional change in Australia over time.

Your comment:

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## Essay Outline. How to use a strong Introduction to develop an essay:

**Question:** *Show how at least one text you have studied employs narrative conventions to construct meaning and engage readers.*

### Introduction

While some texts may be read just for the story, in order to maintain readers' interest and encourage reflection on the themes explored, a text must be effective in the way it tells the story. The abduction of a young woman is a common story in the tabloids and TV dramas, but John Fowles' The Collector makes the reader reconsider the issue because of how the story is told. My interest was aroused and maintained by Fowles using the point of view of both the perpetrator and the victim, by the manipulation of the structure and through the intertextual references and symbolism. The narrative conventions engaged and drew me into the psychological battle between Clegg and Miranda, giving me an understanding of the effect of the abduction on both characters and providing the 'inside story' of a situation often reported in the tabloid press.

### Body

**Paragraph 1** Changing point of view

**(Topic sentence)** The changing point of view engages the reader and encouraged me to view the events from the perspective of both Clegg and Miriam.

E.g. Clegg – background

E.g. Aware of the detailed planning and execution of his plot.

E.g. Change of perspective to Miranda – change in language and feelings.

**(Tie back sentence)** Fowles manipulation of the point of view with the switch from Clegg's point of view to Miranda's engaged and intrigued me, making me reassess my reading of the situation and to see the 'behind the news' version.

**Paragraph 2** Manipulation of structure

**(Topic sentence)** Enclosing Miranda's narrative within Clegg's helps heighten the sensation of her being trapped

E.g. Voyeurism

E.g. Miranda's experience

E.g. Reverting to Clegg's point of view made me realise how hopeless Miranda's situation was.

**(Tie back sentence)** When I read the story from Miranda's perspective, I sympathised with her, however, by providing Clegg's point of view Fowles encouraged me to consider his motivation and background.

**Paragraph 3** Intertextual references and the impact of symbolism

**(Topic sentence)** The motif of collecting functions as a social and psychological commentary on Miranda's kidnapping

E.g. The Tempest – Miranda and Caliban

E.g. The butterfly metaphor.

**(Tie back sentence)** The motif of collecting reinforces the predatory and objectifying nature of Clegg's behaviour and reaffirms Miranda's entrapment

## Conclusion

The vivid portrayal of a kidnapping and murder from both the predator and the victim's point of view creates a powerful reworking of the traditional narrative structure of the abduction and murder genre and the typical tabloid reporting of such incidents. While Clegg's perspective gave me an insight into his psychological disfunction, Miranda's point of view and the literary allusions positioned me to sympathise with her, but also to feel the sense of dread because of her entrapment.

### **ACTIVITY** Speed Introductions

[You choose your own text, so each answer will be different]

- Write an introduction to the following writing prompts. Allow 10 minutes for each one.
- The introduction should contain the elements of a good introduction.
- Each introduction should be three-four sentences long.

(a) **Question:** *Discuss how the characters in ONE text you have studied this year are used to reinforce or challenge accepted ideas, values and attitudes about particular individuals or groups in society.*

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(b) **Question:** *The ways in which narrative texts construct and resolve conflicts are important in shaping our understandings of the text's values. Discuss with reference to one text you have studied this year.*

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(c) **Question:** Analyse the ways in which a text you have studied reinforces or challenges stereotypical representations of Australian lifestyle, culture or identity.

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### A GOOD INTRODUCTION IS GOLD

It grabs the attention of the reader.

It addresses and explains the question.

It provides a clear idea of what your essay will cover.

It provides a tantalising thesis to engage the reader.



# DEVELOPING PARAGRAPHS

## 7

Each paragraph is like a mini essay. Use the TET model to form your paragraph.

1. **Topic sentence** – states the topic or idea developed in this paragraph. WHAT you are writing about. Use some of the key words from the question to show that you are on track, answering the question
2. **Example and explanation sentences** – develops and explains the topic. Provide facts, statistics, examples, illustrations, quotes, etc to support your topic. You should have either one extended example (developed with evidence) or 2-3 less detailed points. Choose a logical order for your material. HOW you are proving or substantiating your idea. Analyse rather than describe.
3. **Tie back to thesis**, sum up your ideas and tie back to your thesis to show the significance of your explanation – WHY is this relevant? Use key words from the question.

Each new paragraph should be indicated by either indenting or leaving a line before the start of a new paragraph.

The length of paragraphs varies, but the structures remains the same.

Think carefully about the ordering of the sentences within the paragraph, each should follow logically and add to or develop the point you are making. Do they provide strong evidence that supports or develops your topic sentence? Are they all relevant? Eliminate weak or irrelevant material. (Sometimes a deleted point can become the basis of a whole new paragraph.) Are they presented in the most logical order? Do they lead to your tie back to thesis sentence?

Use signposts as transitions between paragraphs. Linking words between paragraphs: ‘Also’, ‘in addition’, ‘as a result’, ‘consequently’, likewise’, ‘further’, ‘similarly’, ‘subsequently’ – show your argument is continuing in the same directions. ‘Nevertheless’, ‘however’, ‘but’, ‘on the other hand’, ‘instead’, show you are changing direction or introducing a qualification.

## TOPIC SENTENCES AND PARAGRAPHING

A good paragraph is a unified piece of writing; it has one central idea. This main idea is expressed in the topic sentence. The topic sentence is usually at beginning of the paragraph, although this is not always the case. However, when you are writing essays for assessment, the topic sentence needs to be the first sentence of the paragraph to signpost your argument. The topic sentence contains a controlling idea, a signpost, which directs the rest of the paragraph. All the sentences in the paragraph should be about the subject mentioned in the topic sentence. They should follow logically the idea and be linked in some way. This gives your paragraph unity.

**Here is a topic sentence.** ‘In Canberra there are many sights to interest the tourist’.

The writer has stated their purpose; they plan to describe some of these sights. The reader can expect to read about these sights.

**Another topic sentence:** ‘Animals can be classified into two groups.’ The paragraph will outline the characteristics of these two groups.

### More topic sentences.

What is the controlling idea?

How would you expect the paragraph to be developed?

1. Smoking is a health hazard.
2. Julius Caesar was a brilliant military commander.
3. Thailand has four natural geographic regions.
4. Studying a foreign language has many benefits.
5. Computer generated special effects have an important role in modern films.
6. Othello is accepted by the Venetian society because of his military prowess and rational and persuasive discourse.

### Topic Sentences

Below are two paragraphs. Above each paragraph there are some possible topic sentences. Choose the most appropriate one to begin each paragraph. Make sure that it contains the controlling idea.

- (a) Camping is a cheap way to have a holiday for these reasons.
- (b) Camping is not as comfortable as staying in a motel.
- (c) Camping is a popular way to have a holiday.

\_\_\_\_\_ For one thing, it is a fairly cheap holiday. It is much cheaper to hire a caravan or a tent than it is to stay in a motel. In addition, it is very pleasant to sleep out in the bush and to have picnic meals instead of eating inside. The air is fresh and you have a chance to enjoy nature. Moreover, it is good for us all to escape from the phone, the internet and the television and to forget the problems of the world. Many busy people think it is the most relaxing holiday.

- (a) Assignments are a very important part of a student’s life.
- (b) These are the steps to follow when doing an assignment.
- (c) Some students enjoy doing an assignment for these reasons.

\_\_\_\_\_ First, locate the information you need. Search the library catalogue to find at all the resources that might have something on the topic. After that, you must read carefully and make notes. Next, draw up a plan for your assignment; organise all the relevant material into a plan. Then begin to write.

[Answers: 1 c; 2 b]

## THE MAIN IDEA

How to write a clear, well – structured paragraph:

- (a) The main idea is clearly expressed in a topic sentence, preferably the first sentence in the paragraph.
- (b) Following sentences are in sensible sequence, their purpose being to illustrate, expand or develop the main idea.
- (c) The last sentence confirms and strengthens the idea expressed in the topic sentence, and suitably rounds off the paragraph. It ties the paragraph back to the main idea, supports your thesis and keeps you on track for answering the question.

Read the following, simply written paragraph:

Zurich is noted for its **brightness** and **cleanliness**. The deep blue of the lake, the clear blue of the sky and the dazzling white of the distant snows blend colourfully with the white washed stone buildings, the gay shutters (pink, blue or light green), the bright window ledges massed with geraniums and begonias and the pale blue of the noiseless trams. No litter is allowed to soil the street, where the cleaners are at work all day. Not a scrap of dust nor a finger smudge can be seen on doors or windows. **The colour and freshness of the city are a joy to every visitor.**

NOTE:

- (a) The clear topic sentence.
- (b) The following sentences in support, providing examples of brightness and cleanliness.
- (c) The final sentence that confirms the idea expressed in the topic sentence, gives the effect and sums up the paragraph. Note that ‘brightness’ and ‘cleanliness’ has been confirmed through the examples given and reiterated with ‘colour’ and ‘freshness’.

This is a good plan for you to use whenever you write a paragraph.

### ACTIVITY

Use this pattern to write a paragraph about:

- (a) your favourite holiday place
- (b) an example of urban blight
- (c) The impact of COVID 19 on (select one topic from the following: the travel industry, AFL, schools, live entertainment). The important factor in your description is to focus on relevant material and eliminate irrelevant aspects.

(a) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

(b) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

(c) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### SAMPLE PARAGRAPHS

**Question:** *Describe Australia's response to the outbreak of World War I.*

1. Topic sentence directly addresses the topic/question.
2. Second sentence explains the main idea.
3. The third sentence adds to the explanation.
4. Final or clincher sentence summarises the significant ideas of the paragraph, provides an effect or thesis.

Australians greeted the outbreak of World War I with great enthusiasm and support for England and the Empire. Patriotic fervour ran high as Prime Minister Fisher promised Australia's commitment 'to the last man and the last shilling', and men rushed to enlist in the AIF. This intense nationalistic feeling resulted in the expression of a great deal of anti-German sentiment and attacks on German persons and property. Although some people opposed the War from the outset, most Australians welcomed it, and an atmosphere of optimism and celebration prevailed.

Follow this format for writing a paragraph on Australian's response to the Vietnam War.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### PARAGRAPH EXAMPLES

Here are some sample paragraphs written specifically for particular subjects. Notice the format varies somewhat to meet the requirements of the different subjects.

Short answers in an exam often require a paragraph answer. Note how many marks are allocated and be sure to provide that number of points. Short answers require economical structuring of information, with a short direct opening statement and often follow a chronological or sequential pattern which needs a concluding statement, but not necessarily a Thesis statement.

## ENGLISH

**Question:** Outline one issue explored in The Chant of Jimmy Blacksmith

One of the primary issues dealt with in the novel The Chant of Jimmy Blacksmith by Thomas Kenally is the racist relationship between Aboriginal Australians and the white settlers. Jimmy was subjected to the racist values and attitudes of his employers, Mr. Neville, the Christian minister who adopted him, the police and the general public. This racism was very obvious in the way in which Constable Farrell treated him when he applied for work as a police tracker. Farrell questioned Jimmie's character and asked him if he was a 'lazy, cunning black like the rest of them'. Kenally draws the reader's attention to the fact that the law had a major influence in maintaining racist behaviour and the blacks were treated as if they had no rights. Even though the story is set at the beginning of this century it reminds the reader of police racism and abuse, particularly in relation to black deaths in custody, and the violence the police often use when dealing with Aborigines.

*What issue is dealt with in the topic sentence?*

The racist relationship between Aboriginal Australians and the white settlers.

*Do the following sentences develop the ideas with examples?*

Yes – examples are given and commented on.

*What is achieved in the final sentence?*

The thesis is stated: police racism and violence the police often use when dealing with Aborigines.

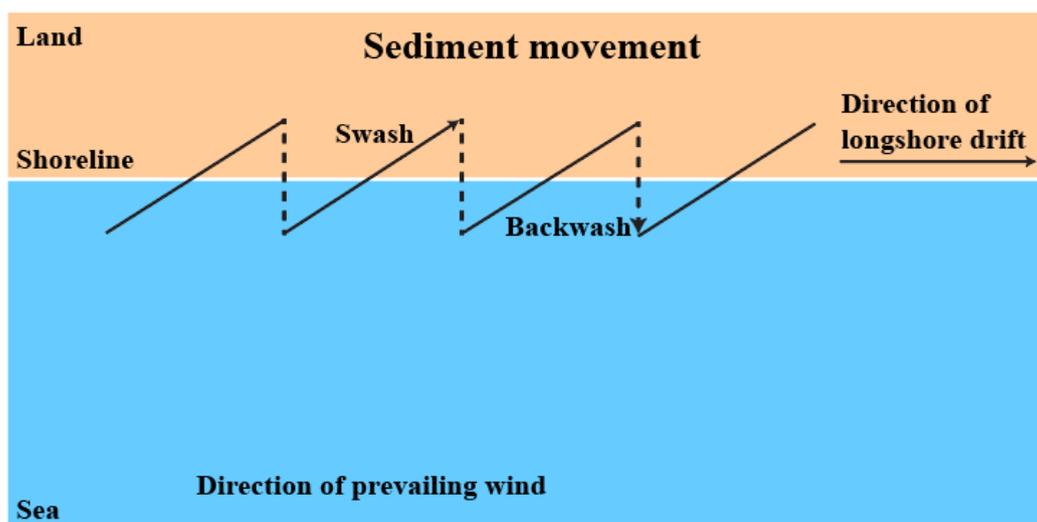
## GEOGRAPHY

**Question:** Explain longshore drift

(Topic/Definition) Longshore drift is a process in which sediment is moved along the shoreline. This form of mass transport is the result of the influence of strong winds on the water, close to the shore. Initially, the waves are clustered along the inshore zone because of the strong winds. Consequently, the excess water produced must disperse. This causes the development of a longshore current which runs parallel to the shore, moving away from the wind. This movement stirs up the sediment on the seabed, which is transported with the current. Finally, the sediment caused by the longshore current is carried parallel to the coast.

(It is appropriate to add a diagram)

### Longshore drift



*The paragraph begins with a definition.*

*The details are presented in a logical, sequential series of steps.*

*Why is there no thesis statement?*

*What is the effect of the diagram?*

## HISTORY – ANALYTICAL EXPOSITORY PARAGRAPH

**Question:** *What effect did the British have on the Indian economy and culture?*

India's economy and culture were badly damaged by the British. The **economy suffered** because India's industrial development was deliberately held back by the British so that India would be forced to spend its money on British goods. Also, Indians were taxed by the British. Some of India's crops, such as jute, cotton and tea were sold to Britain for low prices and then Britain sold them to Europe, making large profits for British investors. **India's culture also suffered**. In 1835 English was made the official language in administration and justice. India's indigenous languages could no longer be used in these areas. Britain's system of education was introduced to 'create a class of person, Indian in blood and colour, but English in opinion, in morals and intellect.' However, new inventions were brought to India, such as the electric lights and radios, bicycles and automobiles and various forms of communications. In my opinion these may have been beneficial to India, but not to such an extent that they cancelled out the damage done to India by the British. **Overall, the British rule was damaging to the Indian economy and culture.**

*The topic sentence clearly states the writer's opinion.*

*The two aspects, economy and culture are dealt with by providing supporting statements and evidence.*

*An opposing idea is expressed and refuted.*

*The thesis is restated as the concluding sentence.*

## ACCOUNTING AND FINANCE

**Question:** *What is credit and how does it work? (4 marks)*

In our society consumers can buy goods and services on credit. (definition) Credit is when the consumer receives these products before they are fully paid for. They usually pay for them in instalments. The consumer does not actually own the goods until all the instalments have been paid. (e.g.) Credit enables people to use goods and services before they have the money to pay for them. (e.g.) People frequently use credit to buy houses, cars and domestic appliances. (explanation) Although credit has obvious advantages, the consumer must pay for this convenience by paying interest on the money provided by credit and there are heavy financial penalties for not paying on time. (tie-back, effect) **Buying goods and services on credit helps the economy flow and grow but it can be a financial trap for consumers.**

*Begins with a definition (in the second sentence – why? What is the impact of this?)*

*Explains how credit works and is used. Gives advantages and disadvantages.*

*Deals with the effect in the final sentence.*

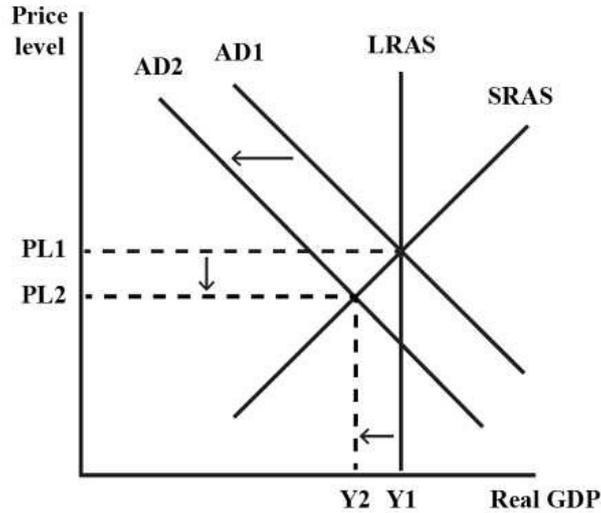
## ECONOMICS

**Question:** *Explain the likely impact on the Australian economy of a Chinese recession.*

A recession in China would provide a negative demand-side shock to the Australian economy. There would be a fall in net exports due to a fall in demand for mineral, energy

and agricultural commodities, such as iron ore, coal and food products. Planned investment would fall as producers tried to reduce their production capacity. The flow-on effect would be job losses. Consumer consumption might fall as the level of household income and consumer confidence fell as the multiplier process worked through the economy. The diagram shows the impact of a fall in aggregate demand from AD1 to AD2. Income falls from Y1 to Y2 and growth slows. The price level falls from PL1 to PL2. **The Australian economy would be severely disrupted.**

(An aggregate demand diagram with explanations is **essential**)



*This paragraph follows a sequence of cause and effects. It starts with a general statement about the effect, follows with the consequences. It does not provide specific examples, which would be helpful. It concludes with a summing up. Note that a diagram is essential.*

### A SHORT-EXTENDED ANSWER RESPONSE FOR HUMAN BIOLOGY

**Question:** Explain how mutations cause variations between members of the same species, and why these mutations can be advantageous. (5 marks)

**(Topic/Definition)** Mutations are permanent changes in DNA to produce new characteristics. Mutations can cause variations through germline changes. Germline mutations are inherited where the individual is not affected but produces gametes with the variations. These variations will be passed on by interbreeding of some species. Mutations produce variations through the following means:

1. Non-disjunction – Chromatids fail to separate during the cellular division phase of mitosis.
2. Translocation – portion of the chromosomes detaches and reattaches at a different position on either the same chromosome or a different chromosome.
3. Inversion – a portion of chromosome detaches and reattaches on the same position on a chromosome, but in an inverted position.
4. Duplication – portion of a chromosome is replicated or occurs twice.
5. Deletion – portion of the chromosome is lost or removed, resulting in a shorter chromosome.

**(Thesis/Effect)** These mutations can be advantageous as they provide variation to a population. These changed traits allow the organism to be better adapted to their environment. Therefore when different selection pressures act on a population the advantageous alleles are more

likely to survive and reproduce with others of the same species, passing on the favorable traits to their offspring.

*This response begins with a clear definition then lists types of variations in point form and finishes with the advantages.*

*It provides a lot of information for 5 marks. How long would it take you to write it?*

*NB – In scientific writing it is often more effective to use point form rather than full sentences.*



## DEVELOPING THE TOPIC SENTENCE WITH FOLLOW-ON SENTENCES

The idea outlined by the topic sentence must be adequately developed by the subsequent sentences. A paragraph, like the essay itself, must have unity. The topic sentence should be developed in a logical, sequential way.

Some means of development include:

- Examples, evidence or proof (statistics; quotes from the text)
- An extended illustration
- Explanation, elaboration ('in other words . . .' 'that is . . .'), definition of terms
- Argument, logical connections (cause/effect, problem/diagnosis/prognosis/remedy, etc.)
- Comparison and contrast
- Anthesis, presenting both sides, or opposing views
- Narrative or description

### ACTIVITY

Below are nine paragraphs. Decide which of the above terms best describes the method used in their construction. (*Note that paragraphs might use mixed methods or could be variously classified.*)

1. The quality of our environment has deteriorated in many ways with the advance of technology. The development of technology and machinery has led to the increased use of fossil fuel and carbon emissions. The ubiquitous use of plastics for packaging has resulted in ever growing stockpiles of rubbish and pollution in our oceans. Our roads are congested with cars and trucks, all spewing out pollutants and clogging our suburbs and country. Technological advances have blighted our quality of life.

2. Greek tragedy is based on the concept of the 'hamartia' or 'tragic flaw', the characteristic that leads to the downfall of the protagonist. The trait of 'hubris', or pride, is that flaw in the case of Jason. He arrogantly leaves his wife, Medea for another woman, saying 'You'll change. I know you'll change'. Later, when Medea admits defeat, he remarks, 'I was right, and you admit it'. However, Medea exploits Jason's flaw of pride to lure him into an unsuspecting, overconfident state while she plots revenge. Jason, believing arrogantly that he couldn't possibly be wrong, is shocked when his children, wife-to-be and his father, the king are horribly murdered. Through this dramatisation, showing Jason's hubris as a fatal flaw, Euripides warns Athenians that their arrogance and overconfidence in their Golden Age could lead to their destruction. In fact, his play was somewhat prophetic in this respect as, soon after its production, Athens fell to Sparta during the Peloponnesian War, proving Euripides' warning was true.
3. There was a strange stillness. The birds, for example – where had they gone? Many people spoke of them, puzzled and disturbed. The feeding stations in the back yards were deserted. The few birds seen anywhere were moribund; they trembled violently and could not fly. It was a spring without voices. On the mornings that had once throbbed with the dawn chorus of robins, catbirds, doves, jays, wrens, and scores of other bird voices there was now no sound; only silence lay over the fields and woods and marsh. (Rachel Carson Silent Spring (1962-from the opening pages of her book about the effect of the indiscriminate use of fertilisers and pesticides)
4. The conditions in the trenches in Flanders where the soldiers in the First World War fought many battles were atrocious. Horses and men drowned in muddy quagmires formed by shell holes filled with water after one of the wettest winters ever known in that area. Everyone and everything was soaking wet and cold, freezing cold. Equipment could not be moved and was always getting bogged. Some men, stuck in the mud, had their backs broken as their comrades attempted to extricate them. Others were never recovered from their muddy dugouts which became their graves. Some of those still alive wished for death. Overall, the death toll was enormous, and the human suffering was dreadful.
5. In the documentary Children Born of the Bomb filmic techniques are used to construct the Russian military and their actions as being cruel and heartless. For example, eerie, discordant music accompanies images of bombing and explosions over Kazakhstan which helps to construct the bombings as inhumane, horrific events in the minds of the viewers. At other times in the documentary patriotic Russian music is played when images of nuclear explosions are shown, to convey the Russian pride in their military achievement. Then a close-up image of a hideously deformed 'cyclops' baby encourages the viewers to consider the results of these nuclear tests. The contrast between the heroic music and the terrible images positions the viewer to see the actions as brutal and callous. These techniques construct the Russian military as cruel and heartless and the nuclear tests over Kazakhstan as inhuman acts which devastated the Kazak people.
6. Why do people suffer? Some psychiatrists believe life starts with the suffering and pain of birth, and thus we are psychologically predetermined to suffer. Some religions believe it is because of original sin, which means we are all born with a propensity to evil or doing harm to ourselves and others. While the beginning of life may be inescapably traumatic in one way or another, there are many factors which can contribute to our suffering through life, including general social conditions of poverty, inequality, prejudice and living conditions, as well as individual situations like physical disabilities, abuse, emotional neglect and bullying. These social and individual factors can affect individuals differently. Personality traits, as well as upbringing, can teach individuals to react in different ways to the same situations; enabling one person to be overwhelmed while another person displays resilience when confronted by trauma or suffering. While some individuals seem to have more bad luck or adverse circumstances than others, it seems that no-one can escape suffering; it is part of the human condition.

7. Voting should be compulsory. It is the duty of every citizen to exercise their choice about how we are governed, although many people abuse this right and meet their obligations by just registering a donkey vote. Elections give individuals the opportunity to voice their views about the policies and rules of our society, but many people have no interest or opinion about these matters and vote out of ignorance or apathy, just because they have to. Therefore, while compulsory voting is an important democratic right and responsibility, abuse of this right can distort the democratic process.
8. *Does a dog or a cat make a better pet?* Pets provide companionship and affection. Both dogs and cats respond to the love and attention shown by their owners, but usually dogs are more effusive, while cats are more aloof. The loyalty of dogs is the stuff of legends, while the cat who walks alone is a common motif. Theoretically the responsibility of caring for one's pet should be the same whether it is a dog or a cat, but dogs do tend to need more attention than cats. While a cat can be quite independent and wander the streets alone, or sit contentedly on a cushion, a dog needs to be walked and have a large fenced area for movement. Cats groom themselves, while dogs need a carer to wash them, clip their nails, etc. I suppose it depends what your needs are, but personally, I think a cat makes a better pet.
9. I do not fully agree with the statement that money spent on space programs is money mis-spent. Certainly, it could be spent on developing agricultural or manufacturing programs, or on humanitarian projects here on earth. However, the desire to explore, to discover, to push the boundaries of science is a very strong human impulse. But unfortunately, so is the urge for power, dominance and colonization, which is part of the motivation behind space exploration. When we look up into the immensity of space, the multitude of stars and galaxies, it is hard to not wonder whether life exists out there and to want to find out. The yearning to push the boundaries of space is both a noble objective and a base human motive. The size and mystery of the universe does seem to justify the expenditure, but human greed and self-interest sounds a warning bell, making it hard to justify money spent on space programs.

[Answers (This allocation is not binding; the paragraphs may be a blend of various elements. 1-Examples; 2-Explanation, definition; 3-Narrative, description (but you could have said Extended illustration); 4-Extended illustration; 5-Examples; 6-Argument, but you might have chosen Explanation /Definition; 7-Argument; 8-Comparison and contrast; 9-Argument, antithesis.]

### **ACTIVITY** Developing the topic by follow-on sentences

Develop the following topic sentences into paragraphs by **ELABORATING** or explaining the following ideas:

1. **Power carries with it both privileges and responsibilities.**

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**2. Control of carbon emissions is necessary to reduce global warming.**

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Develop the following topic sentences into paragraphs by providing **EXAMPLES FOR** the following ideas:

**1. Science fiction texts provide important insights into our everyday world.**

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**2. Equal access to legal representation is not available to all Australians.**

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Develop the following topic sentences into paragraphs by **ILLUSTRATING** the following ideas:

1. Autumn is a depressing season

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2. Graphic novels should be studied as significant literary texts.

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Develop the following topic sentences into paragraphs by **ANTITHESIS** to develop the following ideas:

1. There is a strong case for single sex secondary schools.

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2. Shakespeare is out of date and his texts should not be studied by students.

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### Improve your paragraphs by developing, elaborating or giving more detailed examples.

[Notice how each version adds to the detail; based on an activity in Student Self-Assessment Kit developed by Harvey Agricultural SHS teachers, 1994]

1. One technique used to promote television news is montage. Television stations use a montage of significant historical events and recent incidents to promote their news bulletins. They construct these montages to create an impression for their viewers that their newscast is dealing with both world and local events and they are reporting breaking news. They promote the impression that their news team is at the scene of the action and working to keep viewers informed.
2. One technique used to promote television news is montage. Television stations use a montage of significant historical events and recent incidents to promote their news bulletins. They construct these montages to create an impression for their viewers that their newscast is dealing with both world and local events and they are reporting breaking news. **An example of this is the Channel 7 ad for their news bulletin at 6.00 pm. In their promotion they show a montage of significant historical news events; the moon landing, the fall of the Berlin Wall, the attack on the World Trade Centre, a royal wedding, a ferry accident, recent bushfire coverage and breaking news of a car accident. This montage of events is used to imply that the Channel 7 team is covering significant worldwide events and it is also at the cutting edge of news as it happens and that they are somehow connected to these events** They promote the impression that their news team is at the scene of the action and working to keep viewers informed.
3. One technique used to advertise television news is montage. Television stations use a montage of significant historical events and recent incidents to promote their news bulletins. They construct these montages to evoke in the viewer an impression that their news broadcast is dealing with both world and local events and they are reporting breaking news. **They show their reporters commenting on world news and at the scene of breaking news, as it happens, to present their team as facing danger to cover the news for their viewers.** An example of this is the Channel 7 ad for their news bulletin at 6.00 pm. In their promotion they show a montage of significant historical news events; the moon landing, the fall of the Berlin Wall, the attack on the World Trade Centre, a royal wedding. **These images are of high-profile news events which attracted great interest. The producers are attempting to suggest to the viewers that Channel 7 news team are at the forefront of recording and reporting on important historical events.**

**This montage is followed by another series of images which depicts significant current events** such as a ferry accident, recent bushfire coverage and breaking news of a car accident. This montage of events is used to imply that the Channel 7 team is at the cutting edge of breaking news, they are committed to reporting major events of interest to their viewers and that they are somehow connected to these events. They promote the impression that their news team is at the scene of the action and working to keep viewers informed.

### Developing a paragraph

1. Characterisation is used in the film The Year of Living Dangerously to construct Sukarno as a leader who lacks compassion for his people. Camera angle shots of Sukarno convey his powerful position and huge posters of Sukarno in street scenes further influences the audience to view Sukarno as a dictator. However, these images of Sukarno are contrasted with footage of poor Indonesians eating rice off the floor. The effect of these filmic techniques is to persuade the viewer to respond with approbation towards Sukarno.
2. Characterisation is used in the film The Year of Living Dangerously to construct Sukarno as a leader who lacks compassion for his people. **Low** camera angle shots of Sukarno convey his powerful position and footage of huge posters of Sukarno **in impoverished** street scenes further influences the audience to view Sukarno as a dictator **with vast power and enormous popularity**. However, these images of Sukarno are contrasted with footage of poor Indonesians eating rice off the floor, **a technique that invites the audience to think that Sukarno has little regard for the poverty of his people**. The effect of these filmic techniques is to persuade the viewer to respond with approbation towards Sukarno.
3. Characterisation is used in the film The Year of Living Dangerously to construct Sukarno as a leader who lacks compassion for his people. Low camera angle shots of Sukarno convey his powerful position and footage of huge posters of Sukarno in impoverished street scenes further influences the audience to view Sukarno as a dictator with vast power and enormous **contrived** popularity. However, these images of Sukarno are contrasted with footage of poor Indonesians eating rice off the floor – a technique that invites the audience to think that Sukarno has little regard for the poverty of his people. **This use of characterisation encourages viewers to question Sukarno's leadership while President of Indonesia and to define his period of rule as being an era which did not help the Indonesian people**. The effect of these filmic techniques is to persuade the viewer to respond with approbation towards Sukarno.



## Improve your paragraphs by developing, elaborating or giving more detailed examples.

Paragraphs based on *Heart of Darkness* by Joseph Conrad.

1. When Marlow arrives in Africa, he is met by pictures of lethargy, inefficiency and futility. The Europeans Marlow encounters are presented negatively. Conrad's description serves to highlight the shallow nature of many of the European colonisers.
2. When Marlow arrives in Africa, he is met by pictures of lethargy, inefficiency and futility. **The reader is presented with poignant images of 'decaying' machinery, a man trying to quell a fire using a bucket with a hole in it and the 'objectless' blasting of a hillside.** The Europeans Marlow encounters are presented negatively. **The manager of the station was 'a man of no genius, no learning . . . no intellect' and the accountant had been in Africa for several years, yet had only managed to teach a black woman how to starch shirts and had kept his books in 'apple-pie order.'** The brickmaker had again been in Africa for over a year but hadn't managed to make a single brick as he was still waiting for supplies from Europe to arrive. **These, and other similar descriptions, serve to highlight the shallow nature of many of the European colonisers.**
3. When Marlow arrives in Africa, he is met by pictures of lethargy, inefficiency and futility. The reader is presented with poignant images of 'decaying' machinery, a man trying to quell a fire using a bucket with a hole in it and the 'objectless' blasting of a hillside. The Europeans Marlow encounters are presented negatively. The manager of the station was 'a man of no genius, no learning . . . no intellect' and the accountant had been in Africa for several years, yet had only managed to teach a black woman how to starch shirts and had kept his books in 'apple-pie order.' The brickmaker had again been in Africa for over a year but hadn't managed to make a single brick as he was still waiting for supplies from Europe to arrive. These, and other similar descriptions, serve to highlight the shallow nature of many of the European colonisers. **Through Marlow's rather naive observations, Conrad reveals to the reader the inadequacies and abuse of the colonial occupation of Africa.**

## Another example of how to develop a paragraph

**Question:** *Evaluate the extent to which popular participation in political systems is important in Australia.*

**Popular participation in political activity is a key aspect of good governance. (explanation)** It is based on the principle that those who are affected by decisions have a right to be involved in the decision-making process. **(e.g.)** One way this is achieved is through exercising the right to vote. In Australia compulsory voting has resulted in a high level of electoral participation. **(additional specific details)** Approximately 93% of eligible Australians are enrolled to vote and voter turnout on Election Day is approximately 91%. **(e.g.)** To a lesser extent, Australians also participate in alternative ways, outside of the formal electoral system, by signing petitions and taking part in protest rallies. **(additional, specific details)** The Black Lives Matter rallies attracted significant support, despite social distancing regulations. Similarly, Climate Change rallies, such as School Strike 4 Climate and Extinction Rebellion have become a focus of popular dissent. **(comment)** While a small, active minority strongly participate in the political system through protest rallies, the vast majority of Australians, exercise their right through the polling booth. **(Tie back to Thesis – 'evaluate')** Through the formulation of a wide range of activities, including public protests as well as voting, Australians show popular participation in political systems.

## ACTIVITY

**1** Develop the following information into a full paragraph by using the examples and explanations provided below. (Edit, rearrange, reword, delete, add your own material)

**Question:** *Explore how at least one text manipulates the conventions of a genre to convey complex ideas.*

**Topic sentence:** American cartoonist Art Spiegelman. exploits the graphic novel form to investigate and evaluate the disturbing, long-lasting effects of his father's experiences as a Polish Jew and Holocaust survivor during WWII.

### Brainstorm/Notes

#### The Complete Maus (1996)

*Maus* is a graphic novel by American cartoonist Art Spiegelman.

The frame narrative is based on conversations Spiegelman's had with his father in the 70s, about his father's experiences as a Polish Jew and Holocaust survivor during WWII.

The text uses bleeding effect to show how the effect, or trauma of the past 'bleeds' into the present

The work uses postmodernist techniques. Minimalistic sketches of characters.

Uses the comic form, considered trivial, to deal with the disturbing subject of the Holocaust

Uses an impressionistic woodcut style.

Caricature style effective in conveying the unnatural concentration camps and the racial vilification of Jews.

The black-and-white hatched panels, intentionally use a simple style that heightens the impact of the content and gives a bleak feeling

The black and white images in the graphic novel create effective images which enables the reader to actually see the fear of the Jewish people and the brutality of their persecutors.

The Jews are drawn as wide-eyed fearful mice and Nazis as menacing cats.

'This concept is outrageous, disturbing, subversive, clever and homely, and yet somehow comforting,' says fellow cartoonist, Jeff Smith. 'By using talking animals, Spiegelman allows his readers just enough emotional-safety distance to be able to follow a story that takes place during the Holocaust.'

The mice are ambivalent, small, defenceless creatures, but also seen as pests to be got rid of. Nazi propaganda described Jews as vermin. By constructing the Nazis as cats, Spiegelman alludes to the idea that cats capture and kill mice.

It is a powerful story of the impact of trauma and survival.

Symbolism – 'We walked in the direction of Sosnowiec – but where to go?' road like swastika, no direction, all roads are controlled by Nazis.

Horrors of the cremation pits, from close up of people to expanded view of the fires – no gutter – graphic bleeds into next image – close up of screaming dying mice.





## ACTIVITY

### 2 Use the material below to flesh out this essay outline.

**Question:** *The physical setting of a text can provide much more than mere location. Discuss the significance of the physical setting in one or more novels.*

#### Introduction

Physical details of setting, such as those of weather and geography, are often more than a site for a novel's action. This is very much the case in Michael Ondaatje's novel *The English Patient*, whereby physical details of the setting of the desert and the villa are not only sites for the novel's action, but are also embedded with symbolic meaning that emphasises the text's major themes, the disruption of the imperialistic values of order, ownership, materialism and borders.

[Can you improve on this introduction? Note how it repeats the words of the question. The thesis statement could be developed. Another attempt is printed below]

Setting functions not only to physically locate a text, but also to figuratively convey impressions about the characters or themes. In Michael Ondaatje's novel *The English Patient*, the physical details of the setting of the desert and the villa are not only sites for the novel's action, but also have symbolic meaning that emphasises the text's major themes which are the disruption of the imperialistic values of order, ownership, materialism and borders.

[Rewrite the introduction] in the space provided for writing this essay.

#### Body

##### Paragraph 1

**(Topic)** Much of the text's action takes place in the desert, as a site of disruption and loss.

**(Examples)** reorder the examples below to create a better structure for your paragraph.

E.g. Almsy (the English patient) loves the desert.

E.g. The desert is described as vast, open, inhospitable, dry, unconquered, unknown: 'its wide-open spaces', 'nothingness'.

E.g. 'the desert could not be claimed or owned', 'the desert refuses to be named' resists imperialistic order, control and ownership. Borders create conflict by enforcing difference, 'Erase nations! Erase the family name! The desert taught me this'. The desert symbolically represents the counter-imperialistic impulse against order and ownership.

E.g. The faceless, nameless desert also becomes a metaphor for the English patient.

E.g. 'I wanted to erase my name and the place I had come from. By the time war had arrived, after ten years in the desert, it was easy for me to slip across borders, not to belong to anyone, to any nation.'

E.g. The desert represents the antithesis of the imperialistic desire for possessions: 'in the desert all you desire is water'.

E.g. The wind of the desert which refuses to be tied down or owned. The wind becomes the vehicle for stories.

**(Tie back to Thesis)** Action that takes place in the physical setting of the desert is used to disrupt the imperialistic notions of order, ownership, materialism and borders. [Relate this thesis statement more strongly to the physical features of the desert]

## Paragraph 2

**(Topic)** The villa is the site for the pivotal action in the novel.

### (Examples)

E.g. Previously a nunnery and hospital (place of spiritual and physical healing),

E.g. now in ruins because of the war. Damaged rooms like stories that cannot be told

E.g. Becomes a place of meeting and healing for the four main characters – breaking down of socially constructed national barriers that create difference between cultures and nations.

E.g. The villa and garden merge and co-exist peacefully – 'There seemed little demarcation between structure and landscape' – breaks down borders between man-made and natural.

**(Tie back to Thesis)** The healing that takes place at the villa shows how the physical details of setting function to disrupt the imperialistic values of order, ownership, materialism and borders. [vary the thesis statement]

## Paragraph 3

**(Topic)** Cairo is the site [Vary topic sentences, don't repeat 'site'] for subterfuge, betrayal and deceit

**(Examples)** \* (you might want to change the order of the points in this paragraph)

E.g. Point of entry into the desert for attempts to map and name it.

E.g. Maps are the antithesis of real places. Maps implode 'time and geography . . . compress the world onto a two-dimensional sheet of paper'. Maps, as the construction of geography represent the borders, the ownership of places.

E.g. Expeditions financed by the imperialistic powers

E.g. Cairo is a marketplace; it represents the trade of goods, people and countries. 'Financial and military despots shaped the world'.

**(Tie back to Thesis)** Cairo is the control centre for the espionage and conflict caused by border and ownership disputes and [develop this statement]







## DEVELOPING PARAGRAPHS USING QUOTES

It is essential that you use quotations in your essays. Quotes enable you to provide evidence that explains, supports or justifies a statement. Using quotes shows your knowledge and adds authority to your work.

Only quote what you need to quote. Don't use large chunks from a passage just to add filler, look impressive or repeat what you have just said. In fact, a large quote can break your flow of ideas. It is important that you select the most appropriate quotes and you integrate them into your paragraphs and explain why you are using that quote. You may choose to select specific words rather than whole sentences. You must explain why you have used the quote and discuss its significance or implications. Use quotes to support or illustrate a point, not to be the actual point.

Paraphrase where necessary; if it is the idea rather than the particular words you want, paraphrase and quote the crucial words, embed your quotations in sentences and place them appropriately.

### When to use quotes in your essay

Usually you should not use quotes in your introduction. Your introduction should be your own understanding of the question, your plan and your thesis. I have shown you the problems associated with trying to begin your essay with a prepared quote. Likewise, do not begin a body paragraph with a quote. Your topic sentence should provide a general statement about what will be covered in that paragraph. A quote can then be used to prove or illustrate your topic.

A quotation cannot stand by itself; it does not make the point for you. It must be introduced and then explained. It is important that you show **how** the quote supports your idea, how it is relevant. For this reason, you don't end a paragraph with a quote.

## PROVIDING QUOTES IN CONTEXT AND HOW TO INTEGRATE QUOTES

- Introduce the quote, use the quote, explain the quote.

E.g. Keats's poem 'To Autumn' evokes a strong sense of autumnal quality of the season with the opening phrase, 'Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness' which makes the reader feel the cooling of the temperature and the rich harvest of nature.

- Incorporate your quotes into your sentence, highlighting words rather than quoting big chunks.

E.g. Keats shows the rich fruitfulness and 'ripeness to the core' of Autumn by describing the growth and maturing which 'swell the gourd' and 'plump the hazel shells' to convey the richness of the season.

[Note in the example above I had to provide two words 'growth and maturing' to be consistent with the grammar of the plural 'swell' and 'plump'. Alternatively, I could have said 'by describing the maturing which 'swell[s] the gourd' and 'plump[s] the hazel shells' to maintain grammatical correctness. The use of [ ] shows something has been added to the original quote.]

- Paraphrase where necessary, if it is the idea rather than particular words you wish to convey, or paraphrase and quote the crucial words.

E.g. Keats personifies Autumn as a young woman, reaping the harvest and drowsily overcome by the 'fumes of poppies' as she relishes the 'last ooziings' of the season. The full, open sounds of 'fumes' and 'ooziings' contribute to the sense of the overflowing bounty of nature which Keats wishes to associate with Autumn.

- You must provide a context for the quote and explain why you are using it. In the example below the lead-in sentence does not explain the significance of the quote: (Quotes from ‘Big World’ in Tim Winton’s collection of stories *The Turning*).

Winton describes the road trip that the narrator, Lenny and his mate Biggie take. ‘It’s a mad feeling, sitting up so high like that with the road flashing under your feet.’

To quote like that is to just repeat the idea and it’s a wasted opportunity to gain marks! There is no context nor any explanation about the significance of the choice of words. Why are they feeling so uncertain and so elated? Why is it a ‘mad feeling’?

Try this instead:

When Lennie and Biggie leave their country town ‘down south’ and buy an old Kombi to escape on a road trip ‘up North’ their elation is conveyed through describing their exit as ‘mad’ because it is crazy but exhilarating. They are ‘sitting up so high’, suggests that they are full of expectation and their old way of life, like the road is ‘flashing under [their] feet’ to indicate their quick departure from their old town.

Now we have a much fuller idea of their trip and their expectations and emotions. Note also how the quote is integrated into the paragraph and how words have been changed, indicated by [ ], to make the incorporated quote grammatically correct.

- Do not use the quote to merely repeat the idea:

In response to the question: *Consider how the use of language influences your response to ideas presented in written text*, the student wrote:

In the text the use of descriptive language is very important in shaping the responses of the reader. For example, ‘*The jungle below was a vivid green blanket in which rivers made silvery forked lightning*’ is used as a description of a forest. This description allows the reader to really imagine what is being described and this shapes the viewer’s response to the text and the ideas presented.

This example just uses the quote as a ‘filler’. The quote merely provides a description, no relationship is established between the description and the reader’s response. Cf. how the description of the road has been developed in the quote from ‘Big World’.

- In the paragraphs below, from an answer asking how poetic techniques ‘*allow experience to be represented in an intense and compressed way*’, concise, appropriate use of quotes from Gwen Harwood’s poetry are integrated and explained to provide a powerful argument.

In ‘Hospital Evening’ Harwood employs contrasting imagery, enjambment and symbolism to **challenge the intolerant nature of Australian society**. Through the use of flashbacks Harwood juxtaposes Krote’s ‘snowy’ European home with Australia’s ‘burning’ and ‘blazing’ environment. When placed in **binary opposition** to one another the harsh unrelenting nature of Australia’s climate is exemplified, **symbolising the uninviting reception that many foreigners received when they arrived in Australia. This unwelcoming nature** of Australians is further seen in stanza one and two where Krote, who is ‘peacefully dreaming’ is rudely awoken by a ‘sulky nurse’. The use of **enjambment**, ‘toast . . . slapped’, between stanza one and two accentuates this **rude interruption** and **highlights just how little Australians consider the needs of foreigners**. The nurse in the poem can be seen as **symbolising** the typical philistine Australian and this is exemplified when she ‘holds [Krote] down’ and forces him ‘to sleep again’. This action highlights how Australians **disregard foreigners** in an attempt to **maintain positions of power and control**. Thus, **poetic techniques** allow Harwood to concisely represent this view of Australian society, enabling her to **confront the unsophisticated nature of Australian culture**.

[Note how the argument is built up concisely with the use of single words, *'snowy'*, *'burning'* and *'blazing'*, appropriate terminology such as *'juxtaposes'*, *'binary opposition'* *'symbolising'* and the explanation of the significance: *'the uninviting reception that many foreigners received when they arrived in Australia,' 'challenge the intolerant nature of Australian culture'*

[Note also the insertion of *[Krote]* to create a smooth, grammatical statement.]

### Another Example

In 'Monday' Harwood employs allusion and figurative language to **contest the intolerant nature of her Australian society**. The mothers in the poem believe that Krote should be working *'like any decent man'*, instead of *'dreaming'* on the beach and drinking *'forbidden alcohol'*. Their condemnation of his non-conforming character is exemplified through Harwood's use of similes, *'the mothers glare at Krote like Medusa'*. In Greek mythology a 'Medusa' was a hideous monster whose stare turned anyone into stone. This use of allusion highlights the mother's intolerance of foreigners as her *'Medusa . . . like . . . glare'* was clearly intended to turn Krote into stone, thereby preventing him from participating in Australian society. By presenting Krote as a victim, who is *'screamed'* at, abused and hit with a *'metal spade'* Harwood invites the reader to sympathise with his character. **Thus, poetic techniques allow Harwood to represent her experiences of Australian culture in a concise way, enabling her to challenge the xenophobic nature of her contemporary society.**

[Note how the consequences of *'Forbidden alcohol'* and the mothers' condemnation of Krote's non-conforming character is developed through the student's reference to Harwood's use of the simile, *'the mothers glare at Krote like Medusa'*, then the reference is explained.]

[Note again the concise use of appropriate quotes (often only single words) are used to build the argument. The words from the quotation *'Medusa . . . like . . . glare'* are redeployed to make a point]

### Developing a paragraph

1. In Cloudstreet, Winton criticises middle class values through the representation of Toby Raven.
2. In Cloudstreet, Winton criticises middle class values through the representation of Toby Raven, **who is shown as pretentious and fake.**
3. In Cloudstreet, Winton criticises middle class values through the representation of Toby Raven, who is shown as pretentious and fake. **Rose is initially impressed when Toby introduces her to an upmarket trendy Italian restaurant and takes her to a party in Dalkeith, but it is at this party that Rosie realises his shallowness.**
4. In Cloudstreet, Winton criticises middle class values through the representation of Toby Raven, who is shown as pretentious and fake. Rose is initially impressed when Toby introduces her to an upmarket trendy Italian restaurant and takes her to a party in Dalkeith, but it is at this party that Rosie realises his shallowness. **Toby represents a critical, middle-class response to the working-class way of life endorsed in Cloudstreet.**
5. In Cloudstreet, Winton criticises middle class values through the representation of Toby Raven, who is shown as pretentious and fake. Rose is initially impressed when Toby introduces her to an upmarket trendy Italian restaurant and takes her to a party in Dalkeith, but it is at this party that Rosie realises his shallowness. Toby represents a critical, middle-class response to the working-class way of life endorsed in Cloudstreet. Toby says:

***Perth is the biggest country town in the world trying to be a city. The most isolated country town in the world trying to be the most cut-off city in the world, trying desperately to hit the big time. Desert on one side, sea on the other.***

6. In Cloudstreet, Winton criticises middle class values through the representation of Toby Raven, who is shown as pretentious and fake. Rose is initially impressed when Toby introduces her to an upmarket trendy Italian restaurant and takes her to a party in Dalkeith, but it is at this party that Rosie realises his shallowness. Toby represents a critical, middle-class response to the working-class way of life endorsed in Cloudstreet. Toby says:

Perth is the biggest country town in the world trying to be a city. The most isolated country town in the world trying to be the most cut-off city in the world, trying desperately to hit the big time. Desert on one side, sea on the other.

***Toby's criticism prompts Rose to realise how much she loves this big country town, her family and Cloudstreet.***

7. In Cloudstreet, Winton criticises middle class values through the representation of Toby Raven, who is shown as pretentious and fake. Rose is initially impressed when Toby introduces her to an upmarket trendy Italian restaurant and takes her to a party in Dalkeith, but it is at this party that Rosie realises his shallowness. Toby represents a critical, middle-class response to the working-class way of life endorsed in Cloudstreet.

**Toby's scathing comment that 'Perth is the biggest country town in the world trying to be a city' with the snide implication that maybe it is Toby as well as the city that is 'trying desperately to hit the big time'** Toby's criticism prompts Rose to realise how much she loves this big country town, her family and Cloudstreet.

[Notice in paragraph 5 the problem of leaving the quote hanging with no commentary after it and the more effective use of the quote in 7 where it is edited, integrated and commented on.]

### **ACTIVITY** Rework the paragraphs below, incorporating and explaining the quotes.

1. **Question:** *Discuss the way at least one poem has employed poetic conventions to explore a significant social issue.*

A barren and harsh landscape is portrayed in T.S. Eliot's 'The Hollow Men'. Demonstrated by the lines 'This is the dead land, this is the cactus land' where cacti traditionally thrive in harsh conditions, this is why 'cactus land' is used. An apocalyptic end is put onto this poem, juxtaposed with a children's nurse rhyme (which indicates the hopelessness and defenceless stance Eliot is writing about).

'This is the way the world ends  
This is the way the world ends  
This is the way the world ends  
Not with a bang, but a whimper'

Human beings themselves are powerless to stop anything that comes in their way. These ideas show the modernist cultural identity of hopelessness and insecurity.

[In rewriting the above paragraph, it is important to maintain the full quote 'This is the way the world ends' and to quote it with correct placement on the page. WHY? It is also important to relate the ironic use of the nursery rhyme form to the way poetic conventions are employed.]

**2. Question:** *Discuss the ways texts can challenge or endorse dominant ideological beliefs.*

Offred's belief of women having the right to choose their own path in life and not be owned by the male figure drives her to continue her internal fight against the regime.

'She is a flag on a hilltop, showing what still can be done. We too can be saved'.

The dehumanising process of this brutal government strips all humans of their rights. In a society literally dominated by males, females are expected to be subservient and in turn voluntary help the government boost falling reproduction rates – 'Give me children or else I die', 'She can be saved by childbearing', these two quotes present exactly what females had to endure under the Republic of Gilead. Females were declared 'unwomen' if they could not reproduce, and in contrast to females being humans who have the right to act as they choose, this goes against all of Offred's ideological beliefs and values. The females were expected to abide by these rules and regulation at risk of being killed. 'with thy sorrow and thy conception in sorrow they shall bring forth children'.

[In this example the student has some prepared quotes which they are determined to use, but they are poorly and inappropriately used. Rework this material.

You need a Topic sentence, Use the material as evidence and incorporate the quotes to substantiate your point]

## FITTING THE PIECES TOGETHER

It is important that your paragraphs have an internal logic and unity. Good content loses its impact if it is presented in a poorly organised mix of disconnected facts.

Here is an example of a well-ordered paragraph, with linking words to show the flow of ideas.

The title 'The Report on Junk' immediately suggests that it is an authoritative analysis of the issue. **Consequently**, it gives the article weight and encourages the readers to agree with the idea that advertising junk food is the cause of all obesity. **Furthermore**, the text uses statistics to back up its argument that 'the average child who watches two hours of television per day is bombarded with over 2,200 junk food advertisements per year.' **Additionally**, it claims it gets this information from a reputable source, 'The Coalition on Food Advertising'. The text utilises all these techniques to substantiate and promote their argument, positioning the readers to agree with the claim that advertising is the basis of all obesity.

### ACTIVITY

#### 1. Ordering of sentences in a paragraph

(a) Re-arrange these sentences so they make a logical paragraph.

1. Another factor is rainwater which has the same result.
2. As well, whenever we cut down trees, we make erosion possible.
3. First of all, the wind blows away the topsoil, so the rock underneath is exposed.
4. There are several factors which cause erosion of the soil.
5. Ploughing is yet another of the factors which can lead to erosion.
6. The effect of these factors is the degradation of the soil

[Answer: 4, 3, 1, 2, 5, 6]

(b) Re-arrange these sentences so they make TWO logical paragraphs.

(Decide the topic sentences. Then find the other sentences which are related to those ideas. You should find a topic sentence and two related sentences for each paragraph.)

1. There are several advantages in speaking more than one language.
2. This may be due to the fact that English is the most widely spoken language in the western world.
3. Learning another language does not seem to be an important part of Australian education.
4. Firstly, if you speak another language, you have a better understanding of other peoples and cultures.
5. In addition to this, studying another language gives you a better understanding of how your own language works.
6. Also, Australia is geographically isolated from the rest of the world, and, therefore, it is not easy to practise a foreign language if you live in Australia.

[Answer: 3, 2, 6; 1, 4, 5 OR the order of the two paragraphs could be reversed]

## 2 The sentences in the following paragraphs are not well ordered. Reorder them.

### (a) Coral

1. All members of the group are made up of genetically identical modules or polyps.
2. In return, the algae supply the energy necessary for the polyp to form its massive limestone skeleton.
3. Soft corals or the fan and whip corals which are often used as jewellery, belong in this category.
4. Some corals, however, have no symbiotic algae or hard limestone skeleton.
5. Reef building stony corals belong to the same animal group as jellyfish and sea-anemones.
6. Each polyp contains numerous tiny single-celled algae which take in the coral wastes.

[Answer: 5, 1, 6, 2, 4, 3]

### (b) Plastic debris in the ocean

1. Some even starve to death because the indigestible plastic they eat makes the animals think their stomach is full.
2. As a consequence, plastic waste is accumulating all over the world's oceans and killing up to a million sea birds and 100,000 sea mammals each year.
3. Prior to World War Two, most fishing gear was made from materials such as cotton, hemp or flax – all of which disintegrate in a short time.
4. Such widespread marine pollution has become so severe that it will take an international effort to provide a solution.
5. But unlike natural fibres, plastic does not degrade quickly.
6. These creatures are most often strangled by plastic nets and bands.
7. Since the war however, plastic has been used in place of natural materials.

[Answer: 3, 7, 5, 2, 6, 1, 4]

## **ACTIVITY** Reordering sentences.

Rearrange the sentences in these paragraphs to improve the cohesion and logic of the ideas.

1. **Question:** *Examine the way that specific dramatic features may be used by a playwright to challenge dominant ideologies.*

Another convention of Greek tragedy that Euripides uses in *Medea* is 'deus ex machina'. In the final scene of the play, Medea is carried away by a golden chariot towards the sun. This device was commonly used by Greek tragic playwrights as a convenient ending but Euripides uses it to show his approval of Medea. The fact that she got away with her infanticide and revenge on Jason demonstrates that Euripides believed she was right in her actions. Euripides however questions this social values and shows he thinks that women should be more assertive than they were at the time. In his time, it was very unusual for a woman to take charge of her life and exact revenge in that way.

Your version:

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**2. Question:** *Literary responses change over time. Examine how context influence both the construction of a text and a reader's response to it.*

Writing during the Regency period, Jane Austen's social commentary on the pretensions of the upper classes, the restrictions that govern marriage and the gender inequality facing women in society is deeply embedded throughout her novel, Pride and Prejudice. For the reader to best understand the societal restrictions Austen was challenging, knowledge of the era and the values and attitudes of the time is paramount. To best understand a literary text, and to understand the dominant reading constructed in a text, the reader should be aware of the context in which the text was produced.

Your version:

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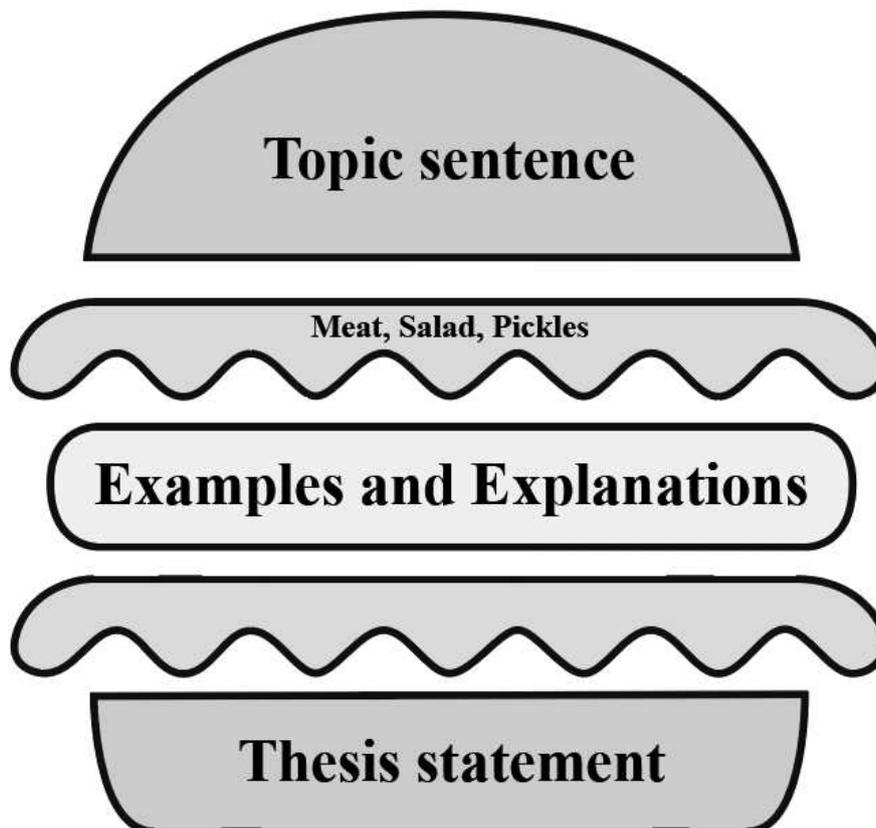
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## THE HAMBURGER MODEL

Remember the **hamburger model** of a paragraph.

A paragraph, like a burger, need a good structure: a strong introductory sentence and tie back to thesis concluding sentence, to hold it together, providing a firm shape. The body contains solid, filling content. The meat, salad and pickles are the ingredients and dressing offering well-arranged, well-formed, substantial and appetising content, thus delivering a satisfying and appealing meal for your reader.

**‘It takes two hands to handle a Whopper’!**



# 8

## CONCLUSIONS

The conclusion sums up your essay and leaves the marker with the final impression, therefore it is important, but not too important.

Make your conclusion brief – you can't say anything new, don't be boring by just repeating what you have already said. Provide a strong, definite statement which reiterates your thesis and sums up your main arguments.

Use the key words from the question to show how you have answered the question. Draw all your major points into one or two powerful statements. If time is short, as in an exam, then a single strong restatement or rewording of your thesis statement is sufficient.

Your conclusion should round off your argument, tie together the loose ends. Do not simply list your points. Reiterate in a slightly different way the main question and your response, or argument (thesis). Make it a strong restatement of your answer to the question and your thesis.

Your concluding paragraph should be short, strong and definite. Using the phrase 'in conclusion', is not necessary, a sophisticated writer doesn't need it, nor want to be slowed down by stating the obvious. Phrases like 'thus it can be seen' are empty and timewasting.

While your introduction claims 'This is my opinion (thesis) and I intend to justify it with the following examples', your conclusion says – I have proved my statement with the examples provided.

### Conclusions follow the TET model

Your **Topic sentence** is the restatement or your reformulation of the question. Use the key words from the question.

Your **Example sentence** (You really only need one here) is the restatement of the areas or topics you covered. (State them in the order you dealt with them, which must be the same order as you outlined in your introduction.)

End with your strong **Tie back to Thesis**. This is your final word on the question.

Relate your conclusion back to the question. **Use words from the question to show you have answered the question.**

### BRINGING YOUR ESSAY TO A SATISFACTORY CONCLUSION

Ways to conclude in a satisfying manner include:

- Re-iterating the central thrust of your theme by perhaps re-stating the main point from your introduction, which will have gained greater significance from the body of explanations and arguments. It relates back to the question and your thesis.

- Making a strong personal statement, showing your endorsement of, or agreement with the specific attitudes or issues you have written about.
- A call to action. Urging the reader to follow up by changing their behaviour, responses or attitudes in light of the significance of what you have just written.

### Sample conclusions

**Question:** *Examine the factors which led to the First World War. What do you consider to be the main cause?*

(remember this question from Writing Introductions?)

(Topic) Thus, *from this investigation,* we can see that the causes of the First World War were complex and many. (Examples) The roots can be traced back as far as the French Revolution and, despite different historians' opinions, it is hard to lay blame on any specific country or event. This essay has shown that the war was a product of a number of factors – Nationalism, Imperialism and Militarism, as well as the political environment created by international alliances and intrigue. (Tie back to Thesis) Ultimately the alliance system, due to the tension it provoked between nations, although not the only 'cause' of the war, became the decisive factor which created the conflict between European countries which led to the First World War.

\*Unnecessary statements

**Question:** *Evaluate the proposition that political crisis or significant political events have a divisive impact on Australian society.*

*As shown in this essay,* the political crisis caused by the conscription debate brought about significant division in Australian society. These divisions were based on political, social, economic, religious and ethnic differences. The conscription debate, by highlighting these differences, caused much disunity. The social feelings of resentment persisted into the 1920s. For the Labor Party it meant years in the political wilderness. Not until the economic crisis of the Great Depression were they able to return to government.

[Note the conclusion evaluates the impact, 'significant division', summarises, in general terms the differences which have been dealt with in the body of the essay concerning the conscription debate and states the consequences. If time permitted more detail would have made a stronger conclusion, but basically a conclusion should sum up, not repeat the material covered in the essay.]

**Question:** *Discuss how a text you have studied has been constructed to shape your response to the ideas, people and issues presented.*

Thus, in *The Year of Living Dangerously* filmic techniques are used to recreate events and characterisation to help determine a viewer's response to the ideas, issues and people presented in the text. The film depicts Sukarno as having vast political power and little compassion for minorities, the poor or the disempowered. The period of history recreated in the film shows the great suffering of the Indonesian people. Furthermore, the text invites me to think that this suffering was a result of the indifference or cruelty of the leader of this nation. Through the film's construction I am persuaded to accept Weir's version of events and accept his depiction of Sukarno as a despotic leader.

**Question:** *Show how dramatic action can be used to draw attention to important social issues in at least one text.*

- 1 From *this* it can be seen that social constraints of race, gender and class become the basis for establishing conflict within *The Tempest*. The structure of the play, involving numerous sub-plots, ensures that conflict is driven by no single issue. Rather it is the numerous various conflicts developed in the play that are responsible for holding audience interest and ensure that Shakespeare conveys the notion of conflict as a result of a divided society.

[This conclusion could have been stronger, more detailed. What is ‘this’? Dramatic action has been explored in relation to syllabus concepts of structure and conflict which is good, but social issue, described as a ‘divided society’ could have been more explicitly explained – what exactly are the divisions created by race, gender and class? Remember this is a conclusion, these issues would have been developed in the body of the essay, but in the conclusion it is advantageous for you to finish with a strong reiteration of the issues.]

- 2 Overall, it is evident that power plays a significant role in dramatic relationships and action seen in The Tempest and often forms a basis for the play’s conflict, as struggles for power and resistance to power create inequalities. However, it is only when these power struggles are resolved and fair rule is established that harmony can be achieved.

[‘Overall’ indicates a summing up. A brief conclusion, possibly written under time constraints, it provides the essential components of a conclusion. A summary of the examples of dramatic action which were outlined in the essay, would have enhanced this conclusion.]

- 3 Dramatic action and conflict in The Tempest draws attention to the social issues of race, gender and class. The traditional hierarchy of power accepted by Jacobean England is threatened by the tempest created by Prospero. Dramatic action draws attention to the potential disruptions to social order by Caliban, Miranda and the plot to overthrow the King of Naples and Prospero. It is only when these power struggles are resolved and fair, ‘legitimate’ rule is established that harmony can be achieved and the order that is provided by acceptance of the Jacobean values of ‘right rule’ and harmonious acceptance of the ordained social order is established.

[A more detailed conclusion. The concluding tie back to thesis statement is a bit long and convoluted, can you rewrite the final sentence more clearly?]

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## Concluding with a strong personal statement

**Question:** Write a response in which you reflect on the factors which have influenced your appreciation and understanding of at least one text you have studied this year.

**(Introduction)** There is a difference between knowing and understanding. One You can know every fact, every figure, every name concerning a particular event, but without some sort of emotional context, one you cannot truly understand. Poems that attempt to create understanding in a reader must therefore provoke an emotional response in the reader. Two poems by William Blake ‘I Saw A Chapel’ and ‘The Chimney Sweeper’ (from Songs of Innocence) evoked strong emotions of pity, disgust, and sadness in me, and in doing so, helped me to understand some of the horrors of 18<sup>th</sup> century England.

**(Conclusion)** Techniques used in William Blakes’ poems such as imagery and first-person narration in ‘I Saw A Chapel’, provoked horror in me by enabling me to understand the corruption of the church in late 18<sup>th</sup> Century England. The issues of child labour and exploitation were made clear to me in the poem ‘The Chimney Sweeper’ evoking strong emotions of sadness and despair, enabling me to understand and censure the abuse of power and oppression of children in 18<sup>th</sup> Century England.

[A clear, adequate conclusion which answers the question and includes a personal response. Note that, because a conclusion is often brief, topic, examples and thesis may be combined. A more elegant style and insightful analysis would have strengthened this response.]

Remember the Prologue to Bertrand Russell's *Autobiography* ('Three passions . . .)? He concluded his Prologue with a simple, strong statement: **This has been my life. I have found it worth living, and would gladly live it again if the chance were offered me.** (Prologue to *Autobiography* by Bertrand Russell, Simon and Schuster and George Allen & Unwin, 1951)

### Good examples of how an essay is summed up in the conclusion

1 **Question:** *Discuss the representation of war in Merry-Go-Round in the Sea*

**(Introduction)** Merry-Go-Round in the Sea, by Randolph Stow is concerned with the impact of war, which is explored through the central character, Rick, and his involvement in World War Two as an Australian soldier and prisoner of war in Changi. War is depicted as disruptive and life shattering through the successful use of conventions such as point of view, characterisation and setting. A central character, Rick, is the vehicle through which Stow explore anti-war sentiments and position the reader to see that war is a damaging and demoralising experience. **A harsh representation of war as dehumanising and isolating is powerfully presented to the reader through the effective use of narrative conventions.**

#### (Outline of Body Paragraphs)

Paragraph 1 (Topic sentence) A representation of war as a harmful and disheartening experience is constructed through the use of point of view. **(Example sentences)** . . . . . **(Tie back to Thesis)** \* Rick's point of view is successfully used to convey the notion that war is a damaging experience that leads to feelings of isolation, thus constructing a representation of war as haunting and life changing.

Paragraph 2 (Topic sentence) War is shown as dehumanising by the change in characterisation of Rick from the stereotypical untroubled, nonchalant Australian male to the empty and unhappy man who returns from war. **(Example sentences)** . . . . . **(Tie back to Thesis)** \* By constructing Rick as deadened after the war the text positions the reader to reflect on the experience of war and its representation as isolating, desensitising and degrading.

Paragraph 3 (Topic sentence) The portrayal of war is further developed through the use of a war-ravaged location of Changi. **(Example sentences)** . . . . . **(Tie back to Thesis)** \* The horrific nature of war is represented through the use of a harsh, war-torn setting.

**(Conclusion)** Merry-Go-Round in the Sea, by Randolph Stow, presents a representation of war as damaging and life shattering. A central character Rick is used to demonstrate the harsh effect war has as he undergoes a transformation from a young, care-free man to a lifeless soul destroyed by the war. Through the effective use of the techniques of point of view, characterisation and setting, Stow constructs war as a traumatic and disruptive event for those involved in it. **A harsh representation of war as dehumanising and isolating is powerfully presented to the reader through the effective use of narrative conventions.**

\*Note the variations on the Tie back to Thesis statement so that it does not become repetitive and boring.

2 **Question:** *Literary works may echo, imitate or allude to other works. Discuss with reference to one text you have studied.*

**(Introduction)** Intertextuality is the interrelationships among texts that shape a text's meaning. The recognisable echoes of other texts in a text intensify the experience by adding layers of meaning. References to works from classical literature in the play, *Translations*, by Brian Friel enhance our understanding of the text by demonstrating the transformative power of language. First performed in 1980, Friel alludes to the Homeric poem, 'The Odyssey' and the poetry of Ovid, and Virgil's 'Aeneid,' to reinforce the idea that the conquering of one culture by another and the resultant loss of language and cultural identity through translation is a recurring tragedy throughout history. **Friel incorporates elements of the epic poetry of Homer celebrating Greek culture and the recitation of the Roman Aeneid**

detailing the destruction of Carthage, into his play to act as portents, and support his view that language is a precious medium; the loss of which can lead to the destruction of a nation. The notion that translation is imperfect and contributes to the erosion of culture and language is strengthened through Friel's frequent references to significant works from the Greco-Roman era.

### (Outline of Body Paragraphs)

Paragraph 1 (Topic sentence) References to 'The Odyssey' in the play demonstrate the rich language and cultural resources drawn on by the Irish, challenging the common portrayal of colonised people as ignorant and the colonisers as those with superior knowledge. **(Example sentences)** . . . **(Tie back to Thesis)** Through detailed references to 'The Odyssey,' Friel subverts the audience's expectations about colonised countries, and constructs the Irish as an intelligent and intellectually rich people and establishes a common loss of language and cultural identity for both Greeks and Irish, through the process of translation.

Paragraph 2 (Topic sentence) The recitation of Ovid's lyrical poetry in Latin, then translated into English by Hugh enables Friel to convey the notion that translation does not capture the full meaning, as something is always lost in translation. **(Example sentences)** . . . **(Tie back to Thesis)** The use of other literary works aids Friel in expressing the notion that translation is imperfect and leads to the loss of culture and meaning embedded in those words.

Paragraph 3 (Topic sentence) The detailed reference to Virgil's 'Aeneid' acts a portent of the play, forecasting the bleak future awaiting Ireland if it does not translate into the modern world but remains static and gets left behind and forgotten. **(Example sentences)** . . . . **(Tie back to Thesis)** Hugh's inability to remember the words to a famous literary work symbolises how civilisations such as the Carthaginians are almost lost to living memory, which supports Friel's view that if Ireland wishes to develop, and not face a fate where their language and culture is only a mere memory, they must translate to move forward with the rest of the world.

**(Conclusion)** Translations, by Brian Friel poses a difficult conundrum: to not be left behind the rest of the world, must you translate into the dominant language? But if you do translate, what do you lose, and is it worth it? Through reference to famous literary works from the Greco-Roman period such as Homer's 'The Odyssey,' Ovid's poetry and Virgil's 'Aeneid,' Friel affirms the value of the original art; however, he also suggests that, while translation is flawed, and that translation will lead to the loss of culture and language, if Ireland was to remain static and unchanged, 'untranslated', the loss would be even greater. The references to classical literature, interwoven into the fabric of Translations enhances our ability to grasp Friel's ideas, to understand the questions the play provokes, and to affirm the idea that translation, although necessary, is imperfect and leads to the erosion of culture and language.

### ACTIVITY Comment on these conclusions

1. **Question:** *Discuss the role of minor characters in creating the social context of a text.*

#### (Introduction)

It is often the seemingly less significant characters of a text that contribute greatly to the development of the reader's understanding of the social milieu of the text. In Joseph Conrad's novella Heart of Darkness minor characters such as Marlow's Aunt, the Chief Accountant of the central station in Africa, and the unnamed native inhabitants of Africa, all contribute to developing and defining the social context of Conrad's novella for his readers. The construction of these characters, and the interaction with the major characters of the story, particularly Marlow, provide an insight into many of the dominant attitudes and values evident in the Victorian England of the late nineteenth century, particularly especially those concerning race, gender, and class. Through these minor characters, Conrad shows and critiques late nineteenth century Britain as a rigidly conservative, imperialistic and hierarchical society.

**(Conclusion)**

Although all very minor characters in Marlow's story of his voyage to the depths of Africa, characters such as the Chief Accountant, the native African characters, and Marlow's aunt all contribute to the construction of social context of Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*. It is through them, as viewed through Marlow's eyes, that the reader is brought to a greater understanding of late nineteenth century Britain's values and attitudes towards race, gender and class, as experienced by the conservative majority who made up his original readers. This understanding leads to a greater appreciation of Conrad's novella.

How effective is the conclusion?

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2. From the conclusion below, deduce a) the question, b) the thesis, c) the body paragraphs.

In *Cloudstreet* by Tim Winton, the ideology of the working class forms the basis of the representation of the Australian national identity. The middle-class values are subverted, while the working-class values are privileged and endorsed. The integration of the two families presents a complex social identity, with the values of egalitarianism, family unity and selfless love. All these qualities are embodied by the working class.

- a. \_\_\_\_\_
- b. \_\_\_\_\_
- c. \_\_\_\_\_

3. **Question:** *Discuss the role of women in Australia in WWII*

**(Introduction – notes)**

Traditional role of women in WWI and post WWI-Changes in society by 1939.

Recruitment of women into the defence forces, National need for labour, Employment conditions, Voluntary work.

Women's changing position in society during WWII.

**Thesis:** Unlike WWI, women were specifically encouraged to enter the armed forces and to work in the civilian workforce in traditionally male commercial and industrial occupations, due to the urgent national need for labour; however, it was not seen as a long-term change to women's roles in society.

**(Conclusion)**

During WWII women participated in many ways in the defence forces and the workforce, but their participation was strongly legislated to ensure their position was constrained, subservient and temporary. However, the economic and social benefits of their labour became very evident, so, although the expectation was that 'things would return to normal after the war,' the ground-work was established for post-war changes in society and women's roles.

Your comments

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### In Conclusion

Your conclusion sums up your essay and provides the final impression. Make it strong, convincing and satisfying.

Be brief and to the point. Provide a strong, definite statement which reiterates your thesis and summarises your main arguments.

Refer back to the question to demonstrate that you have answered the question.

Leave the reader feeling satisfied or challenged.



# DEVELOPING ESSAY WRITING SKILLS

## 9

OK, you have learnt how to use the TET formula to structure your essay, you have worked through how to apply it to the steps of Essay Writing. Now, how can you refine your skills, develop some sophistication and add those extra marks?

### WHAT ARE MARKERS LOOKING FOR IN AN ANSWER?

(Comments from various Markers' Reports, compiled from a variety of subjects, over many years; these comments are repeated each year, across all subjects – 'when will they (students) ever learn?')

- A strong engagement with the question, dealing with the actual question rather than a prepared answer and formulaic responses. Students who clearly identify all the requirements of the question and **answer the question!**
- Good answers have a clear thesis and structure and use appropriate evidence. Each essay is an argument – an argument supported by relevant, detailed evidence; show how, give an analysis rather than a description, consider the significance or consequences of literary choices, or events or policies rather than simply stating them. Answers should provide evaluation and interpretation and a logical development of an argument.
- Markers are looking for what to reward. They do not approach marking your essay with a 'penalty mentality', looking for what to take marks off for, they are looking for what to give marks for in terms of your understanding of the question, evidence of your knowledge and an active, engaged response.
- In **English and Literature**, markers give higher marks to candidates who comprehend and interpret specialised conventions and describe how texts manipulate the conventions of genres. Candidates achieve higher marks if they are able to discern subtle or complex generic patterns, linguistic and cultural nuances. Higher marks are gained if students understand and use appropriate terminology and concepts.
- Candidates are encouraged to make use of personal experiences, values and responses to support or explain arguments as these may help to strengthen answers; however, the main focus should be on the selected text.
- In **History**, markers say students need to demonstrate historic knowledge and in-depth understanding of historical concepts. Strong supporting evidence must be provided and explored. Various interpretations and viewpoints should be recognised and discussed.
- Higher marks are awarded to candidates who look at both the strengths and weaknesses of the sources or the historic event, who compare and contrast the sources, and who focus on and analyse the reasons behind situations, who do not just describe, but explore importance, purpose and relevance and who develop sustained arguments, who don't provide a prepared answer.
- Markers reward a personal response, students who demonstrate a capacity for reflective and independent thinking and write with enthusiasm and interest in relation to the topic.

The **TET** essay plan will help you deal with three common complaints markers make about essays:

If you have been told you essays lack structure focus on

**TOPIC SENTENCES** – engage with the question, relate back to the question.

If you have been told you need more detail, improve your

**EXAMPLES & EXPLANATION** – analyse, consider the significance.

If you have been told your essays lack depth, then work on having a strong

**THESIS** – develop an argument.

## Common problems

1 Lack of structure which leads to not answering the question.

- Sign post the question. Use key words or phrases from the question in your answer to keep you on track and demonstrate your progress through your argument. This sends a clear signal to the marker that your response is addressing all the requirements of the question.

E.g. **Question:** *Discuss how the text represents ideas about **identity**.*

Phrases to use in your response: Johnathon is **identified** as . . . He is **represented** as . . .

Representations of **identity** are constructed through the use . . .

E.g. **Question:** *Analyse how power struggles between women and men in one or more texts are constructed.*

In the play, *Hedda Gabler*, by Henrik Ibsen, which is set in late nineteenth century Norway, the **issue of power** is pivotal in developing the dramatic crisis. Hedda Gabbler, the protagonist, and Judge Brick, the male lead, as well as characters such as Thea Elvsted, **draw the reader's attention to power struggles and shifts in control between them**. The issues of gender, class and the freedom associated with them **contributes to the distribution of power and the resultant conflict within the play**. The techniques of props, stage positioning and symbols such as the pistols, the manuscript and hair **aid in establishing who has and who desires power and reveals the social expectations and values of late 19<sup>th</sup> C Norway**.

- Lead your marker through your answer by having **clear topic sentences**. Focus on ideas rather than techniques. Organise your response around key ideas or issues, show how the techniques relate to the development of ideas. The texts and techniques are the vehicles through which the concepts and understandings are developed.

E.g. **Question:** *Poetry, while exploring private states of mind, can also comment on significant social issues.*

**Topic sentences:**

The personal **thoughts** of an individual mother in 'In the Park', encourages **social consideration** of the isolation which may be experienced by mothers . . .

Harwood critiques the **suppression of women's creativity** by subverting the sonnet form in '**Suburban Sonnet**'. . .

The **role of mothers in society** is investigated in the **personal exploration of feelings of two friends** in 'An Impromptu for Ann Jennings'. . .

2 Essay is descriptive rather than analytical, student fails to engage with the question.

- Interpret rather than describe. It is not enough to merely outline what happened during a particular period of history or retell incidents in a text, or detail a process, you need to analyse the situation, discuss the significance, deal with the ‘so what?’ Contextualise, consider the effect or the significance. Don’t just list examples, they must be explored, explained, discuss the how and why, link to your thesis.

In this question from the 2019 Religion and Life exam: *Discuss how and why there are differing ways in which religion is viewed in society*, Markers’ comments were that simply listing different ways religion was viewed was inadequate – you needed to discuss the how and the why.

E.g. One way religion is viewed in Australia is as **a time of family celebration**, because Christmas and Easter, in contemporary society, (how) **have become associated with holidays and family gatherings**. This is partly due to (why) **commercial interests having hijacked the celebrations for mercenary means**. Another reason (why) is that these religious events have become **holiday times, with Public and school holidays thus encouraging family holidays**.

If you are asked about the relationship between X and Y, or the effect of X on Y don’t just describe X and Y. In the example below, rather than simply describing the suburb and the police station a relationship between them is established.

E.g. *Coppit Sweet* directed by Jenny Brockie is a documentary set in the suburb of Redfern in Sydney. The documentary concentrates on the role of police in this particular area and **views them as part of the problem, not the solution**. The introduction includes a voice over stating facts and events relating to Redfern as the car moves through the dirty streets. Shots of rubbish bins, Aborigines hanging around on the streets, dirty houses and graffiti are carefully selected to communicate the idea that Redfern is a derelict suburb. A camera shot looking up at the police station indicates its dominance and influence in the suburb. The camera zooms in on the broken and damaged police bin **which implies that the police station is run-down like the suburb**. By using the same tracking and close up shots and lighting **the suburb and the police station are shown to have the same derelict, neglected appearance**.

- If your answer is too general, you need to provide more evidence and tease out the details. Support your argument rather than merely asserting the answer. Ensure you have good examples and you **explore the implication and significance of the examples**.

**Question:** *How have dramatic techniques been used to unsettle an audience?*

E.g. **THESIS:** *The impact of the visual and verbal effects in No Sugar **unsettles the audience and challenges them to view the issues raised in the play from the Aboriginal perspective***

**Body Paragraph** (Plight of marginalised groups)

**(Topic sentence)** *The opening scene highlights the plight of marginalised groups, revealing how they are disadvantaged due to their adverse economic, social and political position.*

**E.g. 1** Economic – David asks Milly if he can have money for a pie at school to which she replies ‘It’s all the money I’ve got.’

**SIGNIFICANCE** – *The audience is **challenged** by understanding that Aborigines are dependent on inadequate government handouts and charity, Also, they are **unsettled** when they realise the racial discrimination that Aboriginal people only get one third of the rations that white people do. [You need to add this comment].*

David’s comment, ‘Old Tony the ding always sells us little shrivelled ones and them *wetjala* kids big *fat* ones’.

**SIGNIFICANCE** – The audience is **unsettled** by seeing that the family is racially discriminated against by individuals and the government.

**E.g. 2** Social – Joe has problems with reading: ‘ . . . Aborigines, incong . . . incongruously . . . Dancing . . . to a brass band’.

**SIGNIFICANCE** – Joe has difficulty reading, due to interrupted educational opportunities, however this doesn’t stop Jimmy having a keen understanding of the political issues: ‘them bastards took our country and them blackfellas dancin’ for them’. **The audience understands the Aborigines anger at their treatment.**

Later Neal makes Jimmy wait at the back door

**SIGNIFICANCE** – This is **disturbing** for the audience because it not only reveals the recurring demeaning treatment of the Aborigines by government officials, but also the social consequences of the discrimination.

**E.g. 3** Political – newspaper article proclaims WA’s hopeful optimistic prosperity.

**SIGNIFICANCE** – Contextual background knowledge provides information that the underlying reason for the moving of aboriginals from Northam was because Premier Mitchell wanted to win votes in Northam. **The obvious political manipulation is concerning for the audience.**

**E.g. 4** The scene ends with Joe speaking in the Noongar language as he mimes throwing a dowak at a rabbit.

**SIGNIFICANCE** – This **challenges** the audience to see the issues from an Aboriginal perspective. Reaffirms the Millimurra family commitment to their traditional ways and a rich Noongar cultural life despite an impoverished white fella one.

**(Tie back to Thesis)** The impact of the visual and verbal effects in this scene unsettles the audience by challenging them to view the issues raised in the play from the Aboriginal perspective; to become aware of the recurring examples of racial discrimination and to reassess the rhetoric of government policies and its effect on Aboriginal lives.

- Don’t just retell the facts or the incident. Assume your reader knows the facts, what they need to be persuaded of is how you are using that material to shape a particular argument or thesis and your reasons, your evidence – **you must analyse, comment on their significance or effect.**

**E.g.** There are a number of things you could say about Winston Smith, the protagonist in 1984 by George Orwell.

He is thoughtful, independent, rebellious and fearful. **It is important that you link these characteristics to their significance in relation to his behaviour and the ideas in 1984.**

For instance, because of his thoughtful, reflective nature, he writes down his ideas in a diary, he questions the party indoctrination, thoughtcrime and Newspeak.

His independence leads to his relationship with Julia and their love hideaway.

His rebelliousness is demonstrated by writing ‘DOWN WITH BIG BROTHER’ in his diary, his love affair with Julia, his desire to oppose the Party, his risky behaviour.

However, it is his fearfulness which is his downfall; it has been a factor in all his actions, providing the thread which unravels his resistance. It leads to his complete capitulation in Room 101 where he is forced to face his worst fear.

At the end of the book Winston is broken, he has lost his independence and dignity, he now loves ‘Big Brother’.

Use the information about Winston to write a paragraph in response to the following question.

**Question:** *Discuss how voice has been crafted to reveal an inner or hidden conflict in at least one text.* (English ATAR Exam 2018, Q 7)

**The voice of Winston Smith**, in George Orwell's 1984, enables the reader to gain an alarming insight into the controlling world of Big Brother. **Fearfully chronicling his opposition** to the dystopian world of 1984, Winston records his **hidden resistance** by writing 'DOWN WITH BIG BROTHER' in his diary. His **inner commentary** as he rewrites history to conform to Newspeak principles and his **fear ridden attempt** to escape party scrutiny in the secret love affair with Julia provide the reader with an understanding of the **overriding sense of anxiety** which blights Winston's **attempts to find personal freedom and happiness**. His **constant fear** is that they will be discovered, and the thought police will take them away. When he is captured and taken to the Ministry of Love for re-education, he is broken by being tortured with **his hidden dread of rats**. Winston has capitulated, **he no longer has any inner conflict**, he loses his independence, rebelliousness and dignity, **the narrative voice has now changed to a compliant citizen who loves 'Big Brother'**.

- Contextualise, consider the significance or consequences.

**E.g. Question:** *Discuss the part played by setting in the representation of social values.*

It has often been said that a woman's place is the kitchen. This idea that a physical setting can define a **society's ideas regarding class and gender issues** is, whilst a stereotype, true. Margaret Atwood's The Handmaid's Tale was written in **America in the 1980's at the time of the emergence of The New Right, a fundamentalist Christian political force concerned with America's declining Caucasian birth rate and their political desire for women to return to their traditional domestic roles as wife and mother (in the bedroom and kitchen)**. Atwood extrapolates these **social anxieties** in her construction of a **theocratic society** called Gilead in which men rule and women are defined by their ability to procreate. Within this setting are several others, such as the house, the gymnasium and Jezebels, which reveal the patriarchal class hierarchy of Gilead. The construction of the totalitarian and strictly regimented society of Gilead **highlights these social divisions** resulting in **oppression**, but also the **rebellion** created by this division.

**E.g. Question:** *Texts communicate ideological positions which are influenced by the historical conditions in which they were produced. Consider this statement with reference to at least one text.*

In Heart of Darkness representations of race are certainly influenced by the historical conditions in which they are produced. Conrad was writing in the context of **late nineteenth century Europe**. Although **he tries to interrogate the imperialist ideologies of the European nations such as Britain, Belgium, France and Germany, which was epitomised in the scramble for Africa in the 1870's**, the text constructs the African people in terms of the other, in bestial terms as mad and incomprehensible and denies them the identifying characteristic of human beings, speech, **revealing Conrad's enculturation and naturalisation of the racism which was used to legitimise colonisation**.

How could you improve the opening sentence?

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### 3 Develop a strong, personal response.

- Engage with the question rather than simply reproducing prepared material with merely token reference to the task. Don't let your essay become just a collection of facts and generalisations. Your aim is to engage in an intelligent discussion of an issue or a text, presented clearly and persuasively and supported by well-argued facts.

You need to cultivate your own opinions and construct a strong argument or thesis. Develop critical thinking skills – challenge rather than present facts. The biggest mistake students make is to answer with a prepared, irrelevant answer.

Markers like good solid knowledge of the material, a **strong personal engagement** with the question and a **confident voice**. Try to generate some **enthusiasm and responsiveness**. The introduction below is personal, engaged, confident.

**Question:** *Explore how a text uses voice to challenge or endorse a particular view.*

The indigenous voice has been silenced for too long in our society. Tara June Winch, a Wiradjuri woman, won the 2020 Miles Franklin Award for her challenging story The Yield. I brought to my reading the understanding of 'yield' as meaning what we take from the land, Winch made me see that yield, in her language, is what you give to the land. Poppy Gondiwindi, before he dies, is determined to compile the language and stories of his people. His account is lyrical and heartbreaking. The book challenged me because it provides the voices of multiple narrators; the disposed Wiradjuri people, the granddaughter who has been silent until her return, the Lutheran missionary, the landowners, the demonstrators. So many voices, all competing to be heard. In reading this story I had to listen to, understand and respond to multiple perspectives. Underpinning all the stories is the indigenous voice which grieves for what has been taken from the land, but also celebrates the yield, the reclaiming of language, stories and identity.

### Reworking a first draft

Below is an example of how a first draft can be reworked and improved.

**Question:** *Through an examination of one text you have studied consider how a writer manipulates language to explore personal and/or social issues.*

(Introduction) Writers manipulate language to explore personal and social issues. Richard Flanagan's The Sound of One Hand Clapping (Sound) employs a layering of Slovenian and English and rich, evocative imagery such as the symbols of the shattered teapot and the edelweiss flower to explore the experience of migrants to Australia during the 1950s

**[Markers' Comments:** *Be more specific. Don't repeat the words of the question – try:* Language can be used in a creative and original manner to investigate **deeply moving personal and significant public concerns**.

*Make your thesis more specific, what is the migrant experience? – try:* The dislocation and isolation Sonja experiences as a migrant child in Australia in the 1950s and Australian's insensitivity to the loss and loneliness experienced by migrants.]

See how this idea has been developed in a subsequent paragraph, the bolded parts indicate the improvements added after editing.

**(Topic sentence)** The broken teapot is a recurring motif in Flanagan's Sound and is used to **represents the isolation and social dislocation experienced by migrants to Australia**, like Sonja, in the post-war period. The children's tea set was given to Sonja by the well-meaning Australian **neighbours** to distract her from the mother's 'disappearance'. They expected her to play nicely and **conform to their social expectations** just as they expected her to assimilate into the conservative 'British culture' which dominated Australian society during the 1950s. Sonja however, reacts to their gift by smashing the tea set, **suggesting**

**her loneliness, loss and confusion.** The **effect** of such social dislocation is **explored later** in the novel in the scene where Sonja rubs her swelling stomach with a shard of a broken teapot which ‘threatened to tear through her flesh’ implying the fragment could have not only potentially harmed Sonja in the present day; but also cut deeper, harming her unborn baby – the future. **The recurring motif of brokenness is further referenced through the language of ‘brokenness’ to describe the dislocation of her father and the void left by her mother** that has been perpetuated in her life. As a child, **Sonja tried to put the tea set pieces back together again, but she found that she couldn’t, suggesting her own displacement and dislocation; no matter how hard she tried to fit into Australian society she did not belong.** [*Marker’s comment: move this sentence to after the sentence about Sonja smashing the tea set*] The text suggests that social displacement is a result of trying to become something which one isn’t. Sonja’s social confusion is ended when she embraces her migrant past and accepts that though she isn’t a ‘white Australian’ her voice is not less significant. Through her reconciliation with Archie and acceptance of her migrant experience the broken teapot was mended, and her future life in Australia appears more hopeful.

[By reordering the sentences and by adding some linking words, indicated in bold, the paragraph makes a stronger argument]



### **ACTIVITY Rewrite these student comments, to improve ideas and expression**

1. **Question:** Referring to at least one written narrative, discuss how texts construct ideas about identity.
  - (a) In short stories a character’s identity plays an influential role in promoting various ideas. This has been the case in the short story ‘The Pedestrian’ by Ray Bradbury. This year in class we have also studied the expository text An Inconvenient Truth by Al Gore. Even though it isn’t a narrative text it too creates various ideas through the portrayal of many identities. However in Gore’s expository the ideas that are present are different from these. Since this is the case I will talk about the generic conventions both of the texts have used to construct different and similar ideas concerning identities.

Your version: (You will need a complete rewrite to actually answer the question)

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(b) The text entitled Jasper Jones by Craig Silvey and The Secret River by Kate Grenville set in Australia during the 1800s convey ideas about identity. They convey ideas about the protagonist and the group they belong to, in this instance teenagers and colonial settlers and Aborigines. The texts convey these ideas through the use of figurative language such as simile and metaphor, dialogue and a reference to social issues.

Your version: (If necessary, change the text to ones you are familiar with)

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**2. Question:** *Show how literary conventions have been used to enable a writer to explore social issues.*

Euripides's Medea was first performed in 431 BC. In it Euripides follows the conventions of Greek tragedy. By using this form and the traditional elements of it, Euripides could question the social values of his time.

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**3 Question:** *Discuss how the narrative perspective influences your response to a text.*

In *The Catcher in the Rye* Salinger explores issues such as conformity, adolescence and change which are clearly understood through the use of the first person point of view. It is through the use of first person point of view that we, as readers, are able to develop a rapport with the main character Holden Caulfield and understand the period of his life that he is traversing through as we are able to explore his thoughts and feelings

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### IMPROVING YOUR EXPRESSION

Strengthen your response and vary your vocabulary.

It is insufficient to say the writer has a negative or a positive response, or the issue dealt with is violence.

Rather than writing ‘the audience responds negatively’, try ‘the audience responds with discomfort and embarrassment’.

Rather than saying ‘The text positions us to respond negatively to the issue’ you could write: ‘By describing the developers as ‘sharks’, Winton encourages his readers to condemn the predatory nature of the developers.’

Instead of writing ‘The text presented a positive view of the investigation’, try ‘The text inspired me and showed the amazing resilience and insight of the team’.

## Useful Vocabulary

- 1 Words you could use in your answers instead of saying the writer has a positive or negative attitude (Add to this list):

### POSITIVE

for  
sympathetic  
approving  
supportive  
accepting  
in favour  
favourable  
expresses approbation  
promotes  
compassionate  
endorses  
commends  
lauds

### NEGATIVE

against  
unsympathetic  
critical  
mocking  
rejecting  
opposing  
in opposition  
derisive  
disapproval  
derogatory  
repudiates  
condemns  
disparages

Add your words:

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- 2 Instead of saying ‘The writer gets across the idea’ try:

The writer *suggests* . . .

*Conveys* an atmosphere of . . .

*Builds up* a sense of . . .

*Evokes* an image of . . .

*Describes* . . .

*Communicates* feelings of . . .

*Expresses* the opinion that . . .

Your alternatives:

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- 3 If you are discussing voice you may need to talk about tone. You might describe the tone as critical, sympathetic, authoritative, hopeful, sarcastic, disgusted, convincing, etc.

Add to this list:

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### **ACTIVITY** Improving your expression

#### 1. Change the bolded words to more relevant, specific ones.

The use of language in a text can position the reader to respond in a **specific way to issues** presented. *Machines like Me*, a novel written in 2019 by Ian McEwan, shows the effects of creating a human robot. Through the use of **descriptive** and **sophisticated** language the **audience** is positioned to feel **negatively** towards the issue of creating artificial intelligence and to sympathise with Charlie. [You could create a much stronger thesis statement]

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#### 2. Rewrite to improve expression, including replacing the underlined words.

**Question:** *Discuss how a literary text challenges dominant assumption about what it means to be an Australian through its portrayal of Australian lifestyle, culture and/or identity. (ATAR Literature, 2017, Q8)*

*No Sugar* written by Aboriginal playwright Jack Davis, challenges dominant assumptions about Australian way of life and identity, by following the trials and tribulations of the Millimurras, an Aboriginal family, in rural WA, between 1929 and 1934. There are a variety of different ways in which the Aboriginals, the original inhabitants of this land, are marginalised or oppressed by the white Australians in the play, including, through the language, power and law, and the inclusion and treatment of particular Aboriginal characters. Through these aspects in the play, the audience understands that the Aborigines were a trapped race, who suffered terribly, especially in those depression years.

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## Linking sentences

While the TET model encourages self-contained paragraphs with strong concluding sentence, it is also necessary to develop a flow in your essay by providing links to each paragraph.

Strategies such as **paragraph transitions** can help to explain ideas, develop arguments and to make your writing fluent. For example, Another significant issue . . . , Similarly . . . , By contrast . . . , Thus . . .

Here is an example of how to keep the strong **Tie back to Thesis** sentence and also provide a transition to the following paragraph, by repeating a key word.

**E.g. 1 Par 1 (Topic sentence)** The feature article ‘Social Media Beat-up’ by Maxine Brown examines the effect of social media on students’ wellbeing.

(The paragraph then provides some examples: e.g. 1 The ubiquitous presence of the phone, e.g. 2 FOMO causes anxiety, unproductive activities and e.g. 3 Live vs on-line interaction.)

**(Tie back to Thesis)** Brown claims that the ubiquitous screen time is **damaging** students’ physical and mental health.

**(Par 2) (Topic sentence)** The article documents recent studies that show the **social damage** caused by phones and other devices.

**E.g. 2 Par 1 (Tie back to Thesis)** Atwood gives the **marginalised** Handmaid a voice.

**Par 2 (Topic sentence)** **It is not only Offred who is marginalised**, the other Handmaids are also silenced.



## ACTIVITY

### 1. Rewrite to be more concise:

*Say what you have to say, what you have a will to say, in the simplest, the most direct and exact manner possible, with no surplusage: – there, is the justification of the sentence so fortunately born 'entire, smooth and round', that it needs no punctuation, and also (that is the point!) of the most elaborate period, if it be right in its elaboration.*

(63 words – from 'Style' by Walter Pater (1839-1894) – Note that Pater didn't follow his own advice!)

Your version:

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### 2. Rewrite to eliminate repetition

In writing a common flaw is to repeat the same word

- (a) 'We see the colonial imperialism as **fuelled** by the belief that the natives are inferior, bestial and base. Our contrasting values **fuel** our disgust to this idea.' [What could you replace the second 'fuel' with? How could you improve the full statement?]

Your version:

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- (b) The **different** ways of dealing with their problems are accentuated by visual and verbal techniques. The **different** clothing and the **different** accents of the characters show their **difference**.

Your version:

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- (c) One of the main reasons I desire to become a lawyer is that a lawyer commands respect from people of all professions. After I become a lawyer I shall strive hard to follow a lawyer's code of ethics. I am trying to become a lawyer because I am fascinated by legal things in our society and enjoy law immensely, I feel that I shall make a good lawyer.

Your version:

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### 3 Rewrite to improve the expression.

**Question:** Consider how the use of language influences your response to ideas presented in written texts. In your response you must refer to at **least two** written text.

- (a) The use of language in the texts is very important in shaping the response of viewers. This use of language influences a viewer's response to the ideas presented in a visual text.

Your version:

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- (b) The feature article 'Big Brother is Watching' uses descriptive language and dialogue to influence our response to the idea in the passage. The book The Yield by Tara June Winch also uses descriptive language and dialogue to influence the reader's response and understanding of the idea presented in the book. The article presents the idea that companies control our lives and don't have morals, they just care about business. The Yield deals with some different ideas about land ownership. These responses to the ideas in the text are influenced by the language used which is mainly descriptive language and dialogue.

Your version:

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- (c) Texts create meaning through the use of narrative conventions. Such is it so with Ray Bradbury's short story 'The Pedestrian' which focuses on a walk by a pedestrian in the future. This is presented by the text's use of figurative language such as symbolism, setting, dialogue, characterisation and point of view

Your version:

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### USING QUOTES TO DEVELOP A PARAGRAPH

Be strategic in your use of examples and quotations, which means analysing quotes and explaining them in detail. Simply dropping in quotes as if their meanings were self-evident or filling your paragraph with a list of quotes is no substitute for analysis. Explain the quotes and examples you select from texts. Their relevance needs to be carefully signalled to the reader through introductory comments, and then explained with direct commentary and explanation.

Here are some examples of how to smoothly integrate quotes into sentences. A lead-in phrase can be set up in three ways:

(Examples based on *Jasper Jones* by Craig Silvey)

1. A complete sentence followed by a colon and then the quote:

Charlie sees four local men destroying An Lu's garden: 'They pull at his flowers, his small shrubs, uprooting everything, throwing the heavier stuff at the house.'

2. An incomplete sentence, followed by a comma and then the quote:

Charlie is horrified when he looks out his window and sees, 'four men destroying An Lu's garden. They pull at his flowers, his small shrubs, uprooting everything, throwing the heavier stuff at the house.'

3. A statement that ends in 'that' and then the quote:

The shock and horror Charlie feels when he sees the men destroying An Lu's garden is conveyed through Silvey's description of the men when he states that '[t]hey pull at his flowers, his small shrubs, uprooting everything, throwing the heavier stuff at the house.'

(Note the capital T needs to be changed to a lower case t, so the change is put in square brackets.)

You can use phrases such as 'the author emphasises . . .', 'the author claims . . .', as 'the narrator implies' . . . Other verbs you can use are illustrates, demonstrates, asserts, believes, observes, claims, emphasises, argues.

4. If you want to incorporate the quote into your sentence, you may need to change some of the wording to make it grammatically correct:

Charlie is horrified when he looks out his window and sees the men destroying An Lu's garden, 'pull [ing up] flowers, . . . uprooting everything, throwing the heavier stuff at the house.'

It is important that you follow your quote with an analysis, perhaps relating it to the latent racism of the town, or how Charlie's father heroically goes to defend An Lu, or how Charlie questions the attitudes in the town.

E.g. Silvey illustrates the racism in the town through this unprovoked attack on An Lu and his garden.

E.g. Charlie views his father with admiration when he witnesses how he breaks up the confrontation.

Rather than using lengthy quotations, use brief parts of the statement, incorporate them into your sentences and focus on commenting on them, showing how they work.

E.g. The description of destruction of An Lu's garden, with the local men 'uprooting everything' shocks Charlie as he realises the destructive nature of their racism.

Note how quotes are integrated in the following extract from an essay:

**Question:** *Evaluate the way in which setting is used in a text to convey specific values.*

In Tim Winton's novel, *Cloudstreet* the physical setting of the House is important for both its literal and metaphorical functions. The Pickles and Lamb families are united in that they occupy the same house; however, they are divided physically into different areas of the house, symbolically suggesting the differing nature of the two families.

**The House is personified as a character which ‘weeps’, and ‘cries’ in response to its occupants and their division.** Winton is therefore able to use the physical setting of the House to comment on the internal struggles of the characters. One example of this is Oriel’s retreat into the backyard. Oriel feels displaced in the family; therefore, she feels displaced in the house. **She is grieved by ‘the realisation that Fish didn’t even know her’. . . and the feeling that she had that the House was saying to her, ‘wait, wait’.** Therefore, the physical setting of the House, ‘Cloudstreet’, is significant to the narrative as it enables **Winton to suggest the notion that ‘place reflects changes’.** [you need to add a sentence here to show the relevance of this quote]

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The River is also a significant setting in the text, of **particular significance to Quick; ‘everything important that had ever happened to him it seemed had to do with the River’.** **The guilt which he feels that rules much of his life ‘picks up sadness like he’s got a radar for it’, as it stems from Fish’s accident in the River.** Winton also uses Quick to reveal the spiritual nature of the River, **‘Quick looked over the side, he saw the River was full of sky. . . there’s stars and swirl and space down there and it wasn’t water anymore’.** Therefore, it is on the River that Quick and Fish **transcends to a ‘world beyond their temporal existence’.** **Winton’s own notions of realism: ‘I wanted to include both realms, this is true realism, the supernatural and the natural, accepted as one thing inclusive’, validates the idea that both ‘realist and symbolic elements can co-exist’.** The physical setting of the river is important to the narrative as it works with the surrealist elements of the text to show . . . . [you develop this statement]

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### USING THE PERSONAL VOICE

A good answer not only answers the question but also reflects the writer’s own personal voice or response. Voice is the sense that there is a real person answering the question rather than providing a prepared answer. A person with opinions, reasoning and feelings, someone who engages with the question.



Personal voice involves using ‘I’, ‘me’, ‘I think’, ‘my opinion’ etc., but it is more than that, you can create a sense of a personal response and engagement with the question without using ‘I’. A personal response shows engagement, a mind at work, thinking through the implications rather than regurgitating a prepared answer. Write what you think rather than telling the examiner what you think they want to read.

You may have been taught in the past that it is inappropriate to use the first person response in an essay, but modern critical thinking argues that every response is an individual, response, influenced by the writer’s context (gender, class, age etc). Some questions are, in fact, impossible to answer without using the personal response:

*Explain, with reference to at least one text you have studied how the conventions of a text influence **the meanings you make from it.***

*Discuss the extent to which **your response** to the attitudes and values presented in a text was influenced by the techniques of that text’s construction.*

Other questions ask for a more objective assessment.

*‘In the Australian legal system, Parliament is the main law-maker, but the Courts also have a legitimate role’. Discuss the validity of this statement.*

Use your discretion and be guided by the questions.

Personal voice involves how you respond to a question and what you say. It means responding in your own way, making a personal connection to the issues.

‘Voice is a sense that there is a real person communicating through an answer, a person with opinions, arguments and feelings.’ (Rod Quinn, *Good Answers*, 2001)

Another marker wrote ‘personal voice is when a student reflects upon the nuances of the question, then clarifies a position and writes with vigour, thought and engagement’.

Essays which have a lively sense of personal voice demonstrate a thoughtful engagement with the question, drawing connections, observing links rather than simply rattling off lists of techniques, or stringing together a series of quotes, or regurgitating materials from the classroom which convey the ‘teacher’s voice.’

The use of ‘I’, ‘me’ and ‘my’ can enable the development of a ‘personal voice’ and should not be discouraged, but just because you sprinkle ‘I think’, ‘I believe’, ‘my opinion’ through an essay does not necessarily mean that a credible ‘personal voice’ has been established. It is the individual thinking process, informed by knowledge and understanding of syllabus concepts and conventions and an engaged response to texts that shows markers that you are actively involved in communicating your ideas and responding to the question.

**All English exam questions, not just those which use ‘you’ or ‘your’, should be considered as encouraging students to engage their minds and give voice to their considered responses.**  
(From an Examiner’s report)

Another marker wrote: ‘Be honest. Don’t tell us what you think we want to hear. Answer each question from your perspective as a thinking person with an understanding of the syllabus informed by your own experience of text.’

**The use of the personal voice can result in a stronger presentation of your ideas. It shows that you are confident in expressing your opinion. The personal voice makes you take a view, give a specific response, it means actively presenting your ideas rather than regurgitating a prepared answer.**

**ACTIVITY** Write an essay in response to the following question.

**Question:** *Reflect on the factors that influenced your appreciation and understanding of at least one text you have studied during the year.*

Points to consider before writing your essay

- This question requires a personal response and your reflections on at least one text.
  - The focus is on personal reaction and consideration of the effect of the factors that influence you . . . NOT a focus on the content of the text.
  - The text type is not specified, you can choose any text you have enjoyed.
  - Clarify what is meant by ‘appreciation’ and ‘understanding’
  - The instruction ‘reflect’ requires a consideration of what the factors might be and why those factors might influence you (e.g. your personal or cultural context, your background knowledge or interest in the topic or situation, the issues it dealt with, the use of particular conventions or techniques, the quality of the writing.)
  - You are not being asked to regurgitate content or retell the plot, but to consider how you make meaning from texts, what provides enjoyment.
  - The key discriminator will be your reflection, your personal response.
- 1 Write your plan in the Essay Plan
  - 2 Write your essay on the pages provided.



## ESSAY PLAN

<b>Question:</b>			
Reflect on the factors that influenced your appreciation and understanding of at least one text you have studied during the year.			
<b>Introduction – Opinion/Thesis</b>			
<i>The introduction should explain/reword the question and raise the major issue/focus of the question. It should provide an outline of what will be covered in the essay, define difficult words, terminology and key concepts, possibly give some background context and provide a thesis statement for your answer/argument.</i>			
<b>Body:</b>			
<b>Paragraph 1</b>	Topic	Examples/Explanation	Tie back to Thesis
<b>Paragraph 2</b>	Topic	Examples/Explanation	Tie back to Thesis
<b>Paragraph 3</b>	Topic	Examples/Explanation	Tie back to Thesis

Tie back to Thesis/Question

## ESSAY PLAN

<b>Thesis:</b>	
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<b>Body:</b>
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	Topic	Examples/Explanation	Tie back to Thesis
<b>Paragraph 4</b>			
<b>Paragraph 5</b>			
<b>Paragraph 6</b>			

Tie back to Thesis/Question

<b>Conclusion</b>
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*The conclusion draws the major points of the essay together. It restates the main ideas and relates back to the question and thesis stated in the introduction. It should satisfy the reader that you have answered the question.*





# EDITING YOUR WORK

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## Write – then edit, edit, edit

Students often spend so much time researching and then writing their essay that they don't leave enough time for editing. Reworking your first draft should take about 30% of your time. Final editing should be at least 10% of the total time taken for the essay. Therefore it is important to leave enough time for the editing process.

**Drafting** is the initial rough working which is then fine-tuned with as many drafts as necessary and possible.

**Editing** deals with the overall essay – structure, content, flow, clarity. Editing aims to make your work clear, logical and relevant.

**Proofreading** focuses more on the technical aspects – punctuation, grammar, spelling. It involves a close reading to check details. A proofreading technique is to read the work backwards. This makes you focus on the actual words used rather than 'reading' what you think you wrote. Incorrect spelling in particular stands out.

**First draft** – You may not have a fully formed, stylish, carefully worded introduction in your first draft – but your introduction should include (even if in note form) a clear explanation of terms, areas to be covered and YOUR THESIS.

In the body of the essay sort material into rough paragraphs – leave lots of space to add material.

Write down all the relevant material – you may edit some of it out later, check for gaps in your knowledge or the flow of the argument, the need for more research.

Leave fine tuning of style elements until later drafts but get in the habit of checking details are correct in your first draft – this avoids an unchecked fact or inaccurate quotation slipping through to the final version.

The ideal is 3-4 drafts, achievable if you plan and start early enough, but at least 3 drafts are necessary; First draft – put it all down, second draft refine by culling, adding missing information, reordering paragraphs etc, working on your introduction to make it strong, clear and compelling. During this draft keep referring back to the question, the marking criteria and your thesis – does this paragraph answer the question, add to the argument? If it doesn't contribute strongly to developing your thesis, change it or cull in. Restate – reshape – reject. Third draft is for fine tuning, careful reading to check the unity and cohesion of each paragraph, the flow of your essay, correct spelling and grammar.

When drafting keep an eye on your essay length. Usually your essays are required to be 1,000–1,200 words, which means you need 3-6 body paragraphs. For long essays the limit is usually 1,500–2,000 words. In an exam or in class essay you are expected to write about 3-4 pages (about 1,000 words). Short essays are harder to write; you want to get as many marks as possible within the word limit, so be succinct and argue with strong points.

Be scrupulous about your word count. Too short – concentrate on more examples or better still, develop the explanation associated with your example. Too long – some markers are ruthless and refuse to consider any material over the word length. Hard editing can often sharpen your expression and strengthen your argument. (Word limits do not include quotations and reference details at the end.)

Your third draft has two part, first a reading for flow and meaning and a second for technical issues. If you have been working on a computer, try to print out your work for the final draft (edit) – often structure and grammatical errors are clearer on the printed page.

When you are editing read your work aloud for flow and fluency. You will pick up incomplete sentences, clumsy expression, repetition, missing punctuation. Reading your essay out loud can also highlight poor logic, lack of flow or relevance.

An independent reader can be helpful – your mum, your tutor, a friend who isn't doing the same assignment.

### Drafting on a computer

Most students write their essays on computers, despite the fact that most exams are handwritten. For that reason, it is important to practise handwriting answers. Nevertheless, writing your assignments on a computer has many advantages. Your work is easy to read (use a readable font such as Times New Roman 11 or 12). Editing is much easier, whole chunks of writing can be moved around, you can use the spelling, grammar and editing aids provided, but watch out for American spelling and homophones. Some students like to make their initial draft on paper then rework it as they transfer it to a computer. Be very careful and accurate in transferring hard copy to the computer, sometimes references and sources can be lost.

Drafting on a computer tends to be a more continuous process with small changes as you go. If you decide on a major rewrite save the original version in case you change your mind or need information from the earlier version. If you are making a number of changes save that version before you make the changes. This way you can revert to earlier version if you want to include something you had discarded. Create file names with version numbers. If you are making multiple drafts it is sometimes helpful to print out some as you go, to help you get an overall picture and to have a backup copy if you lose or change material. It is also helpful to print out a copy while still in the draft stage, mark up corrections on the hard copy (it is often easier to notice errors on your hard copy), then make the changes on the Word document. The hard copy also lets you see the physical structure which can be helpful for checking the flow of your argument and paragraph lengths.

Always print out and proofread the final version before submitting your assessment.



Your essay can be considered to still be in a draft form until you have performed the following editing steps to get it ready for submission.

**First edit** is a global or overall one to check your argument.

You need to check:

1. Have you answered the question? Is your rewording clear, have you dealt with all aspects of the question? Check each paragraph relates to the question.
2. Do you have a good strong thesis which you have actually ‘proved’? Does your evidence support it?
3. Does the content address the question? Is it correct, relevant, the most appropriate examples?
4. Do you have sufficient examples, evidence and explanations (with quotes, statistics etc.) to support your argument? Delete irrelevant material.

**Second edit** is an overall one for readability and focus.

You need to check:

1. Is your introduction and conclusion clear and fluent; do they convincingly presents your argument? Is your thesis strong and interesting?
2. Do you have an appropriate topic sentences for each paragraph? Does each topic sentence address the question?
3. Do you have a strong, but not repetitive tie back to thesis statement for each paragraph?
4. Does the organisation of your paragraphs and the arrangement of sentences in each paragraph help build up your answer? – are paragraphs in a logical order? Does the essay flow?
5. Are your sentences clear, well-constructed? Reword clumsy sentences. Vary sentence beginnings and length.
6. Is the tone and level of language appropriate? Is terminology correctly used?
7. Read your work out loud to help you hear the argument and flow.

**Third edit** is a specific, proofreading one for accuracy and style.

You need to check:

1. Correct spelling and grammar. If you are using a computer spell check watch for homophones such as ‘there’ and ‘their’, American spelling such as ‘color’, ‘characterization’.
2. Choose better vocabulary where appropriate. Use a formal level of expression.
3. Check sentence structure and punctuation. Don’t begin sentences with ‘It’ or ‘There is/are’, or ‘This’.
4. Ensure your references and bibliography are correct.

## WRITING CONVENTIONS

### Convention for indicating titles of texts

Underline the title of **whole texts** (or use italics if typing) (‘the big ones’).

Use underlining or italics to indicate books (e.g. The Handmaid’s Tale), plays, anthologies of poems or short stories (e.g. The Turning), brochures, flyers, pamphlets, musical works (e.g.

Beethoven's Eroica), operas (The Magic Flute by Mozart), newspapers The West Australian)

Note the use of Capital Letters, but not for small connecting words, but The at the beginning as part of a title has a capital.

The title of a novel	<u>The Catcher in the Rye</u>
The title of a nonfiction text	<u>Reinventing Australia</u>
The title of a feature film	<u>A Star is Born</u>
The title of a documentary	<u>Planet Earth</u>
The title of a play	<u>Educating Rita</u>
The title of a newspaper	<u>The West Australian</u>
The title of a book of poems	<u>Appreciating Poetry</u>
The title of a television drama	<u>Home and Away</u>
The title of a magazine	<u>Time</u>
The title of an anthology of short stories	<u>Spectrum Two</u>

Use inverted comas for the title of **parts of texts** (little bits).

Use quotation marks to indicate a part of a text for articles, essays, lectures, chapters, sections of books, excerpts, short stories, poems, songs, TV programs.

The title of a short story	'The Pedestrian'
The title of a feature article	'Confessions of a Film Addict'
The title of an essay	'Two Cheers for Democracy'
The title of a newspaper article	'Big Brother is Watching'
The title of a poem	'Woman to Child'

(Note in the examples above small connecting words, such as *of a, for* do not need capital letters)

NOTE: The short story 'The Pedestrian' by Ray Bradbury in Modern Short Stories.

Be careful to distinguish between the individual story and the collection, as anthologies of poems and short stories usually have an individual piece with the same title as the whole collection, e.g. The short story 'The Turning' in the anthology The Turning by Tim Winton.

## Abbreviating text titles

If you are writing about a text with a long title e.g. The Merry-go-Round in the Sea or The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time; don't spend time writing the title out in full each time; you can abbreviate it. Make sure you use the full title the first time, then in brackets indicate the abbreviation you will use subsequently. Some students use the capital letters of the title e.g. T.M.G.R.I.T.S. However, this can create a meaningless jumble of letters, it is better to use key words from the title e.g. Merry-go-Round, Curious Incident, or even Merry or Curious.

## Using Abbreviations

Acronyms or abbreviations should be written in full the first time with the abbreviation in brackets after e.g. National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) and then the abbreviation used for future references.

Write numbers under ten in full (e.g. seven).

Use single quotation marks for terms (so-called 'democracy') and quotations, except for quotations within quotations when you use double quote marks (" ").

## IMPROVING YOUR EXPRESSION

A formal level of language use is generally required – unless you have been given clear instructions to the contrary. Do not use contractions (don't, can't) slang (cop) or a conversational style (you'll see what I mean . . .) avoid clichés ('Let's touch base', 'unprecedented times').

Your language should be appropriate for the context, purpose and genre, but also demonstrate your ability to use the conventions of standard written English.

Use non-discriminatory language. Only use gender specific terms when you intend your reference to be to a specific gender, otherwise use 'they' or 'people' (he/she is clumsy).

Make your meaning clear. A combination of long and short sentences adds variety, but shorter sentences may help your writing be more direct and clearer. Write in full sentence, not bullet points.

Check consistency of spelling and format, e.g. program/programme, non-violent/nonviolent.

Avoid generalisations – Don't make sweeping claims: 'Shakespeare was the greatest writer'; be cautious, say 'generally', 'usually', 'most', 'it appears that', 'seems to', 'tends to', 'the evidence suggests', 'most critics agree'. Qualify your answers by using appropriate dates, context or by using qualifying words.

Be concise – you don't need 'A book called *Pathways to Excellence*' (the italics or underlining, or inverted commas lets the reader know it is a text).

It is unnecessary to write: 'In this essay', 'the text we studied . . .', 'I think setting is important (say 'Setting is important', or better, 'The importance of setting can be seen in . . .')

Get rid of tautologies like 'new innovations', 'In this essay I am going to', or 'In this essay I have . . .', weak expressions, such as, 'In conclusion', 'As I said before . . .'

Avoid beginning sentences with 'This . . .' or 'There are . . .'

E.g. Last year we studied Jasper Jones, by Craig Silvey. This book was very popular with the class. Change to: Last year we studied Jasper Jones, by Craig Silvey, which was very popular with the class.

~~There are~~ a number of examples ~~which~~ support this theory. (A number of examples support this theory.)

Use the active rather than passive voice:

Passive: Taxes were increased by 10% (we want to know who increased them!)

Active: The Federal Government increased taxes by 10%

Passive: A resistant reading of the passage can be made in which gender stereotypes are shown to be challenged.

Active: A resistant reading challenges gender stereotypes.

### ACTIVITY Drafting

Below is a start at refining a conclusion. Write your version.

**Question:** 'Poetic conventions enable experience to be represented in a concise yet powerful way.' Discuss, with reference to **two or more** poems.

In 'Monday' and 'Hospital Evening', Harwood represents migrant experiences of Australia's people and culture in an intense and compressed manner by employing poetic techniques ~~to impart meaning to the reader. This is significant, as Harwood purposely does this\*~~ to challenge the xenophobic and philistine nature of her contemporary 1970s Australian society. Thus, poetic techniques allow Harwood to construct experiences which voice her social comment in a concise manner, enabling her poetry to powerfully challenge and question her society's social mores. Finally, I believe that Harwood should be commended for these provocative poems, as it is because of people like her that today, Australia is a more multicultural and tolerant country.

[Strikethrough indicates unnecessary words]

Your version:

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## USE THE CORRECT TECHNIQUE FOR QUOTING.

Quoting is using the exact words from another source. You need to put the quoted words in inverted commas.

Paraphrasing is restating the idea in your own words. This also needs to be acknowledged. Failure to do so is plagiarism.

### Technical Rules for Quoting

#### 1. Block Quotes

If you are quoting 4 or more lines of text, indent the quoted lines and single space the quote, one font size smaller than the rest of the essay. Introduce it with a colon (:). Leave a line before and after the quote. Do not use quotation marks.

Tim Winton, in 'Sharks close on Ningaloo', a feature article written to persuade readers to protect Ningaloo Reef from a resort development (The West Australian, Jan 15th, 2001), describes his exhilarating experience of swimming with a whale shark:

Swimming with a whale shark was one of the most exciting events in my life. . . .  
I just couldn't comprehend the sheer size of it . . . .  
The shark blocked out the sun. I could feel its passage through the water as I swam on my back trying to keep pace with it. Eventually I fell back into the turbulence of its wake.  
I surfaced with a whoop of exhilaration, privileged to have had those few moments.

Winton's emotive, personal description evokes the uniqueness of his experience to encourage readers to protect the diversity and richness of the reef.

## 2. Ellipses Points

You do not need to quote such a lengthy section. Be selective in what you quote. With longer quotes omit irrelevant parts. If you want to make a long quote shorter in order to present the reader with a more concise quotation, do so using an ellipse, which is three periods, each period having a space before and after it (e.g. ‘. . .’). You might have noticed that I had already cut out some material after *‘most exciting events in my life.’* and *‘sheer size of it’*, shown by ‘. . .’

Tim Winton, in a feature article ‘Sharks close on Ningaloo’ written to persuade readers to protect Ningaloo Reef from a resort development, describes the exhilarating experience of swimming with a whale shark. He says: *‘Swimming with a whale shark was one of the most exciting events in my life. . . I just couldn’t comprehend the sheer size of it. . . I surfaced with a whoop of exhilaration, privileged to have had those few moments.’* His emotive, personal description evokes the uniqueness of his experience to encourages readers to protect the diversity and richness of the reef.

[Be selective and concise, only quote material you are going to comment on. However, be careful not to cut words that change the tone or meaning of a quote.]

## 3. Changing words in the quote

The quote you use should fit in structurally and grammatically with the rest of your sentence. Therefore, you may sometimes have to add words to a quote or modify the verb tense form in the quoted text. You do this by enclosing the added material in square brackets (like this: [ ]).

*Tim Winton, in a feature article written to persuade readers to protect Ningaloo Reef from a resort development, describes the exhilarating experience of [s]wimming with a whale shark [as] one of the most exciting events in [his] life.’*

\* If there is an error in the original quote, you can follow the error with a square bracket and sic, so it is clear the error is in the original, not in your transcribing the material.

e.g. President Trump tweeted ‘I am honered [sic] to serve you.’

## Quoting Poetry

If you are quoting poetry, copy it exactly with correct punctuation and line breaks.

When quoting three lines or less of poetry, use a slash (/) between the lines to mark the line break:

*The Solitary Reaper by William Wordsworth;*

*‘Behold her single in the field, /Yon solitary Highland Lass! /Reaping and singing by herself;’*

If you are quoting more than three lines, you must use the line spacing and indenting of each line as it is in the original.

*In Just – (by E.E. Cummings)*

*In Just –*

*spring            when the world is mud-*

*luscious the little*

*lame balloonman*

*whistles            far            and wee*

(when reproducing unconventional spelling, grammar and punctuation you have to override the spellcheck!)

## PLAGIARISM

Plagiarism is using another person's ideas and/or material and presenting them as your own.

If you use a sentence or a significant part of someone else's material it must be put in quotation marks and the sources recognised and referenced.

If you use someone's ideas then you must acknowledge them.

If material is paraphrased or summarised, then the source must be acknowledged.

### Original material

Lionel Trilling, writing in F Scott Fitzgerald, *The Liberal Imagination* (1968) states:

Thus *The Great Gatsby* has its interest as a record of contemporary manners, but this might only have served to date it, did not Fitzgerald take the given moment of history as something more than a mere circumstance, did he not, in the manner of a great French novelist of the nineteenth century, seize the given moment as a moral fact . . . For Gatsby, divided between power and dream, comes inevitable to stand for America itself.

### Paraphrased

You might find Trilling's comments hard to follow, so decide to paraphrase them.

As Lionel Trilling points out, *The Great Gatsby* is much more than a record of the manners of the twenties. He suggests, in *F Scott Fitzgerald, The Liberal Imagination*, (1968) that Gatsby represents America itself, 'divided between power and dream' (p42).

[Note the source of the idea is acknowledged as well as the actual quote]

### Plagiarism

Of course, the one thing which makes *The Great Gatsby* interesting is its picture of the life of the twenties, but if that were all, it would be out of date. Instead, like the great French novelists, Fitzgerald made the particular moment a moral symbol. Gatsby, the main character, divided between power and dream, represents the American dilemma.

[No acknowledgement – the writer's comment makes it look like the idea is their own, rather than referencing Trilling as the originator of the idea]

(Example from Peter Robbins *Writing an Essay* English Department, WCAE (1984))

## REFERENCING

Generally, when writing in-class essays or in exams you do not need to provide references or page numbers (but it can be helpful), however, a long research essay should include reference details. If referencing is required, your teacher will provide the specific format and details they require. I am not going to go into details in this essay writing book but will give you some general rules.

Ensure that the title of the book and the author's name is correct.

Give details of the publisher, the place of publication and the date.

If required, provide the page number of the reference or quote used. For long poems give the line number, with plays, include the act and scene details in brackets, e.g. In his famous soliloquy Hamlet wonders about the purpose of life: 'to be or not to be – that is the question' (Hamlet 3.i.56) That notation is sufficient, indicating a reference to Act 3, scene 1, line 56)

A Bibliography is an alphabetical list of the references you have consulted, **both quoted and read as background**. Be accurate in recording details.

**ACTIVITY** PROOFREADING

Whenever you write an essay or an assignment, you should proofread it before handing it in. You are sure to find some errors in grammar, spelling or punctuation.

- **There are nine mistakes in the passage below. Some words have either been spelt incorrectly or should have been written with a capital letter and some punctuation is missing. Make the relevant corrections where they should go.**

Charles Darwins great work, 'Origin of the species' was published in 1859. He not only believed that species could change, but suggested a way in which change could come about. One pigeon, he wrote, is not like another, nor is a christmas daisy like a yellow chrisanthemum. They are different varieties of the same species.

Darwin suggested that now and then a different variety would arise, and would in itself find it's surroundings so favourable, that it would thrive and propergate where other varieties died. Then it might take on other characteristics over time. Gradually, by the acumulation of these tiny differences, the species would become a new one.

A storm of criticism greeted Darwin's new idea. His theory contravened many Religious beliefs, and the battle between individual botanists and zoologists, who took different sides, continued for years.

- **There are seven commas missing from the next two paragraphs. Insert them where they should go.**

Darwin who had been many years researching his work before he published it continued working quietly on his ideas. He encouraged honest criticism and examined all the evidence presented to him in order to weigh up the facts.

The great gift of Darwin to his time and to science in the years which followed was not only his theory in itself but its power in stimulating students to study living things from a new perspective. By so doing he lifted botany and zoology out of the rut into which they had fallen.

- **Four full stops, a comma and one question mark have been left out in this part of the text. Make the necessary corrections.**

What was Darwin really like in private life he was a simple, shy genius who found himself famous against all personal expectations he was not particularly bright at school or university, but he had a strong observant mind with plenty of common sense observing beetles in fields appealed to him more than learning from out-of-date books Darwin was a family man who shared his work with his children sadly, world travel affected him, and he became an invalid.

**Remember:** *'Write - then edit, edit and edit'*

# WRITING ESSAYS FOR VARIOUS SUBJECTS

11

Here are some guides for writing essays in specific subjects. They come from teachers, study guides, SCSA website, etc. You will see that they all reinforce the recommendations given throughout this book.

## HOW TO WRITE AN ESSAY FOR:

### ACCOUNTING AND FINANCE

(adapted from material on the SCSA website)

- The structure of an essay in Accounting and Finance is the same as the structure of an essay in any other discipline: It has an Introduction, Body and a Conclusion.
- An essay type response in Accounting and Finance is not intended to be a piece of creative writing. It should have a simple format and consist of relatively short sentences and be written in formal language with no colloquialisms.
- For an essay type question 4 or 5 good paragraphs are required.
- Before you begin writing your essay jot down a plan.
- Ensure that you use correct terminology and **always define your terms**.
- When answering a question, it is important to identify the process required indicated by the instructional verbs, e.g. DISCUSS, DESCRIBE, DEFINE, EXPLAIN, WRITE A REPORT, SUMMARISE, LIST.

- **Essay structure:**

First paragraph is a statement/generalisation about the question but should not merely repeat the question.

Each subsequent paragraph takes a new point from the plan and explains in more detail the statement contained in paragraph 1.

The concluding paragraph repeats the main point and briefly summarises the material.

- **Paragraph structure:**

First sentence in the paragraph is a statement related to the question (topic sentence)

The following sentences systematically explain and /or expand on the first sentence.

The final sentence repeats the idea of the first sentence in a different way, ensuring that you relate the material in the paragraph to the question. It may also provide a link to the next paragraph.

- **What the Markers said:**

Candidates found Extended answer the most challenging section of the examination paper. Most candidates did not provide the required level of detail in their answers. Many did not use relevant Accounting and Finance **terminology**.

## ECONOMICS

Many students appear to struggle when required to structure a coherent 20-mark response.

Some general principles to help you:

- Make sure you understand the question and know the correct terminology.
- Write in simple, clear sentences.
- Use diagrams and graphs to provide examples and explanations.

## ENGLISH

- Choose the questions carefully. Choose appropriate questions and texts.
- Be completely familiar with the syllabus, concepts and terminology used in your subject. Know how to use them. Understand the meaning of the words so that you don't misinterpret the question. Words you are uncertain about rephrase so you provide a clear explanation of how you understand the word and therefore how you will approach the question.
- Begin with a clear statement of your understanding of the question. Reword the question, explain the terminology and key concepts. Use the language of the syllabus. Outline what you will deal with – this is your plan, which indicates how you intend to support your argument. End your introduction with a strong, clear thesis.
- Develop a clear argument. Do not simply give a descriptive account.
- Select your material carefully, to support your answer. Don't retell the plot. Select significant incidents and argue your understanding of the issue to support your interpretation.
- Use clear topic sentences that indicate the progress of your answer.
- Choose appropriate examples and quotes to explain, argue your thesis; incorporate them into your statements. Provide sufficient, but not repetitive, examples and quotations to support your topic statement.
- Use critical terminology wisely and effectively.
- Keep referring back to the question, using the terms used in the question.
- Answer all aspects of the question.
- End each paragraph with a clear statement that ties the paragraph back to your thesis.
- Conclude your essay with a strong restatement of your argument and make sure it is firmly tied to the question.
- You will need to write about 4-5 pages to cover all the material.
- Maintain an adequate level of language usage.
- Remember, markers are looking for what to reward.

### What are teachers and examiners looking for?

- Better answers address the question in the opening paragraph without sounding formulaic. Poor answers do not deal with the terms of the question.
- Students need to ensure they clearly identify all requirements of the question and base their response around this central idea.
- Those who give obviously prepared answers do not score as well as those who address the question.

- Good answers had a clear thesis and structure and used appropriate textual evidence. Each essay should be an argument supported by appropriate evidence.
- It is pleasing to see better candidates return to the question in concluding sentences in body paragraphs. This gives their essays more strength and direction and ties it back to the thesis.
- Students are generally not writing well on some popular texts. In too many cases they simply summarise the text rather than engaging with the question.
- Markers are annoyed by the incorrect spelling of titles and authors' names, incorrect details or spelling of character and place names.
- Markers want a strong engagement with the question, an interested, personal response.

\*Refer to the Grade descriptions for English on SCSA website.

### How to get good marks when writing English essays

(Based on what you are required to demonstrate as stated in the syllabus and markers' comments. Also, check the grade descriptors on the SCSA website.)

- Draw on a repertoire of strategies to interpret a range of texts. (Have a grab bag of techniques as a way of unpacking a text, but do not use simply as a checklist in your answers.)
- Read the syllabus. Be familiar with and use the words from the syllabus E.g. 'representation', 'values', 'attitudes', 'ideology', 'context', 'reading', 'conventions'.
- Use your time wisely. A question worth 10 marks should have an answer of one page which should take you 15/20 minutes to write.
- Remember the focus of the course is language: its purpose, context and audience.
- Show how texts manipulate conventions. Compare and evaluate different texts.
- Do not use lengthy quotations, use brief parts of the relevant statement, incorporate them into your sentences and focus on showing **how** they work.
- Describe the impact/effect on you as a reader. Use a personal voice. Apply to your own context. Generate some passion or interest.
- Use your knowledge of socio-cultural contexts and relate them to your understanding of the world.

### GEOGRAPHY

- Not all Extended response questions will begin with 'Describe' or 'Explain'. It is important that you familiarise yourself with higher order words including 'Assess', 'Discuss', 'Account for' and 'Evaluate'. Be aware of what these different instructional words require you to do with information and the appropriate allocation of marks (you get more marks for 'higher order' responses).
- Avoid using prepared answers and rote learning information from textbooks or practice questions completed in class. The questions asked in the examination will rarely be the exact question you may have prepared.

### LITERATURE

- Spend time analysing the question so that you are quite clear about what is required.
- Begin with a clear statement of your understanding of the question. Don't simply copy the question as your first sentence. You need to convince the marker that you understand the topic. Reword it to indicate your understanding of the question and how you intend to approach it. Explain any terminology you use.
- Your introduction should be clear and concise. It should set the framework for your essay. Define terms and indicate the direction of the essay. State your thesis. Indicate how you intend to support your argument.

- Answer the question. Shape your material to fit the question (not vice versa). Be selective and do not write everything you know about a text. Be relevant.
- Don't paraphrase the text or retell the story. Literature questions are concerned with HOW and WHY rather than WHAT. Understanding means more than just knowing the story – you must discuss factors such as the effects of language, the way events and characters are constructed and interconnected, the significance of events, etc.)
- Provide apt examples from the text to support and illustrate your points. (identify techniques / give examples / comment on effect.)
- Choose appropriate quotes, which are brief and relevant. Don't use large chunks. Incorporate quotations into your own sentences. Quotations don't make a comment on their own, you need to explain the significance.
- Write to a reader. Anticipate their enjoyment when reading your essay.

### What are Markers looking for?

- Examiners are looking for engagement with the question not a learnt answer for a previously asked question.
- Your answers must focus on the question and address all aspects.
- Show that you have considered the implications of the question.
- A key skill in the examination is selecting the best question for your text. Not every question will suit every text. Choose an appropriate question that best suits your knowledge and skills.
- You need to show a knowledge of and ability to use correctly the concepts and terminology of the syllabus.
- Contextualise your answer with syllabus statements. Questions are written to test your understanding of concepts with the texts you have studied providing examples of that concept or understanding. Rather than be an answer about a specific text, you should view it as a response to an issue or concept, using the specified text/s as evidence. You need to demonstrate your ability to discuss the issue or concept with the use of specific texts or issues in detail, choosing appropriate examples and quotes to substantiate your arguments.
- Avoid retelling the plot or the event.
- 'The members of the English Literature Examination Panel consciously devised questions which required students to go beyond the find-and-discuss rubric to a define-and-analyse one. The questions are accessible to students who can redeploy their knowledge – but difficult for those candidates who are slaves to the more or less prepared answer.'
- You are encouraged to use a personal voice, to refer to your personal experiences, context, values and responses.

Markers are instructed to look for what to reward. Answers are ranked, using the full range of marks, from 0-25.

### The guidelines are:

- |       |  |
|-------|--|
| 0-4   | <i>Hopeless</i> : no familiarity with the text: no engagement with the question.   |
| 5-8   | <i>Glimmerings</i> : evidence of only minimal knowledge of the text, poor understanding of the question. there is only a slight engagement with the text and question. |
| 9-12  | <i>Weak, below average</i> . Not a strong knowledge of the text. Weak literacy skills.   |
| 13-15 | <i>Average</i> . Demonstrates knowledge of text but only adequate handling of the question.  |
| 16-20 | Good, engaging well with the text and question at quite a sophisticated level.   |
| 21-25 | <i>Outstanding</i> .   |

## MODERN HISTORY

### What are history markers looking for?

(Based on SCSA History Marking Guide)

Overall essays will be marked on the extent to which they:

1. Answer the question:
  - Address all components of the question
  - Organise relevant evidence into a coherent account
  - Create and sustain an argument in relation to the question
2. Use and understand appropriate terminology and concepts:
  - Demonstrates historic knowledge and in-depth understanding of historical concepts
  - Recognise, where appropriate, different interpretations and viewpoints
3. Display quality of expression:
  - Use clear, correct and concise language
  - Spell significant events, people and places correctly
4. Provide a personal response:
  - Demonstrate reflective and independent thinking
  - Write with enthusiasm and interest in relation to the topic

### Examiners are looking for:

#### Content, detail, evidence

- Extent to which the essay addresses all the component parts of the question rather than being a prepared and regurgitated model answer.
- Selection of relevant and accurate content, evidence and detail relevant to the topic – not everything you know about the topic!
- thoughtful consideration of detailed, relevant evidence and appropriate analysis rather than superfluous ‘retell’.

#### Argument and/or perspective interpretation

- Logically structured essay with a coherent thesis.
- Argument/perspective supported by relevant evidence, details and examples.
- Depth of argument logically sustained through the essay to a plausible conclusion.
- Quality and depth of analysis, evaluation and/or interpretation.
- Greater attention should be paid to addressing essay questions more precisely.

#### Written expression

- Clear, literate expression.
- Correct grammar, spelling, punctuation.

## POLITICS AND LAW

**Essay Writing for Exam Success** – (from Creelman Exam Questions: Politics and Law, published by Academic Group)

- Answer the set question – don’t try to make a prepared answer fit.
- A good essay needs to be well constructed, supported with relevant examples and

evidence and logical and strong in its argument.

- Write in full sentences and well structured paragraphs.

## Introduction

- Re-write the question in your own words to show you understand it.
- Deal with all parts of the question.
- Define the terms, do not use the same word to define a term e.g. Don't say: 'Representative Government is where the government is representative of the people', that won't earn you any marks.
- Outline what you plan to do. Use a verb, e.g. 'explain', 'show', 'explore'.
- Develop a strong thesis, e.g. 'Evidence suggests that . . .' State your argument and the way in which this is going to be developed.

\*The introduction is the most important part of the essay. By the time someone has finished reading it they will have an idea that you either:

Know what you are writing about (you have expressed what the topic is), have set out what you plan to do (how you are going to answer the question or discuss the topic), stated your general argument – it should be evident that you have done the work and know the topic well.

## OR

They'll be thinking that you are waffling on because you haven't done the work, have no real idea of what the topic is about (you are probably guessing) and are stringing a few things together in the hope of getting something right.

## Body

- Each major point should be contained in a separate paragraph.
- Each paragraph should contain:
  - Topic sentence that supports the purpose of the paragraph
  - Explanatory sentences that develop or further explain the topic sentence
  - Supporting evidence – examples, case studies, statistics, court decisions and facts and figures. Use contemporary (recent) examples that fit. Explain your examples clearly – don't just tack on something like 'e.g. WorkChoices' to the end of a sentence without actually giving details about how or why it supports your point.
  - Final statement which ties back to your thesis and back to the question.

\*The Body is the section where good students will demonstrate their mastery of the topic and their depth of knowledge (e.g. students who present more appropriate and relevant supporting evidence will be rewarded with higher marks).

## Conclusion

- Briefly restate the argument (thesis) of the essay.
- Indicate the understanding reached in the essay.
- Write something relevant and conclusive in response to the question.
- Students who are able to present strong arguments with a convincing conclusion will be rewarded with higher marks.

\*The Conclusion is actually quite easy. Just reverse your introduction, change a few of the words. Be brief. The purpose is to confirm that you have answered the question and that you knew the material.

Proofread your essay – spend 5 minutes checking facts and spelling are correct.

### Some furphies about P&L essays.

1. Students think they need to open with a sensational quote or a quote from a relevant speech. No way! It's very rare that a student can do this successfully so it's best to avoid it (if it goes wrong then that can do more damage than not having a quote at all). Sometimes the best opening is a simple yet forceful statement. This shows that you are focused on what really counts.
2. The essay must be six pages long. Not necessarily. The majority of students do need to work on extending their writing, but the Examiners prefer quality over quantity – two pages is not enough, three is getting there, four is almost hitting the mark. The exemplars tend to be 6 or 7 pages long so you should be working on improving what you have all the time. Always work towards four pages or more; if you don't make it – don't worry, you get rewarded for what you have written rather than penalised for what you haven't.
3. It's impossible to get full marks for an essay. Not true. It is rare but it happens – even in the ATAR exams. Since the marks are scaled, someone will get full marks – make it you!

### Helpful hints:

- Don't write 'In this essay, I will be writing about . . .'. It is sloppy and a waste of time.
- Answer all parts of the question.
- Use appropriate language. Don't use abbreviations such as @, &. Write the word in full.
- If you use an abbreviation for a name/phrase, write it in full 'Australian Federal Police (AFP)' the first time you use it then the initials can be used after that.
- Don't use dot points or sub-headings in a formal essay.



## ANALYSIS OF SAMPLE ESSAYS

Study the following sample essays – examine if they are ‘good’ essays. They are typical student essays at ATAR level, of varying standards, written in a variety of situations. You be the marker, assess the strengths and shortcomings of the following essays. Make suggestions for improvement. You don’t need to know the subject, are not marking them for content, but you are looking at their structure.

Look for the TET model.

### ACTIVITY

Before you mark each essay, write your own answer.

## MARKING GUIDE

Ask the following questions:

### Does it answer the question?

1. Does it explain the question and the key terms?
2. Does it indicate what areas (Topics) will be covered?
3. What is the Thesis? Is it clearly stated in a thesis statement?

### Structure and argument

1. Look at each of the opening sentences. Are they clear Topic sentences?
2. Is each topic sentence well supported by Examples and Explanation? Is there a good level of analysis?
3. Does the closing sentence of each paragraph examine the effect or significance of the Thesis? Does it Tie back to the Thesis statement and repeat the words of the question (without being too repetitive)?

### Style and grammatical correctness

1. How well written is the essay?
2. How fluent and interesting is it?
3. Does it use appropriate terminology and good word choice?

**GENERAL ESSAY MARKING GUIDE**

You can use this guide when assessing the following sample essays and for your own work.

You can also access the marking criteria for specific subjects on the SCSA website.

<b>Introduction</b>	
Topic Sentence: Introduces the essay question clearly and in an engaging manner	/2
Explanation: Clearly develops the context of the topic and introduces the text/author or appropriate area of study.	/2
Evidence: The topics of the upcoming body paragraphs have clearly been signposted	/2
Thesis: A clear statement has been made that answers the essay question	/2
<b>Body Paragraph 1</b>	
Topic Sentence: A clear and engaging sentence to introduce the paragraph topic has been used	/2
Explanation/Evidence: Further development of the topic has been made and specific supporting evidence has been discussed	/2
Thesis Link: A strong link back to HOW this evidence has proven the thesis has been made. So what?	/2
<b>Body Paragraph 2</b>	
Topic Sentence: A clear and engaging sentence to introduce the paragraph topic has been used	/2
Explanation/Evidence: Further development of the topic has been made and specific supporting evidence has been discussed	/2
Thesis Link: A strong link back to HOW this evidence has proven the thesis has been made. So what?	/2
<b>Body Paragraph 3</b>	
Topic Sentence: A clear and engaging sentence to introduce the paragraph topic has been used	/2
Explanation/Evidence: Further development of the topic has been made and specific supporting evidence has been discussed	/2
Thesis Link: A strong link back to HOW this evidence has proven the thesis has been made. So what?	/2
<b>Body Paragraph 4</b>	
Topic Sentence: A clear and engaging sentence to introduce the paragraph topic has been used	/2
Explanation/Evidence: Further development of the topic has been made and specific supporting evidence has been discussed	/2
Thesis Link: A strong link back to HOW this evidence has proven the thesis has been made. So what?	/2
<b>Conclusion</b>	
Topic Sentence: A clear reinterpretation of the essay question (not exactly repeated from the intro) has been made	/2

Explanation/Evidence: A summary of the main points in the body paragraphs have been made (with no new information introduced)	/2
Thesis Link: A very strong, impactful, final answer to the thesis statement is made. The reader has been left with insightful 'food for thought'	/2
Writing Conventions (focus on the quality of the argument and expression)	
Argument: The essay question has been well explained and addressed	/2
A strong and clear argument has been made with a strong thesis statement and the argument has been maintained throughout the essay.	/2
Excellent use of examples and evidence that build a strong case	/2
Clarity: Ideas have been developed clearly and effectively	/2
Evidence: has been specific and relevant to supporting the thesis	/2
Language and grammar is sophisticated and well written	/2
TOTAL	/50

### Sample Essay – (Ancient) History

**Question:** *To what factors do you attribute the collapse of the Roman Empire?*

The Roman Empire, which had ruled the Mediterranean for hundreds of years, fell in 476 AD. This marked the end of a great civilisation which had spread over many continents, taking in Britain, the Mediterranean, Northern Africa and Asia Minor. The decline of the empire is attributed to a number of factors. It cannot be blamed on one sole factor, rather to a combination of them.

Over time the empire had decentralised. Less importance was placed on Rome as the capital and the need to be totally dependent on it. Gradually more provinces broke away and became self – sufficient and independent. They enjoyed their own government and looked after themselves as opposed to relying on Rome for everything. This caused a breakdown in the unity of the empire.

During this period the poorer classes were often ignored and, by the third and fourth centuries, no financial support was given to them at all. Those in rural centres were forced to move to the cities as they could not afford to maintain their farms. This caused pressure in the cities, as they become overpopulated and unable to support all their citizens. Eventually the cities began to decline, many ceased to exist. What had once been a thriving empire began to decline.

Because of the Pax Romana the army became obsolete, so for most of the third and fourth century the army was not used. Thus, the soldiers lost their military tradition and discipline and were unable to fight as a unified body when the need arose in the fifth century. Also, under the Severan emperors, the soldiers became merely a source of political power for the emperors to use as they pleased. The soldiers resented this, and this too became a destructive element in the decline of the Roman army.

The empire was enormous and for this reason was too hard to defend. Many blamed Trajan for increasing the size of the empire, which had given the Barbarians a chance to invade. In the fourth century AD the empire was just too big to defend and the fact the army was no longer unified made it even harder. The boundaries were under constant attack. The Moors attacked the south. The Picts and Scots attacked in Britain, the Sassanians attacked the east while the north was under attack from all directions by the Huns and the Goths. Many were actually gaining territory.

Because of the invasions it became necessary, in 395 AD, to partition the empire. The West was ruled from Ravenna in Italy whilst the East was ruled from Constantinople. The east took in Greece, Syria, Egypt, whilst the West included Italy, Africa, Spain, Gaul and Britain. In 447 AD, the Romans surrendered the West and concentrated on the East, as it was easier to defend and under less attack. The Eastern Empire remained intact until the Turks took over some centuries later.

The empire had come to an end, after ensuring many years of peace for the Mediterranean region. It was certainly a great empire and it left a lasting impression on the world.

### Sample Essay – Economics

**Question:** *Describe the factors which influence the level of consumption expenditure within the Australian economy.*

Consumption expenditure is the spending by households on goods and services. Consumption includes spending on durable goods such as cars, TV sets and stereos and on nondurable goods such as food and entertainment. Consumption is the largest component of aggregate demand, comprising about 60% of total spending in the Australian economy. Consumption is also the most stable component, unlike investment expenditure.

The most important factor affecting consumption expenditure is the level of disposable income. This is income that is left in the hands of the consumer after income tax has been deducted. If there is a cut in the direct taxation rate then consumers will experience an increase in their disposable income. However, a rise in indirect taxes, such as GST, will cause prices to rise and hence real income to decrease. As the level of income rises in the economy, consumption spending also increases.

A second important factor affecting consumption is the level of wealth. Wealth is the value of real assets such as property, shares, cash, artworks, furniture, etc. During a recession, for example, the value of many assets falls as their price drops. A lower level of wealth will reduce consumption expenditure.

Many households borrow money to finance their current consumption. Interest rates represent the cost of borrowed funds. Changes in interest rates therefore will have a significant impact on consumption expenditure. If interest rates rise, other things being equal, then consumption will most likely fall as borrowing for items such as cars, boats and holidays, decreases.

Expectations about what may happen in the future can also affect consumption. A person who is not confident about their future employment may postpone spending on major consumer items. If people think inflation will increase, then consumption spending will rise before prices increase.

There are many other factors, which can also affect the level of consumption expenditure - the age distribution of the population, government policy decisions such as a consumption tax (GST) and family allowances and attitudes to savings.

### Sample Essay – English

**Question:** *Discuss the narrative strategies a writer may use to engage the reader, referring to your own experience of reading fiction.*

Texts attempt to create a world which the reader can identify with. Successful representational techniques can engage the reader by creating a text which the reader can relate to because it appears to be ‘real’ or believable to the reader. Looking for Alibrandi by Melina Marchetta is one such text. The reader can relate to the text through the effective use of narrative techniques such as plot, characterisation, point of view, setting and the issues dealt with. Looking for Alibrandi deals with a young girl’s search for identity in the context of an

Italian background, an absent father and her group of friends. This situation is one which many Australian teenagers, including me, can identify with and the narrative strategies made the text interesting and engaged my interest because it was related to my world.

The plot has many resemblances to the everyday lives of many teenagers. Josie goes to a posh Catholic girls' school and has the usual conflicts associated with friends and boyfriends. What makes the story interesting and engaging is her conflict with her grandmother, who wants Josie to maintain conservative and Italian values. Josie has been brought up by her mother, a single parent, and when her father enters her life she has to work out how she is going to relate to him and how it might affect her relationship with her mother. This is a situation that I have experienced so I was interested in how Josie reacted. The interplay of the conflicting pressures and demands in Josephine's life is something I can understand, thus it engaged my interest and made the text relevant to me.

The issues and behaviour of the characters constructs them as interesting and believable to the readers. Josie's grandmother is a feisty old Italian lady whom Josephine has a frustrating, yet loving relationship with:

It scared me looking at her so close. I don't do that too often and I realised that she was getting old . . . She looked tired and I realised that I loved her as much as I disliked her.

Despite their conflicts, Josie loves and finally understands her grandmother and feels proud of her Italian heritage. Josie's search to strike a balance between family tradition and her own way of doing things is the same sort of problem my friends and I have, negotiating different family values, therefore the family conflicts engaged my interest.

The two boys in her life are rather superficially constructed, yet identifiable as typical male characters. John is a 'too good to be true', 'has it all' character on the outside, but inside is suffering deep personal problems which lead to his suicide. Jacob is into grunge and his behaviour swings from being charming and articulate to being frustratingly indifferent. These characters are constructed as 'real' people living in a world I can identify with.

The first person point of view allows the readers to gain an insight into Josephine and relate to her. This gives a personal tone to the novel which draws the reader in and accentuates the everyday problems of Josephine. Early in the novel she voices her desire to be free, to do her own thing:

I'll run one day. Run for my life. To be free and think for myself.  
Not as an Australian and not as an Italian and not as an in-between. I'll run to be emancipated. If my society will let me.

The way the story develops, showing Josie's thoughts and feeling as she grows up and achieves her emancipation and also her changing relationships with her Nonna, her mother, her father and her friends, constructs Josie as a believable character and the insight I gain into her life is engaging.

The setting is realistically constructed. The story is set in suburban Sydney. Josephine's house is described as an everyday working-class place. Other incidents are set in coffee shops, the movies, even McDonald's. These everyday scenes enable the reader to relate to the events.

The issues that the text deals with are ones of everyday concern to many teenage readers. Josephine's relationship with her Nonna is full of conflict because of the generational and cultural gap. When she understands her grandmother's secret she comes to value and respect her more, understanding the difficulties she experienced as a migrant. Josie learns that she can belong to her family and still grow in her own independent way. The realisation is one which I found affirming and helpful. It made the book relevant to me, thus the narrative strategies engaged my interest.



### Sample Essay – English

**Question:** *Consider how one or more text you have viewed employs narrative elements including structure, to position the audience to accept a particular way of seeing the world.*

Documentaries appear to present a truthful, factual account, however, they actually use many features associated with fiction, such as narrative techniques to construct their particular version of reality. In the documentary Guns and Roses directed by Carole Shaw, the narrative techniques of title, structure, characterisation and setting are employed. The use of such devices constructs a story which positions the viewer to accept the hidden and destructive nature of domestic violence.

As in any narrative, the title of the documentary Guns and Roses draws the viewers' attention to the subject matter and positions them to adopt a specific response. The oxymoron of 'guns' and 'roses' illustrates the conflict between the illusion of wedded bliss and happy families and the reality of violence and abuse which may occur within marriage. This idea is enhanced through the visual effect of a wedding couple figurine being smashed, accompanied by the sound effects of glass breaking. These symbolic techniques suggest that the documentary will smash the illusion of domestic 'happy ever after' and positions the viewer to accept the documentary's point of view of the dominance of domestic violence. The use of narrative techniques of title and symbols constructs a 'story' of hidden domestic violence.

The structure of a documentary is integral in telling its story. Guns and Roses uses the narrative structure of beginning, middle and end to create an engrossing account. The documentary begins with a close up of blinds being drawn in a house, suggesting the hidden nature of domestic violence, going on 'behind closed doors'. In the documentary are three separate interwoven stories of domestic violence creating a linked story line which draws attention to the victims and their traumatic experiences. These stories use the narrative techniques of suspense and conflict to attract and maintain the viewers' interest. The climax of the story/documentary is the shock incident when Melodie shoots her husband, which the viewer has been positioned to accept because of the narrative elements which show her entrapment and brutal treatment by her husband. As with any narrative, documentaries must have a resolution. The resolution of Guns and Roses shows Melody catching a train, suggesting that she is moving on and, as shown by the close up of retreating suburban houses, leaving her abusive domestic situation behind her. Guns and Roses tells a story of conflicts caused by domestic violence; the narrative structure encourages the viewer's involvement and acceptance of the documentary's viewpoint about the hidden and destructive nature of domestic violence and positions us to accept Melodie's actions.

Characterisation is the basis of any narrative, even in a documentary. It is vital in Guns and Roses, as shown through the development of the protagonist, Melody. She is presented as more than an interviewee, rather as a character in the story, as the viewer has a rounded view of her; what she looks like, what she does and how she thinks. The documentary focuses on constructing her character to show the desperation and entrapment she feels. Shots of wedding photos which zoom into a close up of her husband smiling are contrasted with stories Melody tells of his violence adding the comment 'I would have been dead'. Through these narrative techniques the viewers are encouraged to identify with Melody and accept the contrast between the illusion of happy wedding photos and reality of Melody's experiences as she suffered abuse by her husband. Although it is a documentary Guns and Roses uses narrative techniques to establish the character of Melody's husband Bryan as an apparently 'good Aussie bloke' who, nevertheless, beats his wife. The viewers are positioned to sympathise with Melody as her illusions are shattered and she faces the dilemma of the 'good guy/bad guy' situation. In the same way as fiction writers construct characters, Melody and Bryan are developed as characters in a story about domestic violence. As a contrived fiction Guns and Roses uses characterisation to take the viewers behind the illusion of happy families to show the violence experienced by Melody.

The narrative technique of point of view is also utilised by the documentary Guns and Roses as, rather than using a presenter, Melody's point of view guides the documentary. In a re-enactment of an incident where Melody is abused, a shaky, hand-held camera is used to construct Melody's point of view. The camera jolts and focuses on a distorted view of a shower drain before becoming blurred, suggesting that Melody has become unconscious. Like all narratives, the documentary, Guns and Roses, uses the narrative technique of point of view to reveal the terrible effects of domestic violence.

Similar to narratives, setting is established in documentaries as they are contrived fictions presenting a version of reality. The setting in the opening scenes is that of ordinary suburban street with houses with drawn curtains to suggest the secrecy of domestic abuse and people's unwillingness to discuss such issues. The interviews with Melody are conducted in the home, showing her washing dishes and a close up of her looking out of the window. Through these images Guns and Roses plays on the traditional gender stereotypes with the female in the domestic sphere engaged in passive tasks. This is reinforced when Melody claims 'I wanted to be a good mother.' However, this setting is contrasted to the one at the end, when Melody is positioned outside the house, at a train station, signifying that she is moving on from the abuse she has faced. Just as in narratives, setting is an important tool in positioning the viewer to respond in a certain way. Guns and Roses uses setting to represent the entrapment Melody felt by Bryan and society's expectations that she accept such behaviour as 'just a domestic'.

Documentaries use narrative devices similar to fiction texts in presenting their information and thus they present a particular version of reality. Guns and Roses uses the narrative techniques of structure, the title, characterisation, point-of-view and setting to position readers to agree with their argument that domestic abuse is a social rather than domestic issue that needs to be dealt with by society.

### Sample Essay – Geography (contributed by Di Guy)

**Question:** *Assess the impact of wheat/sheep farming and extensive pastoralism on the environment in Australia's farm lands.*

In many agricultural areas in Australia, especially in lands devoted to wheat growing and the grazing of sheep on natural grasslands, severe environmental problems are being experienced. Land degradation problems include soil erosion (by wind and water), salinity, acidification of soils, breakdown of soil structure and increasingly water repellent soils. At their worst, these problems collectively can cause the environmental problem of desertification and pose a threat to the environment in Australia's farm lands.

Soil erosion is one of the most problematical environmental problems. Soil erosion is the wearing away of topsoil by wind and water. Water erosion has devastated around 20% of the farmlands that have been cleared for wheat or grazed by sheep which exposes the area to wind and the resultant loss of topsoil. Even rabbits have the ability to cause tunnel erosion. The clearing of land for wheat and sheep farming can lead to the severe environmental problems of erosion.

Salinity is a severe problem in the wheat/sheep lands. This is caused by the clearing of native vegetation and its replacement with exotic species such as pastures. Low rooted native vegetation could reach the water table and not disturb the stability of the soil whereas imported plants need more moisture; hence their root systems need to be more extensive. This brings salt to the surface, where it forms a salt scald, such as those seen on a recent field trip along the Great Eastern Highway to Ullaring farm. Despite the construction of interception banks to trap excess water the farmer at Ullaring is losing the battle, with up to 5% of his land becoming salt-affected every year. Saline soil is subject to (vulnerable to) erosion, thus salinity has a detrimental impact on the environment.

Acidification, a lesser known problem, but equally destructive to soils, is the process whereby soils become increasingly acid due to the use of fertilisers and legumes (for animal fodder). Some soils have become acid to the point where plant growth and yield declines and soils become prone to erosion. Acidification is a problem in the South West region of Western Australia, where farms have become unproductive because of the degradation of the soil.

Soil structure decline is the undesirable breakdown in the structure of the soil caused by poor management practices. Soil degradation leads to problems with water repellent soil which fails to sustain vegetation and leaves barren tracts of land.

In conclusion, this account has demonstrated that soil degradation is a severe problem in many of Australia's agricultural lands. The impact of wheat/sheep farming has been to cause soil erosion, salinity, acidification, and breakdown of the soil quality. All forms of soil degradation are linked and desertification (the spread of desert-like conditions) often results.

### Sample Essay – Literature

**Question:** *Discuss how at least one Australian text has drawn from mythical concepts and/or archetypes to shed light on the values underpinning Australian life.* (Literature ATAR Exam, 2019, Q 7)

Literature is embedded in the retelling of traditional stories which help construct a nation's identity and its beliefs. These myths often deal with the founding story of this community. Australia was settled on the myth of 'terra nullius'; the belief that the country was uninhabited and there for the taking. The early settlers grappled with this concept as they attempted to conquer what they perceived as a hostile land and to establish settlements. David Malouf's *Remembering Babylon* is a novel that explores the experiences of colonialists in the early days of white settlement in Australia. To the white characters in the text Australia seems to be an untamed wilderness, and the landscape appears to them as unfamiliar and hostile. Through a number of representational strategies Malouf attempts to construct for the modern reader this sense of unfamiliarity and otherness and the resultant fear it evokes in the colonists. Such strategies include the title and epigraph, the setting, and the narrative point of view. The representation of Australia through their eyes positions us to see the difference between the settlers' uneasy relationship with the land and the Aboriginal people's connection to country and thus to criticise the colonist for their attempts to Westernise the land. Through these narrative strategies Malouf helps us to understand the myth of 'terra nullius' and the settlers' feelings of estrangement which positions the readers to view the white settlers as invaders and takers and the land as hostile to their values of ownership and attempts to cultivate and control it.

Malouf's choice of title and epigraph enables the reader to contextualise the founding myth of Australia. The title Remembering Babylon may seem at first unrelated to the subject matter, but it positions the reader to understand the sense of strangeness and fear the author wants to convey about the settlers' experience. The biblical allusion to 'Babylon' links what Babylon was for the Jews, a place of exile, to the white settlers' experience of Australia as a place of exile, strangeness and unfamiliarity; it is not their land. The epigraph has a similar effect. It is a quote from William Blake, and reads, 'Whether this is Jerusalem or Babylon, we know not'. This quote leads readers to think that whilst in Europe people were encouraged to think that Australia was Jerusalem, a 'Promised Land', but when they arrived in Australia, they saw the land as strange and felt a sense of exile. We are positioned to understand the effect of believing the land to be 'terra nullius', which led them to try and fence and control the land. The title and epigraph help readers to understand the sense of fear and alienation that Malouf argues the settlers felt because they invaded and imposed their values and ways on the land.

The construction of setting itself helps readers understand the uneasy sense of hostility and invasion the settlers feel towards the land. Descriptions such as 'the land to the south was all unknown' and 'the land he had broken out of was all unknown to them' position readers to see the strangeness and unfamiliarity of the landscape to the settlers who attempted to Westernise it, put up boundaries and fences and try to cultivate it. The uneasy hold the settlers have in the small settlement near Bowen in Queensland helps readers to understand the strangeness of the landscape to the white settlers. Malouf suggests that it is their attitudes to the land rather than the land itself, which has caused this sense of alienation and fear. The Europeans are represented as seeing the landscape as an 'absolute dark' and an 'impenetrable dark' because 'the land to the south was all unknown to them'. Here a sense of difference is established between the known 'village steeple' and sense of 'boundaries and the dark 'other side of things'. This sense of strangeness and fear is largely a result of Eurocentric attitudes; the characters battle the land . . . 'to make it just a bit like home'. By contrast with the natives who 'in their traipsing this way and that all over the map, were forever encroaching on boundaries', indicating the settlers' resentment of the original inhabitants' existence on *their* 'terra nullius'. By contrast, Mr. Frazer and Gemmy understand the link between spirit and land. Mr Frazer claims that 'we have been wrong to see this land as hostile and infectious' and calls it the 'Promised Land' (Jerusalem rather than Babylon). Readers are therefore positioned to accept that the mindset of the settlers means they experience a sense of profound unfamiliarity and fear as a consequence of their Eurocentric outlook of ownership and conquering of the land.

This sense of disassociation is also achieved through the strategy of narrative point of view. The use of the second person point of view at some points in the novel puts modern readers in the same position as the white settlers enabling them to understand how the Malouf constructs the settlers and, by extension, the readers as intruders and invaders. This is exemplified when the narrator states:

It was a scary thought, that; to have unknown land to the north and to the south of you.

The use of the word '**you**' makes the sense of unfamiliarity and fear more compelling and immediate to the reader. Hence the construction of narrative point of view helps readers understand how unknown and hostile the landscape was to the white settlers and positions us, the readers, to experience the ongoing impact of 'terra nullius' as an unsettling founding myth.

Australians have naturalised the white invasion and settlement of Australia, so contemporary readers may find it difficult to understand why settlers reacted to the landscape as vast and scary and experienced it as hostile. Malouf wants readers to view white settlement from a different perspective. We are made to understand and identify with their sense of fear and intrusion, as the settlers struggle to feel 'at home' in this landscape. Yet, through a number

of representational strategies Malouf helps us to understand their feelings of intrusion and estrangement as they seek to own and control the land and to position the readers to view the white settlers as invaders and the land as hostile to their attempts to cultivate it, thus challenging the white Australian myth of ‘terra nullius’ and the value of land ownership.

### Sample Essay – Literature

**Question:** *Show how the ideological concerns of a text are shaped by the historical conditions of its construction.*

Any text is, of necessity, a produce of the time and place of its production, whether it unconsciously reproduces the values and attitudes of the time, or consciously seeks to challenge them. In *Heart of Darkness* representations of race are certainly influenced by the historical conditions in which they are produced. Joseph Conrad was writing in the context of late eighteenth and early nineteenth century Europe. Although he consciously attempts to interrogate the imperialist praxis of the European nations which were engaged in the scramble for Africa in the 1870’s, the text naturalises the representations of ‘the black races’ as Conrad unconsciously constructs them within the dominant colonial discourse of his time. *Heart of Darkness* constructs the African people in terms of the other, in bestial terms as mad and incomprehensible and denies them the identifying characteristics of human beings, that of speech, revealing Conrad’s deeply ingrained acceptance of the ideological underpinning of imperialism, despite his criticism of its praxis.

The text uses a discourse of Social Darwinism which was employed in the historical context of eighteenth and nineteenth century Europe, to describe the African people. They are described as ‘black shadows’, ‘black bones’, and ‘black limbs’ and this use of dark imagery works to construct them as wild, mysterious and ‘other’. This naturalises their inferiority to ‘white races’ and therefore replicates the ideas that they should be conquered. In this sense, the representations of race are influenced by these historical conditions in which the scramble for Africa was occurring and the justification of imperialism based on the ideology of Social Darwinism, by representing the African people as inferior, less evolved.

The depiction of the African people in the text and therefore the ‘black races’ in general can again be seen to be influenced by the colonising context since they are represented in non-human terms. The native Africans are described as ‘ants’ and the African fireman who is supposedly ‘an improved specimen’ is criticised by Marlow: ‘to look at him was as edifying as seeing a dog in a parody of breeches and a feather hat, walking on his hind-legs.’ This imagery furthers a construction of the African people in terms of animals and as inferior. The reader sees that this representation is largely a product of the time as it was deemed necessary to justify the appropriation and exploitation of these ‘foreign lands’ and the people in them in order to validate the colonisation and ‘civilisation’ of these places.

In the novella the African people are constructed as inferior in keeping with the dominant modes of representation at the time, by the way in which they are denied speech. On most occasions Marlow describes them to utter a ‘violent babble of uncouth sounds’, ‘no sounds of human language’, but like a ‘satanic litany’ or ‘mumble’ and ‘grunt’. As speech is the defining characteristic of human beings, the native Africans are again denied this faculty in the text. The historical conditions of the text can be seen to shape the representation of the African people and the dominant social Darwinist assumptions are shown to underpin the construction of the text.

Another representation of race in the text which is influenced by the context is the way in which the Africans are defined as insane and incomprehensible. Marlow, remarking again upon the behaviour of the Africans, states ‘The prehistoric man was cursing us, praying to us, welcoming us – who could tell?’ and ‘we were cut off from the comprehension of our surroundings . . . as sane men . . . in a mad house.’ Here, the use of the simile ‘as sane man in a mad house.’ constructs the ‘black race’ as mad, inferior and ‘prehistoric’ which can be seen to be a product of the ideology of the time used to legitimise Imperialism.

Heart of Darkness was certainly influenced by the historical context in which it was written, with racial representations which define the African people as inferior, as they are dehumanised, denied speech and constructed as mad and incomprehensible. Despite Conrad's attempts to critique imperialistic notions, his unconscious bias naturalises his representations of the Africans. The social and historical conditions, with the scramble for Africa occurring and the ideological underpinning of the biological theories of Darwin being employed to construct these representations shape Conrad's deeply ingrained unconscious acceptance of the ideological underpinning of Imperialism, despite his criticism of its praxis.

### How to write a 'good answer'

- 1 Answer the question.
- 2 Know your subject and the terminology.
- 3 Develop a strong thesis.
- 4 Structure your answer - use the TET formula.
- 5 Be interesting, engaged, persuasive.



# WRITING ESSAYS IN EXAMS

12

## PREPARING FOR AN EXAM

The best way to prepare for exams is to work through past papers. In this book I have used many questions from past exam papers and assessment tasks, which you can use for your revision.

### Steps

- Unpack and analyse questions. Work on choosing questions. Learn to identify key terms, concepts, syllabus points. Pay attention to the modifiers.
- Spend 10 minutes unpacking a number of questions. (This simulates the 10 minutes Reading Time you have at the beginning of an exam). In your practice exam session you can use a pen (you can't in an actual exam Reading Time) Underline key words, circle instructional words, asterisk important modifiers (*'to what extent'*, *'factors leading to'*) Think of substitute words.
- Rewrite the questions using your own words.
- Do 5-minute plans. Develop a thesis, brainstorm 3-4 points which will become paragraphs.
- Write introductory paragraphs, in 8-10 minutes, with an arresting opening sentence, a clear statement of your understanding of the question, an outline of your plan and a good strong thesis statement.
- Write topic sentence for each paragraph (2 minutes a sentence).
- Know your material well. Be sure about the spelling of names, places etc. Get dates and places right. Quiz yourself on the details of events and facts.
- Choose noteworthy incidents; outline what happens, and the significance.
- Select quotations which are relevant and directly related to the question. Be succinct, choose particular parts, even just certain words, to support your argument, rather than learning and parroting big chunks of text.
- Write out relevant quotes and facts and statistics, try incorporating them into sentences, paragraphs.
- Practise writing body paragraphs in 8-10 minutes. After you have revised your notes for a particular topic or text, consolidate your knowledge by writing a body paragraph with three examples or explanations and one quote, or relevant statistics.
- Rehearse doing open book answers. As you search for material note what areas you need to spend time learning or committing to memory.
- Write timed essays in an exam situation (allow 5 minutes to plan and 2 minutes to proofread).
- Prepare by doing a full paper. Develop the mental concentration needed for the long haul of the full exam. Be aware of your posture, try writing with different pens to find the one which is most comfortable to write with, check what equipment you can take (and not take) into the exam.

- Handwrite answers as much as possible throughout the year, in preparation for the exam situation. The cognitive process of writing an answer by hand requires greater thought and planning compared to composing an answer on a computer.
- Experiment with approaching sections on the exam paper in different order. Find out which works best for you. (A fundamental rule for exams is ‘best foot forward’ – start with what you know best.)
- Read Markers’ reports and make a note of their comments.
- Swap answers with friends and ‘mark’ each other’s work.



### ACTIVITY

Work through some past papers. (The last four years are available on the SCSA website, [Creelman Exam Questions](#): have questions from the last 6 years)

Go to the Essay/Extended answer section. Give yourself 10 minutes Reading Time.

1. Choose one question – Ask yourself why you chose that one. Do a 5 minute plan
2. Choose another question from that section – How can you make that one work? Do a 5 minute plan.
3. Read student answers if possible, from [Good Answers](#) (for English and Literature) or other subject guides.



## WRITING ESSAYS IN AN EXAM

Before you start writing:

- Be familiar with the general instructions, e.g. answer 4 questions, set study areas, exclusions, different text types, etc.
- Break down time allocation (An analogue clock face provides a good visual of the time remaining). **Stick to your timing.**
- Be completely familiar with the terminology of your subjects.

### In the exam

#### Reading Time

- Use your reading time wisely – read the paper carefully.
- Take careful note of the sections, number of choices etc (this should be no surprise you have already familiarised yourself with the format and layout of the paper).
- Analyse all the questions – read them carefully. Don't jump to conclusions about what they require just because you react to some words in the question. Don't be caught out by a question, which looks the same as a previous year's question, or is similar to one you answered during the year. Make sure you understand all the words in the question, check each part of the question.

#### Choose the right question:

- One that best suit what you know; one that you have good, relevant material for; one that allows you to develop a strong, interesting thesis.
- Make sure you select the right genre and text or historical situation or period for the question.
- If possible, choose a less popular question.
- Some texts and areas are overdone. It would be to your advantage to either write on a not so popular text/situation, or to have a different approach to it.
- Do mini-plans in your head – can what you know be used to provide a strong case for that question? what is your thesis /argument, do you have at least three strong points with evidence to support your thesis?

#### Planning

It is important to develop a plan when writing an essay in an exam. Five minutes planning will focus your ideas, make your actual writing more efficient and strengthened your writing. Develop a quick plan, using abbreviations.

Spend the first 5 minutes planning-organise your material and write down your thesis. For a one-hour essay have 4 main points (3 paragraphs to use, 1 up your sleeve if time permits) Also jot down (in very brief note form) any relevant quotes, facts, dates or information you will need.

A plan will keep you on track, act as a memory jog in case you forget a point due to exam stress. Evidence of a plan in your exam book will impress the marker.

**E.g. Question:** *Evaluate the role and impact of John Curtin as a wartime leader.*

**Thesis:** Strengthened Australia's growing national identity. Post war impact – political, social, economic.

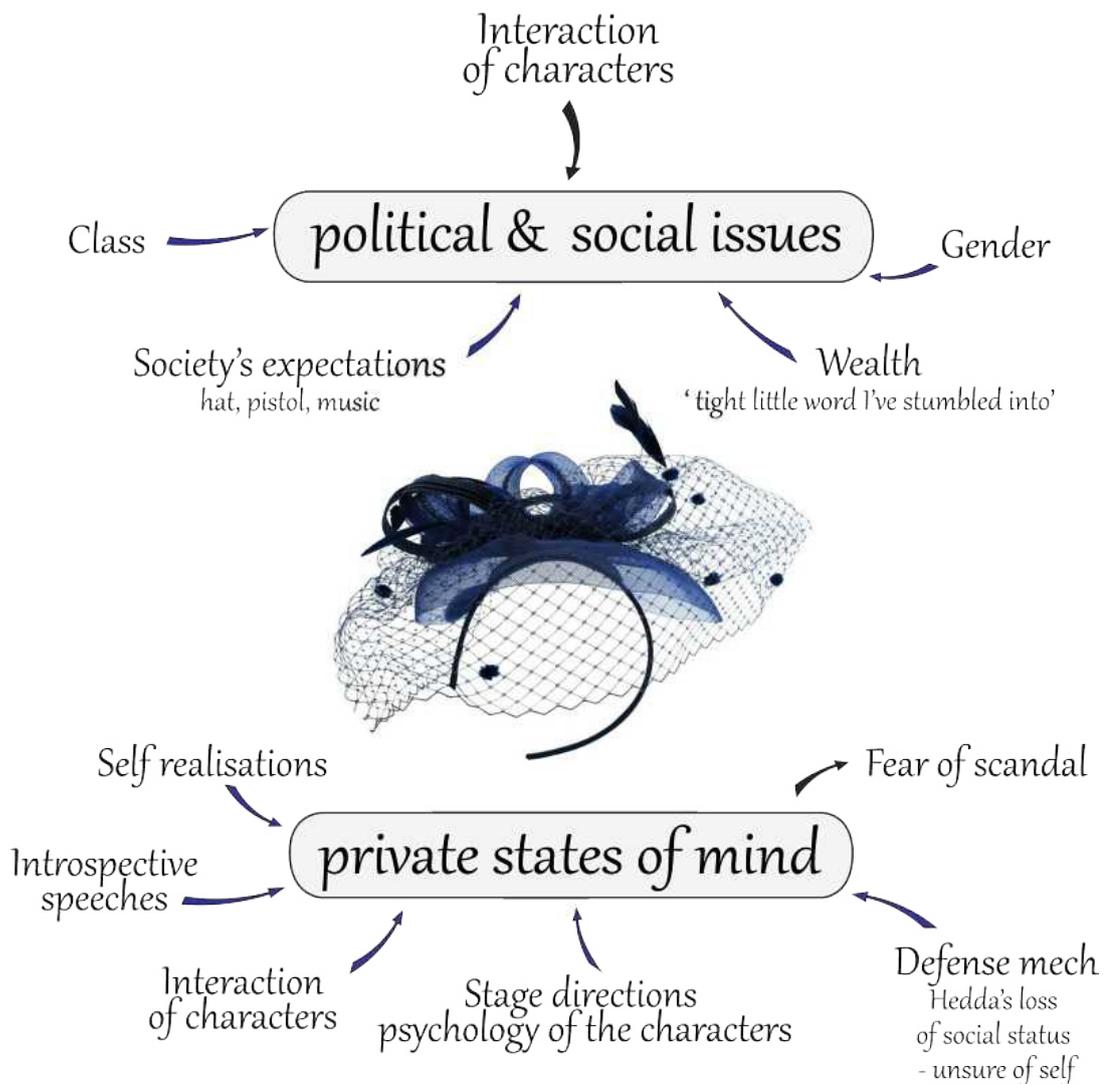
1. WW2 – Menzies – support for Britain c.f Curtin – American alliance – threat to Australia – War in the Pacific



Another example of a plan written in an exam situation. (from a visual thinker!!)

**Question:** *Discuss the proposition that plays are better at presenting and discussing political and social issues than they are at exploring private states of mind*

## Hedda Gabler



**Thesis:** *Plays are equally good at presenting social & political issues as exploring private states of mind.*

## ESSAY PLAN

<b>Question:</b>	

<b>Introduction – Opinion/Thesis</b>	

*The introduction should explain/reword the question and raise the major issue/focus of the question. It should provide an outline of what will be covered in the essay, define difficult words, terminology and key concepts, possibly give some background context and provide a thesis statement for your answer/argument.*

<b>Body:</b>			
<b>Paragraph 1</b>	Topic	Examples/Explanation	Tie back to Thesis
<b>Paragraph 2</b>	Topic	Examples/Explanation	Tie back to Thesis
<b>Paragraph 3</b>	Topic	Examples/Explanation	Tie back to Thesis

Tie back to Thesis/Question

## ESSAY PLAN

<b>Thesis:</b>	
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<b>Body:</b>
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	Topic	Examples/Explanation	Tie back to Thesis
Paragraph 4			
Paragraph 5			
Paragraph 6			

Tie back to Thesis/Question

<b>Conclusion</b>
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*The conclusion draws the major points of the essay together. It restates the main ideas and relates back to the question and thesis stated in the introduction. It should satisfy the reader that you have answered the question.*

## Writing Your Essay

For a one hour essay you should allocate 5 minutes planning, 50 minutes writing, 5 minutes proofreading.

Write legibly – if your writing is hard to read write larger – DON'T PRINT – it is too slow.

Write in pen, not pencil. Don't use overly slanted writing, small writing, very fine pens. Large, spread out writing is easier to read.

Space your answer out for ease of reading by the marker and to make it easier if you want to make corrections and additions. Lots of crossing out, highlighting and arrows to all parts of the answer booklet make reading your answer very difficult.

Write each answer in the correct section of the exam booklet.

If you run out of time use dot points – but plan not to run out of time.

## Proofread

Check for silly errors, dates reversed, authors, main characters or place misspelt. Check for omitted words or punctuation which affects the clarity of your meaning. Allow time for reviewing and proofreading. Although an exam essay is considered to be a first draft, marks are allocated for expression which may impact on your final result.

### **ACTIVITY** Write a timed essay.

Choose a question from this book or a previous exam paper.

PLAN

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ESSAY

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## What makes a good answer?

- Show evidence that you have thought about the implications of the question.
- Address the question – all parts of the question Make sure your answer maintains its focus on the question.
- Explain key terms and clarify your understanding of ambiguous ones.
- Show that you understand the terminology and concepts of the subject and use appropriate terminology.
- Provide a clear structure which is well signposted so your reader can follow the argument.
- Have clear topic sentences and follow with good examples.
- Use all your time – have sufficient evidence. if you finish early write an extra paragraph, add detail or quotes to your work, proofread.
- Make a personal, informed, enthusiastic response to the question.
- Use a good level of expression and correctness (examiners recognise that an exam essay is a first draft and they pardon some errors and lack of fluency, but to really stand out, write fluently and correctly).

### **ACTIVITY** Answer The Question

1. **Question:** *Show how literary techniques have been used to explore significant social issues in at least one text you have read.*

E.g. 1 The views, emotions and opinions in a poet intends to express through the creation of a poem cannot be conveyed merely through the subject matter which the poem is based upon. Poetic devices such as rhythm, form, alliteration and enjambment are thus employed to develop and foreground the social concerns of the poet. heightening the atmosphere and tone of the poem. Gwen Harwood utilises poetic techniques in all of her poem – their simplistic and easily read nature belies the clever crafting involved in their creation. ‘In the Park’ and ‘Barn Owl’ are two of Harwood’s poems which suitably illustrate her use of poetic techniques as a tool to create meaning for the reader, through illuminating her themes.

[Although this introduction sounds impressive, the student hasn’t answered the question – what are the social issues Harwood explores?]

E.g. 2 In Gwen Harwood’s poem ‘An Impromptu for Ann Jennings’, the speaker, a mother, reveals the conflicting desires of the women and engages in an exploration of society’s values concerning motherhood. The speaker in ‘The Secret Life of Frogs’, challenges the values associated with war and violence through the construction of a mature woman persona reflecting on her childhood experiences.

[What is missing from this Introduction?]

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2. Write an Introduction for the question above.

- Choose a text

- What literary techniques will you write about?

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- What significant social issues will you explore?

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Your Introduction (10 minutes)

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3. Develop a plan for the following question:

**Question:** *Examine how two texts, using different modes, construct a particular social group.*

- Understanding the question:

Command Words 'examine' –

Key words – 'different modes means . . .'

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- Chose two texts of different modes

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- What social group will you write about?

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- What are the characteristics of that group?

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- Compare the techniques used to construct the groups (try a Venn diagram)

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- What is your response to each textual construction?

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### Your Thesis

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### Introduction

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4. Write an essay plan for the question in the essay plan template:

## ESSAY PLAN

**Question:**

*Examine how two texts, using different modes, construct a particular social group.*

**Introduction – Opinion/Thesis**

*The introduction should explain/reword the question and raise the major issue/focus of the question. It should provide an outline of what will be covered in the essay, define difficult words, terminology and key concepts, possibly give some background context and provide a thesis statement for your answer/argument.*

**Body:**

	Topic	Examples/Explanation	Tie back to Thesis
<b>Paragraph 1</b>			
<b>Paragraph 2</b>			
<b>Paragraph 3</b>			

Tie back to Thesis/Question

## ESSAY PLAN

**Thesis:**

**Body:**

	Topic	Examples/Explanation	Tie back to Thesis
<b>Paragraph 4</b>			
<b>Paragraph 5</b>			
<b>Paragraph 6</b>			

Tie back to Thesis/Question

**Conclusion**

*The conclusion draws the major points of the essay together. It restates the main ideas and relates back to the question and thesis stated in the introduction. It should satisfy the reader that you have answered the question.*

## Writing an in-class essay

There are three basic types of in-class essays:

Prepared essays: You are told the area or focus and generally you are allowed to take in a page of notes. You are not given the actual question.

Hints for a prepared essay – take particular note (and make notes) on the teacher’s prefatory comments when they give you the details for the assessment – they will usually indicate the focus or particular aspects they are wanting you to concentrate on. Come prepared with good notes (not too much detail), appropriate terminology and relevant quotes. Have an idea of your general line of reasoning or argument, BUT the real skill in doing this type of in-class essay is to ensure that you answer the question. You know the general topic area, so it is important that you really concentrate on what the question is actually asking, the particular focus. Therefore your opening paragraph needs to clearly explain what you understand the question to mean, define or elucidate key terms and use your general argument line to develop a strong thesis relevant to the topic. This will be the discriminator in an in-class essay where you have had the opportunity to prepare your material, therefore everyone should have good content. Make your essay stand out with an interesting, engaged response.

Timed essays: You are given the questions beforehand, so you are expected to prepare. The test is about your time management. The temptation is to have too much material, the skill is in discrimination and choosing the most relevant and organising your time. Practise writing timed introductions, body paragraphs and full essays.

Exam situation essays: You do not know the question/s and you do not take in any notes. Same preparation and rules apply as for an exam situation. Make the most of the timed training opportunity.

### **ACTIVITY** Exam Preparation

1. (a) Prepare a page of notes for a text of your choice.
- (b) Write a 5 minute plan and a 10 minute introduction for the following question using a text of your own choosing.

**Question:** *Explore how the way a text has been crafted has been used to reveal the values and attitudes in a text.*

2. Use the questions in this book to give yourself lots of practise writing essays.
  - (a) Write 5 minute plans
  - (b) Choose three quotes, memorise them, work on incorporating them into a paragraph
  - (c) Write timed introductions
  - (d) Write a timed essay
    - with a page of notes
    - without notes.

## ACE YOUR EXAMS – THREE RULES

1. Know your material well
2. Know how to write a well-structured essay, with relevant examples and quotations.
3. **Engage with the question. Use your knowledge to develop a convincing argument/thesis.**



## ANSWERS

These answers provide some explanations and directions. They are not to be considered as 'the answer'. The purpose of this book and the activities is to get you writing and improving your skills by using your own texts and developing your own ideas and material. I have not provided answers for all of the activities but have offered some guidelines and suggestions where appropriate.

## CHAPTER 2 UNDERSTANDING THE QUESTION

### (P17/18) Understanding Instructional Words

1. Use the definitions provided in the text – compare with other versions, choose which one you want to use.
2. **Consider the different focus or instructions for questions which ask you to:**
  - **Describe** some aspects of Australian culture as presented in . . .  
Provide a **detailed account** of some features, such as mateship, 'dinkum Aussie', 'Aussie battler', perhaps describe how Australian culture is explored in Cloudstreet.
  - **Illustrate** some aspects of Australian culture as presented in . . .  
Give an extended example of some features, perhaps the Anzac tradition at Gallipoli for mateship, or the philistine culture or xenophobic attitudes revealed in Harwood's poetry.
  - **Compare** some aspects of Australian culture as presented in . . . with an American text.  
Is Australia's blokey culture and mateship the same as the American cowboy tradition?
  - **Analyse** some aspects of Australian culture as presented in . . .  
Provide some depth, look at the nature, characteristics, function, relationship, e.g. Australian outback tradition, alcohol, fighting, sexism.
  - **Evaluate** some aspects of Australian culture as presented in . . .  
Provide a personal judgement on the benefits and limitations.
3. **How would your introduction be changed if the command word was:**
  - Debate* . . . You would need to look at both sides and give your opinion.
  - Discuss* . . . Your essay will be wide ranging and detailed.
  - Review* . . . Provide a thorough overview.
  - Account for* . . . Give reasons.
  - Reflect upon* . . . Be contemplative, personal.

### (P29) Understanding the Question

- (a) **Question:** *Discuss the ways a character in one or more texts challenges dominant assumptions about what it means to be Australian*

#### Instructional/Command word

*Discuss* 'Examine, analyse carefully. Be comprehensive and give details.'

#### Key Words

*the ways* – through their actions, values?

*a character* – only need one

*one or more text* – only need one

*assumptions . . . be Australian* – macho, rural, mateship, fair go, sporty?

Things to consider

Jasper Jones – sporty

Cloudstreet – spiritual life? working class values? family life?

The Tall Man – racism

The question in my own words

[one version] The ‘dinkum Aussie’ who believes in a fair go is a central convention in the image of the typical Aussie. However, as a stereotype, this representation is often challenged in Australian literature.

- (b) **Question:** *Analyse two ways human rights are protected in Australia and in one other country*

Instructional/Command word

*Analyse* – Identify components and the relationships; draw out and relate implications

Key Words

*human rights* – protection of freedom, dignity and well being of individuals

*protected* – by legislation, laws and accepted ways of behavior

*in Australia and in one other country* – choose if you want to compare or contrast the situation

Things to consider

Legal protection, rights of individuals, current violations of human rights.

The question in my own words

The right to freedom of movement, from persecution and to pursue liberty and happiness are basic human rights which are necessary as the basis of a just and equitable society. Americans have their rights outlined in their Constitution; Australia does not have a Bill of Rights, but legislation passed by Parliament and our legal system are designed to protect our liberty.

- (c) **Question:** *Outline a role for public participation in implementing the steps of methodical environmental planning*

Instructional/Command word

‘*Outline*’ – provide main features or general principles

Key Words (use a dictionary to help reframe the question)

*Role* – part or function

*public participation* – community involvement

*implementing* – putting into action

*steps* – stages

*methodical* – organised, step by step

*environmental planning* – framework for sustainable land development

Things to consider

Focus is on the role of the community in supporting environmental awareness.

The question in my own words

The following step by step process will provide the main features necessary to ensure maximum benefit from community input into plans for sustainable land development.

- (d) **Question:** *Assess the impact of wheat/sheep farming and extensive pastoralism on the environment.*

Instructional word

'Assess' – Look carefully at the situation. Point out both strengths and weaknesses; *give your own judgment of the situation/issue.*

Key Words

*impact* – effect

*wheat/sheep farming and extensive pastoralism* – areas of study

*environment* – ecosystem

Things to consider

Which environment? select one area of study: semi-arid and tropical rangelands OR irrigated pastures.

The question in my own words

This study will provide an independent scientific evaluation of current and emerging environmental issues associated with agricultural activity in the . . . . area.

- (e) **Question:** *Identify the significance (short and long term) of at least one political event, crisis, or development from the perspective of a participating individual or group.*

Instructional/Command word

*Identify the significance (short **and** long term)* give a list of causes, processes or features, **select appropriate details and evidence** to include and **exclude**. The effect is important.

Key Words

*one political event, crisis, or development* – choose one; is it an event, crisis or development? *Define the characteristics of the chosen term.*

*significance* – impact, consequences – *how, why, so what?*

*short **and** long term* – you must consider both

*from the perspective of a **participating** individual or group* – it is important to specify the point of view

Things to consider

Focus on one particular perspective – discuss significance

The question in my own words

[Depends on the event etc chosen]

- (f) **Question:** *Evaluate the extent to which there is access and equity in Australia's legal system.*

Instructional/Command word

*Evaluate* – present a judgement, give strengths and problems, give your opinion, consider to what extent.

Key Words

*problems of access and equity* – difficulties associated with the ability of people to exercise their rights within the legal system and to be treated fairly by the procedures, processes and personnel of the system.

*legal system* – Within the legal system not society generally

Things to consider and The question in my own words

**See answers to Question:** *Analyse, in depth, the problems of access and equity faced by one group of Australian society in Chapter 6 Writing Introductions. (p 126–7)*

Consider how the instruction 'Evaluate' changes the question.

- (g) **Question:** *Consider how your response to a text has been influenced by your own context.*

Instructional/Command word

*Consider* – examine, ponder

Key Words

*how* – ways

*your response* – personal

*text* – any type

*influenced* – what impact or bias

*your own context* – what is your context: gender, social group, ethnic group, age, etc

Things to consider

many factors, choose the most effective one for you.

The question in my own words

[one version] My reading of a text is shaped by my own experiences, sometimes because the cultural situation resonates with my own, sometimes because, despite different belief and practices, the representations created establishes connections with my own experiences.

**(p 38) Unpack the following questions – Break them up, dig out their meaning, restate it.**

1. **Question:** *Reading poetry involves filling in the gaps. Discuss with reference to one or more poems. (2003, Q3)*

(a) Different meanings that 'gaps' could have:

- 1) The difference between your and the poet's context and experience.
- 2) The condensed nature of poetry involves the use of elliptical and figurative language to make statements.
- 3) Your emotional response, the meaning you make of the poem.
- 4) Unknown, ambiguous, multiple meanings of words, images.

- (b) How do you, as a reader ‘fill in the gaps’? Is it different for different readers?

Poetry evokes a personal emotive response, the ambiguous, multilayered aspect means readers unpack meaning, understand images differently, respond from their own context.

- (c) A similar question, **but different: Question:** *Many texts work by allusion, compressing images and connections, asking us to make links. Discuss the ways in which one text ask for our collaboration to make meaning.*

The question in my own words: e.g. The concise, multifaceted nature of language encourages active reading strategies for the reader to make sense of and respond to a text.

e.g. The use of language devices such as symbols and structural time shifts in a text can involve the reader in actively participating in the construction of meaning by incorporating disparate or subtle associations into their reading.

- (d) Another similar, but different question:

*Explore how the economical and sometimes ambiguous use of language can allow for multiple interpretations of a text (ATAR Literature 2019 Q 8)*

Instructional/Command word

‘Explore’ – investigate, evaluate.

Key Words

‘economical’ – sparse, minimal

‘ambiguous’ – multiple meanings, multifaceted

‘multiple interpretations’ – diverse ways of reading, unpacking meaning

Things to consider

Multiple readings could be the result of intentional or unintentional ambiguity from the writer, or due to the context and reading practices of the reader.

The question in my own words

e.g. The rich, multifaceted layering of language in texts encourages readers to consider different interpretations of the text.

e.g. Language is a cultural medium and the choice of words by a writer can offer various meanings depending on the context of the text and the reader. (Syllabus statement)

2. Explain the terms used in the following variations on this question:

- (a) ‘allows experience to be represented in an intense and compressed way’

My rewording: Enables emotional situations to be described in a powerful and compact way.

- (b) ‘The language of poetry is richly suggestive’

My rewording: The figurative language evokes many meanings/emotions

- (c) ‘Highly patterned language’

My rewording: figurative language, images and recurring motifs, rhyme and rhythm

## CHAPTER 3 CONSTRUCTING A THESIS

### (p 52) Politics and Law

#### 1. Which thesis is more effective and why?

**Question:** *'In the Australian legal system, Parliament is the main law-maker, but the Courts also have a legitimate role'. Discuss the validity of this statement.*

When you consider the two theses you can see that Thesis 1 simply restate the question, while for Thesis 2 the Introduction begins with defining the two bodies, their validity is questioned, then affirmed, thus providing some substance for the ensuing essay.

#### 2. (p53) English

**Question:** *Discuss how stylistic choices made by a writer influence your response to the text.*

- (a) *Effective narrative techniques used in Never let me Go by Kazuo Ishiguro encouraged me to consider what 'identity' might mean if you have been cloned to supply replacement parts for others.*

Some factors you could consider, but there is much else you could mention.

**Answer:** The summary 'Effective narrative techniques' is sufficient, presumably the details would have been outlined in the rest of the introduction. The student could have been more specific about the effect on the clones. Note you must give a personal response, 'your response'.

- (b) *Powerful narrative strategies used in All Quiet on the Western Front persuade readers to accept Remarque's strong anti-war message which shows the senseless suffering caused by war but nevertheless the way it may be endured through the comradeship of the soldiers.*

**Answer:** A good, specific thesis, providing a sound basis for development in the essay.

- (c) *While the plot and setting play a part in constructing the narrative, the most important convention in The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time by Mark Haddon is the point of view of the autistic Christopher because it engages the reader and encourages us to explore the experience of living with autism.*

**Answer:** Good focus on the technique to be discussed, but could be more specific about the experience of living with autism.

### (p55) Putting it together: understanding the question and developing a thesis.

[These answers are only suggestions as your answers will relate to the particular books you have selected.]

- 1. Question** (English) *Texts attempt to bring about action or social change. Discuss this statement with reference to at least one text you have studied.*

The question in my own words:

Many texts are written to convey the writer's strong views about social issues and often attempt to effect changes in beliefs or action from their readers.

What are the key words I should repeat in my thesis?

'bring about action or social change'

My Thesis [One version] Ray Bradbury, in Fahrenheit 451 explores the dehumanising stultifying effect of the technological control of media; the text presents a strong case for the need to protect intellectual freedom and the creative value of literature.

**2. Question** (English) *Show how a text you have studied explores the idea that identity is a complex mix of social factors.*

The question in my own words:

Are we a product of our inherited genes and family characteristics or does each individual construct their own self? This question is raised and complicated in Kazuo Ishiguro's Never Let me Go, where the characters are clones.

What are the key words I should repeat in my thesis?

Identity, complex mix, social factors

My Thesis [One version] Never Let Me Go by Kazuo Ishiguro suggests that, despite **identity** for the clone being **predetermined** and a product of the **social factors** from their original human, Kathy's search for identity demonstrates that her sense of self is a **complex mix** of her **social situation**, her **relationships** and the **individual** features of **her treasured collection of objects**.

**3. Question** (English) *The people, or characters, within texts have a way of making us think about ourselves. Explore how **at least one** text you have studied has made you think about yourself.*

The question in my own words: While books enable us to experience other situations vicariously, they also provoke self-reflection about our own experiences.

What are the key words I should repeat in my thesis?

*people, or characters, making us think about ourselves*

My Thesis [one version] Davey Morne, the silent, but complicit observer in 'Herbie' (in Archie Weller's short story collection Going Home) makes me reflect on times when I have silently gone with the crowd instead of standing up for what I believed was right.

**4. Question** (English) *Explain how visual techniques may be manipulated to construct ideas about gender.*

The question in my own words:

Visual features of clothing, appearance, hair, manner of walking and gesturing are frequently used to stereotype and create a construct of what society considers to be typical, appropriate aspects of masculinity and femininity.

What are the key words I should repeat in my thesis?

*visual technique, manipulated, construct ideas about gender.*

My Thesis [One version] The drag Queens in The Adventures of Pricilla, Queen of the Desert manipulate the visual aspects of masculinity and femininity to challenge the audience to reflect on the constructed nature of gender and the implications of conforming or not conforming to society's expectations.

**5. Question** (Literature) *Explain how literary texts can capture points of cultural change with reference to at least one literary text you have studied. (Literature ATAR Exam, 2017, Q3)*

The question in my own words:

Writers of thought-provoking texts may choose to describe and attempt to understand a critical crisis point in the social beliefs or practices of a society.

What are the key words I should repeat in my thesis?

*capture points of cultural change* [It may not be the main concern or theme of the text, but act as the background or motivation for it]

My Thesis

[A template for your particular thesis applied to **your** text]

The dystopian text (your choice, e.g. *The Handmaid's Tale*, *The Road*, 1984) uses literary techniques such as (e.g. setting, symbols, characterisation) to provoke readers to consider the devastating change in the way of life due to . . . .

**6. Question** (History) *Analyse the influence of one group, movement or event on community attitudes and government policy.*

The question in my own words:

You need to choose a particular thing – e.g. One Nation political party, a union group, Greenpeace, etc e.g. The One Nation political party has had a divisive effect on society and a political effect in excess of the size of the party.

What are the key words I should repeat in my thesis?

*influence community attitudes, government policy.*

My Thesis [One version] The racist views of one Nation policies has caused deep disruption to communities and enabled Pauline Hanson to be able to wield disproportionate power in the Senate.

**7. Question** (Literature) *Different reading practices can change a reader's response to a text. Discuss with reference to one or more texts you have studied.*

The question in my own words:

Reading a text from the point of view of a marginalised group can open up a different way of understanding it.

What are the key words I should repeat in my thesis?

*Different reading practices, reader's response.*

My Thesis The ambiguous title *Heart of Darkness* invites multiple readings which can position the reader to accept Conrad's critique of colonialism, to read the text as an exploration of the nature of evil but it can also function to allow a post-colonial reading.

## CHAPTER 6 WRITING INTRODUCTIONS

### (p110) How effective are these introductions?

(a) **Question:** *Discuss the extent to which your response to the attitudes and values presented in a text was influenced by its structure and content.*

1. Has the question been well explained?

A general statement clarifies the question and deals with both structure and content

2. What plan is outlined, what would the topics of the body paragraphs be?

Names the text and content, deals with techniques rather than specific structure. Considers how structure affects response to content, which is excellent.

3. How effective is the thesis?

Good thesis – states writer's position, has described the specific values and attitudes,

doesn't really deal with 'to what extent', acknowledges the documentary maker's intent.

4. Is the introduction interesting, engaging?

Yes, interesting and clear outline

- (b) **Question:** *The construction of national identity is a complex mix of place, time and character. Discuss how one writer has helped shape Australian national identity.*

1. Has the question been well explained?

Describes the contribution of 'place, time and character' with 'early bush tradition' (and Murray's contribution to that tradition).

2. What plan is outlined, what would the topics of the body paragraphs be?

Indicates poet and poems to be considered.

3. How effective is the thesis?

Suggests an interesting contemporary exploration of the traditional bush legend

4. Is the introduction interesting, engaging?

Provides a good context for examining Australian national identity.

**(p114) 1. How effective do you think the following opening sentences are and why?**

- (a) **Question:** *Discuss the ways minor characters can reveal social values in a text.*

**Answer:** quote is irrelevant, does not deal with the question at all.

- (b) **Question:** *Explore how, from your reading of at least one text, that the values and attitudes of individuals are shaped by their social environment.*

**Answer:** Repeats the question.

- (c) **Question:** *Discuss the part played by the setting in the representation of identity in one or more novels.*

**Answer:** Repeats the question, by rearranging the words.

- (d) **Question:** *The construction of the ending of a novel reveals the underlying values of the novel.*

**Answer:** An interesting, engaging beginning, but it doesn't deal with 'reveals the underlying values', focuses on the narrative elements. Could have changed the final statement to 'how this ending was *inevitable because of the beliefs and principles of the main character OR because of the moral structure underpinning the novel.* (but with specific details of the beliefs or moral structure).

**2. Possible Opening sentences: How effective are they? Which one would you choose and why?**

**Question:** *Any work of narrative fiction gives us a story and the telling of the story.*

*Discuss this statement showing how at least **one novel** employs narrative conventions to construct meaning and engage readers*

- (a) **Answer:** Just repeats the question.

- (b) **Answer:** Explains the question, shows understanding, somewhat wordy.

- (c) **Answer:** Shows a good understanding of the meaning of the question, although it slides over the narrative aspect.

- (d) **Answer:** An interesting, attention grabbing statement. Shows understanding of the issue. Has potential, as long as it then **does** deal with the question, but needs to explain 'how'.

### 3. Assess the following opening statements:

**Question:** *The representation of the 'other' within a text can be a political and/or social comment.*

- (a) **Answer:** Focuses on the issue, interesting opening. Will it move on to social and political implications?
- (b) **Answer:** Focuses on the reader's response. Indicates it is moving in the right direction.
- (c) **Answer:** Repeats the question but does define 'other'.

### 4. Comment on the effectiveness of these introductions:

**Question:** *A text can express specific attitudes and values by encouraging identification with a central character.*

*Discuss the ways in which narrative techniques promote this identification. Refer to at least one film you have viewed.*

- (a) **Answer:** Although some good material is included (film details, the character, the technique and issues) the 'specific attitudes and values' are not identified.
- (b) **Answer:** Repetitive and general. Repeats words of the question.
- (c) **Answer:** A reasonable opening statement – outlines techniques – **no details of film** – gives details of viewers' response – no values or attitudes identified.
- (d) **Answer:** A good attempt to reword the question – personal response good – filmic details given, gets details correct, including spelling of Deborra-Lee – outlines techniques to be dealt with – good thesis statement.

## 1. (p119) Politics and Law – Evaluate these introductions

**Question:** *Analyse, in depth, the problems of access and equity faced by one group of Australian society.*

- (a) **Answer:** Style is too colloquial – replace the bolded words – no definition of 'access' and 'equity' – no 'in depth' – weak thesis – doesn't identify group of people.

Access and equity is a **serious** problem in Australia. We have some **serious** issues with people not being getting the access to the system and not treated with equity. This is because the government **isn't doing the right thing and giving them enough money** and making them available for those who need the help. Or the courts are tending to favour white people. **This essay** will be about how people are **not getting what they need** because the system is against them. [Reword the bolded words.]

- (b) **Answer:** Provides definitions – quite a long introduction, but the definitions are essential for P and L essays – 'many minority groups', question asks for 'one group' – after this general introduction the student needs to focus more carefully on specific issues and specific groups. 'stacked against' is colloquial, but acknowledged as such with the use of ' '.

## 2. Literature – Evaluate these introductions

**Question:** *Explore how social groups are constructed to endorse or challenge particular ideologies.*

- (a) **Answer:** Confident handling of the question – rewords question – identifies two cultural groups and outlines characteristics – indicates the plan would explore the

construction of both groups and the changes in Othello's behaviour – mentions techniques of language and actions – clear thesis, could be more detailed.

- (b) **Answer:** Good understanding of the question – interesting, engaged response, we want to read on to find out more – could be more specific
- (c) **Answer:** Good understanding of the question – engages reader with the use of 'apparently 'typical'' and 'romanticised' – outlines techniques 'how' – good thesis, unusual inclusion of 'the life of the spirit' in working class values.

**Question:** *Consider how a text you have studied represents a particular social group.*

- (d) **Answer:** Excellent opening statement with a clear explanation and qualification – good outline of what will be discussed in the essay – strong thesis – sophisticated expression.

**Question:** *Discuss how the historical context of production influences the representations of a particular group. Discuss in relation to at least one text you have studied.*

- (e) **Answer:** Excellent knowledge and understanding of the question and historical context – interesting, engaging thesis – very fluent and sophisticated use of concepts and language, but it is a little stilted and prepared.

### 3. Writing good introductions

**Question:** *Discuss the ways that marginalised groups in at least one text are made to submit to OR attempt to challenge dominant ideologies.*

- (a) **Answer:** Opening statements explains the question – provides outline of what will be covered in essay – good thesis
- (b) **Answer:** Good understanding and rewording but needs to find some synonyms instead of repeating words. – needs details about 'how' – needs a thesis
- (c) **Answer:** No introductory sentence to explain the question – too general and superficial

### 4. Comment on these introductions

**Question:** *Examine how everyday experience can acquire greater significance through the use of effective language conventions. You should refer to two or more texts. [Change the poet and the examples if you don't know Harwood's work]*

- (a) Doesn't address the question – explain 'greater significance' – outline language conventions – see reworked introduction in text.

**Question:** *How can texts from another historical or cultural context have relevance for you, the reader? Refer to one or more poems in your answer.*

- (b) **Answer:** A strong, engaged introduction – clarifies the topic – a bit wordy, but that helps establish the personal voice – could be more fluent in expression – personal engagement is good – excellent thesis, but needs to add 'how' – despite the different historical context the poetic techniques enable a contemporary reader to relate to the situation.

**Question:** *With reference to **one or more** texts, discuss the ways in which particular minority groups are represented.*

**Answer:** General and superficial – replace the underlined words – give specific examples to be discussed in the body of the essay – thesis OK, how could you make it stronger?

- (c) No Sugar written by Aboriginal playwright Jack Davis, follows the trials and tribulations of the Millimurras, an Aboriginal family, in rural WA, between 1929 and 1934. There are a variety of different ways in which the Aboriginals, as a minority group, are marginalised or oppressed by the white Australians because of their race, ~~in the play~~, including, through the language, power and law, and the inclusion and treatment of particular Aboriginal characters. Through these aspects in the play, the reader can identify that the Aborigines were a trapped race, who suffered terribly, especially in those depression years.

## (p125) Politics and Law

### 1. Which is the better introduction?

**Question:** *Assess the extent to which a Bill of Rights would strengthen the protection of human rights in Australia.*

- (a) **Answer:** Waffly opening sentences – see corrections made, but still not a strong introduction

~~Human are those that relate to Human rights are~~ **have the right to individual** dignity and wellbeing of the individual and ensure that all people ~~are~~ **and the right to be treated** equally and fairly. They apply from birth to death and are an inherent part of ~~human experience~~; Australia has many sources of protections of rights which include constitutional, statute, common and international law. The 1982 Canadian Charter Rights and Freedoms is a constitutional ~~bill of rights~~ **Bill of Rights** that will be assessed. By examining these protections, it will be determined whether a constitutional ~~bill or rights~~ **Bill of Rights in Australia** would strengthen human rights.

- (b) **Answer:** Clear explanation – provides historic context – gives definition – references (remember this was in an exam) – good use of appropriate terminology – outline of what will be covered in the essay – strong thesis, although it doesn't indicate the conclusion – consider the function of the bolded words in explaining the question.

The **debate** surrounding the introduction of either a statutory or constitutional bill of rights (BOR) has been present since federation with recent discussions arising at the 2008 '**2020 summit**' and through the Brennan Committee's investigation and the Rudd Government's response to that committee. By enacting a BOR, which can be **defined** as a law stating what is considered to be the fundamental civil, political and other civil liberties (**Willmott, 2010, p440**) Australia will be, by law, protecting the rights and freedoms of individuals. However, **in order to accurately assess** whether such a law would strengthen human rights protections, it is first necessary to **evaluate the effectiveness of the current protections**. It will **then** be necessary **to discuss the various arguments for and against a BOR**. This will then provide **a wider foundation** of knowledge for a **judgement** to be made on whether a BOR would be **beneficial for the nation** and **overall strengthen human rights protections** in Australia.

### 2. Sample Introductions – which is more effective? What is good/inadequate with these introductions? How could they be improved?

**Question:** *'Australia's system of government is not a true reflection of the will of the people but rather a reflection of the will of the political parties, lobby groups and the media'. Discuss this statement.*

- (a) **Answer:** Reasonable attempt at an introduction – gestures towards providing definitions, but not enough detail – waffles – makes generalisations – sweeping claim as thesis, not supported.

One of the functions of parliament and government is to be **'representative'** and thus reflect the will of the people. **Many people** [be more specific] argue that the Australian Government does not truly perform this function but rather is **a reflection of the will** [don't repeat this phrase – explain] of the various political parties, lobby groups and media outlets. However, whilst **elements of this statement might be accurate**, [which elements?] the government can **certainly claim a mandate** from the people when performing its function. [why?]

- (b) **Answer:** Style is too informal – many sweeping generalisations – poor expression – no logical development – no thesis.

Political parties, lobby groups and the media do have a big impact on the performance of government in Australia. ~~They basically run the country and~~ The people have little impact except at elections. Elections in Australia are the **best way** to have your voice heard because **the media is often biased** and can do much **damage** and **whip up support** for an issue and do not report accurately all the time. [*change to* **Through a careful examination of the media treatment of a number of significant political events, the bias and inaccuracy of the media bias can be demonstrated**] They often blow things up. Lobby groups [such as . . .] represent particular **partisan** groups ~~in the community and lobby for them, but they are specialised and too~~ can be too powerful at times. ~~There are also political parties that are supposed to represent interests, but they are only interested in winning at all costs.~~ [*try* **Political parties seem to have sacrificed principles in order to win**] The government spends a lot of time on issues that don't mean anything to people and waste Question Time shouting **at each other** rather than debating what is important. ~~This is a shame because~~ It is important for political parties, lobby groups and media to make sure they are ~~following the government~~ an effective voice.

3. **Question:** *'Constitutional change in Australia has been a difficult and often contentious process'. Examine the means of constitutional change over time and evaluate this claim.*

- (a) **Answer:** Reasonable attempt to answer question – provides definition – indicates 'other methods' – alludes to 'over time' – final statement confused and too general. The beginnings of a good introduction – needs work on content and expression.

The Constitution is an important document as it provides the guidelines to power and governance in Australia. However, even though provisions were made for its alteration, very few changes have been made since ~~it's~~ **its** inception at Federation. Referendums have a ~~notoriously~~ low success rate which has meant that other methods such as High Court interpretation have been used more often and with greater success. These two processes of constitutional change have been somewhat contentious (more so at different times) and **evaluating the variety of reasons for this factor** [reword].

- (b) **Answer:** Good material, but somewhat confused presentation – gives definition – some facts, not others – need to emphasise '*difficult*' and '*contentious*' – weak final statement – what is the thesis?

The Constitution of the Commonwealth of Australia is the document that sets out the roles and powers of the Federal Parliament. It was written in the 1890s in the lead-up to Federation and much of it was based on the Westminster System of Responsible Parliamentary Government adopted from the UK. However, the ~~writer's~~ **writers** of the Constitution recognised the need for the possibility for changes to the document in the future and included Chapter 8 (section 128) which clearly outlines the process for Referendums. ~~However, Since Federation this process has been put to the people on a number of occasions, but it has been very unsuccessful.~~ [*try* **44 Referendums have been put to the vote, but only 8 have been carried**].

Other methods of constitutional change have been employed such as High Court Interpretation. Any changes to the constitution can have enormous repercussions on the political and legal system and are thus contentious although the extent to which varies. It is important to evaluate the process of constitutional change in Australia over time. **This evaluation will show that . . .**

### (p129) Speed Introductions

Each answer will be different, based on the text you chose – follow the guidelines given.

## CHAPTER 7 DEVELOPING PARAGRAPHS

**(p146) Develop the following information into a full paragraph by using the examples and explanations provided below.** (Edit, rearrange, reword, delete, add your own material)

This is **one** version. Note not all the material is used – the example of symbolism could form the basis of another paragraph. In my next edit I would probably shorten the quote and integrate it better into the paragraph.

American cartoonist Art Spiegelman. exploits the graphic novel form to investigate and evaluate the disturbing, long-lasting effects of his father's experiences as a Polish Jew and Holocaust survivor during WWII. In *The Complete Maus* (1996), Spiegelman uses the comic form, considered to be trivial, to deal with the profoundly disturbing subject of the Holocaust, thus creating a powerful story of the impact of trauma and survival. Framed within a series of conversations Siegelman had with his father in the 70s, the text employs postmodernist techniques of mixing the comic form with impressionistic woodcut images and uses cartoon minimalistic sketches of characters, depicted as animals. The Jews are drawn as wide-eyed mice and Nazis as menacing cats. The mice have ambivalent connotations; they are considered to be small and defenceless, but it also references Nazi propaganda which described Jews as vermin, with the connotation they were seen as pests to be got rid of. Similarly, by constructing the Nazis as cats, Spiegelman draws on the understanding that cats capture and kill mice. 'This concept is outrageous, disturbing, subversive, clever and homely. and yet somehow comforting,' says fellow cartoonist, Jeff Smith. 'By using talking animals, Spiegelman allows his readers just enough emotional-safety distance to be able to follow a story that takes place during the Holocaust.' The caricature comic style creates emotional tension: conveying the abhorrent concentration camps and the victimisation of the Jews. For example, the horrors of the cremation pits in the concentration camp of Auschwitz are shown using panels with close ups of people which then moves to an expanded view of the fires depicted with no gutter between the panels, showing how the graphic bleeds into next image of a close up of screaming dying mice. The black and white images and the hatched panels in the graphic novel intentionally use a simple style to heightens the impact of the content and convey a bleak feeling, creating an effective image which enables the reader to actually see the fear of the Jewish people and the brutality of their persecutors. The bleeding effect of graphic cartoon panels shows how the effect, or trauma of the past 'bleeds' into the present. **Spiegelman's manipulation of the graphic novel form provides an unsettling insight into a complex and disturbing experience.**

**(p156) Rework the paragraphs below, incorporating and explaining the quotes.**

(a) **Question:** *Discuss the way at least one poem has employed poetic conventions to explore a significant social issue.*

[One version of a reworking of the paragraph] A barren and harsh landscape is portrayed in T.S. Eliot's 'The Hollow Men'. ~~Demonstrated by the lines~~ **The dry desert landscape is described with the flat, repetitive statement;** 'This is the dead land, this is the cactus

land' where cacti traditionally thrive in harsh conditions, this is why 'cactus land' is used, which conveys a sense of futility and lifelessness, conveyed by the reference to the harsh dry conditions in which cactus grow. This is the setting for an apocalyptic end is put onto this poem, juxtaposed conveyed with an ironic use of the poetic convention of a children's nurse rhyme form which uses a simple, repetitive structure to convey the meaningless cycle of life and death to indicate the hopelessness and defenseless stance-meaninglessness that Eliot is writing about. The repetitive, ritualistic chant makes a powerful contrast between the innocence of the nursery rhyme form and the nihilistic content:

This is the way the world ends  
 This is the way the world ends  
 This is the way the world ends  
 Not with a bang, but a whimper

The flat, futile repetition suggests the petty insignificance of life. Human beings themselves are powerless to stop anything that comes in their way. These ideas show the modernist cultural identity of hopelessness and insecurity. [Note the correct way to use the quote, with no inverted commas and with single line spacing.]

2. **Question:** *Discuss the ways texts can challenge or endorse dominant ideological beliefs*

Here is a reworking of the material. Personally, I do not think the material or the expression is worth reworking, I would prefer to scrap the lot and start again, however, as an exercise, here is an example of how the material can be shaped, with a clear topic sentence, the quotes incorporated into the material and a definite concluding thesis statement.

The dehumanising process of the brutal government of Gilead strips all humanswomen of their rights. In a culture literally dominated by males, the social assumption is that females are expected to be subservient and in turn voluntary their role is seen as being to help the government boost falling reproduction rates. Females were are declared 'unwomen' if they could cannot reproduce. The role of women in Gilead is expressed in the belief – 'Give me children or else I die', 'She can be saved by childbearing', these two quotes present exactly what Childbearing is the function that females had have to endure under the Republic of Gilead. Offred's ideological belief of women having the right to choose their own path in life and not be owned by men drives her to continue her internal fight against the regime and their beliefs values. Despite her outward conformity, her inner rebellion 'is a flag on a hilltop, showing what still can be done'. She believes '[w]e too can be saved'. Offred challenges the dominant cultural assumptions of Gilead', as she contrast to believes females being humans who have the right to act as they choose rather than being 'walking wombs' or reproductive containers.

(p159) **Reordering Sentences.** Rearrange the sentences in this paragraph to improve the cohesion and logic of the ideas.

1. **Question:** *Examine the way that specific dramatic features may be used by a playwright to challenge dominant ideologies.*

Another convention of Greek tragedy that Euripides uses in *Medea* is 'deus ex machina'. This device was commonly used by Greek tragic playwrights as a convenient ending, but Euripides uses it to show his approval of *Medea*. In the final scene of the play, *Medea* is carried away by a golden chariot towards the sun. The fact that she got away with her infanticide and revenge on Jason demonstrates that Euripides believed she was right in her actions. In his time, it was very unusual for a woman to take charge of her life and exact revenge in that way. Euripides, however questions this social value and shows he thinks that women should be more assertive than they were at the time.

2. **Question:** *Literary responses change over time. Examine how context influence both the construction of a text and a reader's response to it.*

To best understand a literary text, and to understand the construction of its dominant reading constructed in a text, the reader should be aware of the context in which the text was produced. Writing during the Regency period, Jane Austen's novel, Pride and Prejudice offers a social commentary on the pretensions of the upper classes, the restrictions that govern marriage and the gender inequality facing women in society is deeply embedded through her novel, Pride and Prejudice. For the reader to understand the societal restrictions Austen was challenging, knowledge of the era and the values and attitudes of the time is important. paramount. To best understand a literary text, and to understand the dominant reading constructed in a text, the reader should be aware of the context in which the text was produced.

## CHAPTER 8 CONCLUSIONS

### (p166) Comment on these conclusions

1. **Question:** *Discuss the role of minor characters in creating the social context of a text.*

Two corrections you could make: 1) list the characters in the same order as mentioned in the introduction – which should have been the order they were dealt with in the body of the essay. (Sometime it might be effective to mention them in reverse order). 2) The sentence 'This understanding . . .' is weak and irrelevant (the question asks about 'social context'). Delete it and end with the penultimate sentence, or add a strong statement about the effect on the contemporary reader, or preferably, a specific statement about the critique he makes, e.g. Conrad's minor characters reveal the hierarchical and . . . (finish this statement)

2. From this conclusion, deduce a) what the question was, b) the thesis, c) the body paragraphs.
- (a) **Question:** *Examine how one or more texts represents Australian national identity.*  
 (b) Winton presents an Australian national identity that embodies the working-class ethos which values egalitarianism, family unity and selfless love.  
 (c) Par1 – the ideology of the working class, Par 2 – middle class-Toby Raven, Par 3 – Family life, Par 4 – selfless love ('mateship').
3. A well structured, satisfying conclusion. – it sums up the essay. It is brief and to the point. It provides a strong, definite statement which reiterates the thesis and outlines the main arguments. It leaves the reader feeling challenged.

## CHAPTER 9 DEVELOPING YOUR WRITING SKILLS

### (p175) Rewrite these student comments, to improve ideas and expression.

1. **Question:** *Referring to at least one written narrative, discuss how texts construct ideas about identity.*
- (a) Answer the question! Don't introduce a non – narrative text. Be specific, discuss **how** texts construct ideas. **A complete rewrite is necessary, one which answers the question.** E.g. In short stories a character's identity plays an influential role in promoting various ideas the themes of the text. ~~This has been the case~~ In the short story 'The Pedestrian' by Ray Bradbury. ~~This year in class we have also studied the expository text An Inconvenient Truth by Al Gore. Even though it isn't a narrative text it too creates various ideas through the portrayal of many identities. However in Gore's expository the ideas that are present vary from those in passage two. Since~~

~~this is the case I will talk about the generic conventions both of the texts have used to construct different and similar ideas concerning identities . . . the pedestrian's identity is constructed through the interior monologue and the description of the streets. As he passes each house he reflects on the conforming blandness of the residents which positions the reader to understand he likes the freedom and individuality of being out walking and thinking He enjoys wandering through the deserted street and evading the city's automated control. As a loner, relishing a walk, he exemplifies Bradbury's theme of the value of individual activity.]~~

- (b) These two very different texts will need to be dealt with separately and specifically. Find examples of descriptive language and dialogue used to convey ideas about both the individuals and the social group they belong to. What are the social issues concerning each text?

(You can change the texts to ones you are familiar with if you want to.)

2. **Question:** *Show how literary conventions have been used to enable a writer to explore social issues.*

E.g. Euripides's Medea, was first performed in 431 BC, ~~In it Euripides~~ follows the conventions of Greek tragedy. By using ~~this form and~~ the traditional elements of this form, such as a chorus, and the Greek notion of 'hubris' ~~of it~~, Euripides could question the social values of his time **regarding hubris (pride) and revenge.**

3. **Question:** *Discuss how the narrative perspective influences your response to a text.*

E.g. In The Catcher in the Rye Salinger uses the first person point of view to explore issues such as conformity, adolescence and change. ~~which are clearly understood through the.~~ It is through the use of first person point of view that we, as readers, are able to develop a rapport with the main character Holden Caulfield and understand ~~thethis~~ period of his life ~~that he is traversing through~~ as we are able to explore his thoughts and feelings regarding the **adolescent challenges he experiences and his disdain for conformity.**

**(p179) Improving your expression.**

1. **Change the bolded words to more relevant, specific ones.** The use of language **conventions** in a text create meaning and shape the reader's response. ~~the reader to respond in a specific way to issues~~ presented. Machines like Me, a novel written in 2019 by Ian McEwan, shows the effects of creating a human robot. Through the use of **descriptive** expressive figurative and technical and **sophisticated** language the **audience** reader is positioned to ~~feel negatively~~ consider the ethical implications ~~towards the issue~~ of creating artificial intelligence and to sympathise with Charlie as he explores the implications of a world controlled by computers.
2. **Rewrite to improve expression, including replacing the underlined words.**

**Question:** *Discuss how texts challenge dominant assumptions about what it means to be an Australian through its portrayal of Australian lifestyle, culture and/or identity.* (ATAR Literature, 2017, Q8)

No Sugar written by Aboriginal playwright Jack Davis, challenges dominant white, hegemonic assumptions about Australian way of life and identity by ~~following~~ exploring the discrimination and deprivations experienced by the Millimurras, an Aboriginal family, in rural WA, between 1929 and 1934. The play reveals a variety of different ways in which the Aboriginals at that time were marginalised and oppressed by the white Australians on the basis of their race, shown through the use of **dominant** hegemonic, white, bureaucratic discourse and the effect of the Government legislation, dramatised

in the representation of the treatment of members of the Millimurra family. Through these aspects in the play, the audience is challenged to question dominant assumptions about what it means to be an Australian as Davis's play portrays the Aboriginal experience of being an Australian is as a marginalised and disempowered group due to their disenfranchisement of their land, ~~dominant~~ bureaucratic white Government practices and social attitudes at that time and even now.

(p181)

1. **Rewrite to be more concise.** Say what you need to say in the simplest, most direct, precise manner. Simple sentences are best.

2. **Rewrite to eliminate repetition**

(a) We see the colonial imperialism as ~~fuelled~~ **driven/motivated** by the belief that the natives are inferior, bestial and base, **which arouses our disgust.**

(b) **Diverse** ways of dealing with their problems are accentuated by visual and verbal techniques. The **distinctive** clothing and **varied** accents of the characters show their difference.

(c) I want to become a lawyer because they are respected by all other professions. I am interested in studying law as I am fascinated by legal issues. When I am qualified, I feel that I will be a good lawyer; I shall strive hard to follow their code of ethics.

3. **Rewrite to improve the expression.**

**Question:** Consider how the use of language influences your response to ideas presented in written texts. In your response you must refer to at **least two** written text.

(a) The word choice and structure of the text influences a reader's response to the ideas presented.

(b) The feature article 'Big Brother is Watching' uses **emotive** language and dialogue to influence our response to the idea that **companies control our lives and they behave immorally; they just care about their business interests.** The feature article is effective in its use of persuasive language to encourage the reader to reject the power of 'Big Brother'. Another text we have studied, the novel *The Yield* by Tara June Winch, uses a combination of **formal, everyday and Aboriginal language** to show **the variety of responses to land ownership.** ~~The Yield deals with some different ideas about land ownership. These responses to the ideas in the text are influenced by the language used which is mainly descriptive language and dialogue. The various voices used in the text encouraged me to consider the competing view on the issue of land ownership.~~

(c) Texts create meaning through the use of narrative conventions **in order to shape the reader's reaction to the text.** ~~Such is it so with~~ Ray Bradbury's futuristic short story 'The Pedestrian', which focuses on a walk by a pedestrian ~~in the future. This is presented by the text's use of figurative language such as symbolism, setting, dialogue, characterisation and point of view~~ uses figurative language to describe both the setting and the behaviour of the character, Mr Mead. Bradbury's description of the bleak, impersonal setting and the simple everyday behaviour of the pedestrian, **influences me to respond with** disquiet as I understand the significance of **Bradbury's idea that this society in the future considers normal activities, such as a casual walk, as being 'abnormal.** [Need to discuss TWO texts]

## CHAPTER 10 EDITING YOUR WORK

(p195) Drafting

*Poetic conventions enable experience to be represented in a concise yet powerful way.*

*Discuss, with reference to **two or more** poems.*

[This reworked version reorders the sentences as well as improving the expression. Note that the conclusion uses the words of the question to show that it has been answered.] Poetic techniques allow Gwen Harwood to construct **experiences** which voice her social comment in a **concise** manner, enabling her poetry to **powerfully** challenge and question society's social mores. In 'Monday' and 'Hospital Evening', Harwood represents migrant's experiences of Australia's culture in a compressed, intense manner by employing poetic techniques which challenge the xenophobic and philistine nature of contemporary 1970s Australians society. I believe that Harwood should be commended for these provocative poems, as it is because of **people like her** that Australians has become a more multicultural and tolerant country.

### (p199) Proofreading Solutions

Charles Darwin's great work, Origin of the Species was published in 1859. He not only believed that species could change, but suggested a way in which change could come about. 'One pigeon', he wrote, 'is not like another, nor is a Christmas daisy like a yellow **chrysanthemum**. They are different varieties of the same species.'

Darwin suggested that now and then a different variety would arise and would in itself find **its** surroundings so favourable that it would thrive and **propagate** where other varieties died. Then it might take on other characteristics over time. Gradually, by the **accumulation** of these tiny differences, the species would become a new one.

A storm of criticism greeted Darwin's new idea. His theory contravened many religious beliefs, and the battle between individual botanists and zoologists, who took different sides, continued for years.

Darwin, who had spent many years researching his work before he published it, continued working quietly on his ideas. He encouraged honest criticism and examined all the evidence presented to him, in order to weigh up the facts.

The great gift of Darwin, to his time and to science in the years which followed, was not only his theory in itself, but its power in stimulating students to study living things from a new perspective. By so doing, he lifted botany and zoology out of the rut into which they had fallen.

What was Darwin really like in private life? **He** was a simple, shy genius who found himself famous against all personal expectations. **He** was not particularly bright at school or university, but he had a strong, observant mind with plenty of common sense. **Observing** beetles in fields appealed to him more than learning from out-of-date books. **Darwin** was a family man who shared his work with his children. **Sadly**, world travel affected him, and he became an invalid.

## CHAPTER 11 WRITING ESSAYS FOR VARIOUS SUBJECTS

### Sample Essay – Ancient History

**Question:** To what factors do you attribute the collapse of the Roman Empire?

#### Does it answer the question?

1. Explains the question, **but doesn't provide details**
2. Could have more direction
3. **No thesis.** Generally, introduction is weak, too general

### Structure and argument

1. Clear Topic sentences
2. Well supported with Examples and Explanation, **but too general**
3. Clear development of thesis and progress of answer
4. Weak concluding paragraph.

### Style and grammatical correctness

1. Fluent
2. **Straightforward and readable**, but not dynamic
3. **Adequate knowledge** of concepts and facts.

### Sample Essay – Economics

**Question:** *Describe the factors which influence the level of consumption expenditure within the Australian economy.*

#### Does it answer the question?

1. Explains the question and the key terms – should have included a diagram
2. Follows a logical development structure rather than using the introduction to outline plan for the rest of the essay.
3. Clear simple statement of fact as thesis, but does not deal with factors affecting the level of consumption as part of the thesis.

### Structure and argument

1. Clear, direct topic sentences
2. **Rather simplistic level of argument, examples are generalised**  
Some paragraphs are well structured, not Par 4
3. Ties back to the Question.

### Style and grammatical correctness

1. Clear, straightforward
2. Too flat and general
3. Basic level of expression. **No sophisticated use of terminology or theoretical language.**

### Sample Essay – English

**Question:** *Discuss the narrative strategies a writer may use to engage the reader, referring to your own experience of reading fiction.*

#### Does it answer the question?

1. Reasonable, clear introduction, outlines approach.
2. Clearly indicates what areas (Topics) will be covered
3. Clearly stated thesis statement but limited.

**Structure and argument**

1. Clear opening sentences, **tend to be formulaic**
2. Well supported by Examples and Explanation. **No deep analysis**
3. Excellent Tie back to the Thesis statement without being too repetitive

**Style and grammatical correctness**

1. Adequate, fluent writing
2. Engaging
3. Uses appropriate terminology and good word choice

**Sample Essay – English**

**Question:** *Consider how one or more text you have viewed employs narrative elements including structure, to position the audience to accept a particular way of seeing the world.*

**Does it answer the question?**

1. Excellent outline. Clear explanation of question.
2. Indicates essay plan
3. Good, strong thesis

**Structure and argument**

1. Clear Topic sentences, **but too similar and formulaic**
2. **Excellent knowledge of text, good evidence and sophisticated analysis**
3. Excellent tie back to thesis, variety of expression

**Style and grammatical correctness**

1. Well written
2. Good vocabulary, fluent, engaging. Note inconsistency of spelling of Melody/Melodie
3. Appropriate, confident use of terminology

**Sample Essay – Geography**

**Question:** *Assess the impact of wheat/sheep farming and extensive pastoralism on the environment.*

**Does it answer the question?**

1. **Excellent explanation**
2. Clear outline, but note how final points are brief, incomplete (Timing?)
3. Strong thesis, but could have followed through with the implications of desertification (loss of productive pastures)

### **Structure and argument**

1. Well signposted sentences
2. Good Examples and Explanation, good level of analysis
3. Strong Tie back to the Thesis

### **Style and grammatical correctness**

1. Well written
2. Fluent and interesting
3. Uses appropriate terminology and good word choice

### **Sample Essay – Literature**

**Question:** *Discuss how at least one Australian text has drawn from mythical concepts and/or archetypes to shed light on the values underpinning Australian life.*

#### **Does it answer the question?**

1. Sophisticated, well argued explanation
2. Describes the plan of essay
3. Excellent, interesting Thesis

#### **Structure and argument**

1. Varied sentence beginning, but clear direction
2. Well supported by Examples and Explanation, strong analysis
3. Strong Tie back to the Thesis with varied statements

#### **Style and grammatical correctness**

1. Well written
2. Fluent and interesting
3. Good knowledge of literary terms

### **Sample Essay – Literature**

**Question:** *Show how the ideological concerns of a text are shaped by the historical conditions of its construction.*

#### **Does it answer the question?**

1. Shows good understanding and knowledge
2. Describes the plan of essay
3. Excellent Thesis

#### **Structure and argument**

1. Varied sentence beginning which reference the question.
2. Well argued, good detailed examples
3. Strong Tie back to the Thesis with varied statements

#### **Style and grammatical correctness**

1. Well written, good vocabulary
2. Fluent and interesting. Rather brief
3. Good knowledge of literary terms

## Acknowledgements

Grateful acknowledgement is made for the following permissions to publish:

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## About our ATAR Help Programs

### Term Programs



#### Tuition Classes

Small group tutoring classes available throughout the year to provide on-going help as you need it. For years 7 - 12.



#### Master Classes

Weekly teaching classes by top ATAR teachers who will extend you and teach you how to gain maximum marks.



#### Exam Boost Seminars

Exam Boost Seminars provide targeted exam preparation answering practice exam questions. You will receive feedback from an exam marker and tips and strategies to improve your exam performance.

### Holiday Programs



#### Head Start Program

Held in the January School Holidays. You will gain an overview of the syllabus for your ATAR courses, preview important concepts and get an academic boost for the year ahead.



#### ATAR Holiday Revision Program

Specially designed programs to help revise ATAR course content and teach you how to maximise your results. Held in the April, July and October school holidays.

**Enrol in our programs at [www.academicgroup.com.au](http://www.academicgroup.com.au)**

### Get in touch



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Academic Task Force and Academic Associates are part of the Academic Group



# ACADEMIC TASK FORCE

## A PRACTICAL ESSAY WRITING GUIDE

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### A Step by Step Guide to Writing Better Essays

If you follow these guidelines you will achieve essay writing success.

This comprehensive, step by step guide to writing better essays is based on the very successful Essay Writing course developed by Dr Pam Bagworth and taught in Academic Task Force Revision Programs for many years. The material has been expanded to include many more worked examples and activities to develop students' essay writing competency.

This book is aimed at senior students.

It outlines a series of easy-to-follow steps for tackling school essays.

It gives guidelines for writing essays for school assessments and exams such as ATAR.

Worked examples are provided based on actual exam questions from a variety of subjects.

This Essay Writing book provides:

- A practical guide for senior students
- A simple formula plan for structuring essays in all subjects
- A step-by-step process for writing essays for assignments and exams
- Direction and practical examples to enable students to:
  - Understand the question
  - Construct thesis statements
  - Create structured, convincing paragraphs
  - Draft and edit work.

Students can work through practice and sample essays in a range of subjects, including English, History, Geography, Literature, Economics, etc.

Learn how to strengthen arguments with evidence, quotes and explanations.

Increase marks by attending to Markers' comments to ensure essays are relevant and convincing.

It empowers students to develop strong essay writing skills and gain great marks.

ISBN 978-1-74098-315-0



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