



GENERAL COMMENTS

The 2010 English examination assessed student achievement in the knowledge and skills indicated in the *VCE English/ESL Study Design*.

The examination consisted of three sections. Section A (Text response) offered students the choice of two distinct topics for each of the 20 texts on Text List 1 and students were required to complete one response. Section B (Writing in Context) instructed students to compose a piece of writing stemming from a prompt for each of the four Contexts. Section C (Analysis of language use) required students to analyse the ways in which speaker Chris Lee used language and visual features to persuade in a presentation given at the International Biodiversity Conference 2010.

Assessment of each section was based upon the criteria, and applied holistically using the descriptors of the 'Expected Qualities for the Mark Range', which can be found on the VCAA website on the English study page. These descriptors, which are based on the criteria, are general indicators of what might reasonably be expected for the specified mark ranges in each section of the examination. Assessors used the descriptors to make specific judgments about the characteristics of responses to the examination.

Each student's examination was assessed by no fewer than six independent markers.

More than 40 000 students sat for the 2010 English examination and assessors were generally impressed with the skills and qualities shown by the majority of students. Most were able to respond well and present three completed pieces of writing that demonstrated an understanding of the knowledge and skills required in the study. Both the quality and quantity of work was quite sound and at times impressive. The growing awareness of the value of close textual knowledge and careful management of response structure indicates sound teaching and learning.

Students seemed to have a clear understanding of how to approach the examination and demonstrated good time management. There were very few incomplete or partial responses.

On the other hand, it should be noted that:

- there still seems to be a dependence on formulaic responses, which suggests that some students believe that rote-learning is sufficient. The study of English is concerned with developing students' understanding and confidence in responding to the specific topics and prompts that are offered in the examination. Active engagement with texts enables students to develop language awareness, articulate ideas and develop communication skills
- some students did not fully engage with the actual elements of the topics and prompts. Greater care needs to be taken in analysing and recognising the specific expectations of each topic or prompt – often this comes down to a precise understanding of the words which comprise the task
- this is an English examination and strong language skills (including correct spelling and grammar) are expected and necessary for success
- it is recommended that students organise their time so that enough time is left at the end of the examination to proofread their work. While handwriting is not assessed it must be legible.

SPECIFIC INFORMATION

The student responses provided below are presented for illustrative and informative reasons, and they may form the basis of profitable discussions. These examples should not be taken as 'the best' that is possible or as 'perfect'; indeed, none is without shortcomings of one sort or another. In this report, however, they have been selected both as typical of better responses and/or material that may be of some use for improving the knowledge and skills in the English study. Readers will obviously be able to make many more observations about the quality of these responses beyond the brief comments offered herein.

Note: Student responses reproduced herein have not been corrected for grammar, spelling or factual information.



Section A – Text response (Reading and responding)

The two topics enabled students to address the knowledge and skills as outlined in the study design. The choice between topics enabled students to develop a sustained discussion from the aspects of key knowledge for Outcome 1 in Units 3 and 4:

- the ideas, characters and themes constructed by the author/director and presented in the selected text
- the way the author/director uses structures, features and conventions to construct meaning
- the ways in which authors/directors express or imply a point of view and values
- the ways in which readers' interpretations of texts differ and why.

While some topics focused on more than one of the aspects of key knowledge (for example, *A Man for All Seasons* [i.], *Nineteen Eighty-Four* [ii.] or *Life of Pi* [i.]), most focused on a single aspect. There are subtle but discernible differences in the topic types and students would benefit from understanding these variations. All topics in this year's examination required student responses to address the full range of key knowledge and skills, and to be supported by detailed analysis and specific reference to the selected text. High-scoring responses did not rely entirely on the most obvious scenes from the texts. Their familiarity with the entire text and the discerning selection of scenes to support and explore ideas meant more individual responses that were thoughtful, moving beyond the most predictable and superficial discussions. The most successful responses recognised the conceptual ideas and implications of the topic and explored these, using detail from the text as illustration to support and develop this discussion.

There is little doubt that students continue to develop their skills and textual knowledge across all responses. It was evident that most students selected a topic with which they felt they could demonstrate their understanding of the text with respect to the specifics of the topic. There were far fewer responses consisting of a simple plot summary, suggesting that students have been well taught in the selection of relevant supporting evidence. Where this did occur, it was often due to poorly constructed paragraphs where the direction of the topic sentence caused students to simply retell an incident or scene rather than deal with ideas offered by the topic. Students should not offer a series of examples that support the general premise of the topic without exploring its implications.

Students' ability to understand, acknowledge and explore the genre of their selected text continues to improve. Responses that focused on Bolt's use of the Common Man in his play, the visual imagery employed by Sarah Watt and even the way characters' names supported a greater understanding in Dickens' novel suggested that insightful discussions are taking place in classrooms in relation to how the construction of a text adds to its meaning and our understanding. This knowledge was particularly apparent in the 'how' topics which specifically dealt with structure, including *A Farewell to Arms* (ii.), *Maestro* (ii.) and *Home* (ii.).

Students should be encouraged to have confidence in their own reading and demonstrate a personal understanding of their text rather than relying exclusively on commercially produced material. All texts are complex and offer much opportunity for exploration. There is no 'expected' response to a topic and the most successful pieces were those that were thoughtful and fresh. Assessors do not have to agree with the interpretation of a topic or text but students must be able to support their interpretations with insightful supporting evidence from the text. If students have an excellent knowledge of their text and a grasp of the topic, then they should be confident when constructing their essays and presenting their ideas.

Students' understanding, deconstruction and organisation of responses in relation to the set topics are the areas that require the most work. Students should be taught to look critically at the wording of the topic and to consider what assumptions are being made within the topic. Too many students want to respond to their own question rather than grappling with the ideas of the set topic. Students should have the confidence to challenge the position of the topic instead of simply accepting or disregarding it. Students would benefit from more practice analysing and distinguishing different topics and approaches to topics.

The less successful responses dealt with the topic superficially, lacked precision and resorted to retelling the plot or describing characters. Students are advised that excessive quoting is not appropriate and the chosen material needs to be used to support a developing case.

Students must ensure that they explore all elements presented in the topic. Too often students took a key point from the topic and produced an essay which lacked discussion of a significant idea that had a major bearing on the topic itself. For example, the second topic for *Cosi* was '*Cosi is more than an entertaining comedy. It reveals the sadness of the lives of the characters.*' Discuss. Far too many of the 3000 students who attempted this topic ignored the idea offered in



the first part of the topic ‘more than an entertaining comedy’ and focused entirely on the ‘sadness of the lives of the characters’.

Students are reminded that where quotations are incorporated into the topic, they must consider how the quotation adds to the dynamic of the topic and need to recognise the importance of the quotation in relation to the topic.

Some of the responses to collections of poems and short stories were limited, in that they appeared to have prepared only a few stories, episodes or poems and were determined to present those, regardless of their relevance to the topic.

Students must study a sufficient number of poems to be able to select supporting detail when addressing the set topic, and must study the stories that appear on the VCAA Text List 1. In some cases not all stories in an anthology are on the list and students are expected to use in their responses only those that are listed.

Most students again demonstrated an understanding of writing a text essay. Clear introductions, appropriate paragraphing and the ability to embed quotations appropriately were a feature of most pieces. These basic skills must be continually reinforced, including building more sophisticated vocabulary, continuing to improve grammar, and an increased focus on sentence structure.

The most popular texts and their mean scores, out of a possible 10 marks, were as follows.

Text	% of students	Average mark
<i>Look Both Ways</i>	24.2%	5.5
<i>Cosi</i>	12.2%	5.2
<i>Nineteen Eighty-four</i>	12.1%	6.0
<i>A Man for All Seasons</i>	10.3%	5.9
<i>Maestro</i>	9.6%	5.5

The least popular texts for this part included *Into Thin Air*, *A Human Pattern*, *Home* and *Of Love and Shadows*. Fewer than 100 students chose to write on *Selected Poems* by Kenneth Slessor.

The highest mean score for Section A was achieved by students who wrote on *Hard Times*, *Richard III*, *A Human Pattern*, *Selected Poems* (Slessor) and *A Farewell to Arms*.

The following student example is a mid-range response.

Cosi (i)

‘Cosi is more than an entertaining comedy. It reveals the sadness of the lives of the characters.’

Discuss.

Thought the play Cosi the audience witnesses the lives of mentally ill people unfold before them. Louis Nowra has used black comedy within Cosi to allow the audience to abandon their pre-conceptions of ‘mad’ people and to see the characters not for their illness but for their personality. Because of this the audience is able to relate to each character and their situation and realise the underlying sadness of the patients lives. We are confronted by their pasts as we come to realise the causes for their illnesses; like with Roy as we learn of his childhood, abandoned by his mother and growing up in orphanages. Cosi also reveals the sadness within the lives of those who society considers ‘sain’ as the audience is treated to the life of the protagonist Lewis Riley and the struggles and dependence he faces.

The truth of Roy’s life is one of the most shocking revelations to the audience as he often puts on a outgoing happy façade. With his vibrently outgoing personality Roy becomes one of the central figures of the play. He influences Lewis into directing the Italian opera ‘Cosi Fan Tutte’ and captivates Lewis with tales of music and performance from his childhood. This illusion that Roy casts over Lewis, and the audience alike, is seen for what it truly is as we learn that the stories were all lies and what Roy never new his mother. ‘I had a dream, Jerry.’ This quote from Roy reveals Roy’s sadness as audience has an epiphany that Roy’s tales of music and performance, along with his desire to performer ‘Cosi Fan Tutte’, are his way of trying to escape the sadness of his life spent unloved within orphanages and the asylum.

We witness similar sadness in the life of one of the other patients, Ruth. The audience first sees Ruth as being obsessive compulsive with a need for control over her life. Ruth’s behaviour is very methodical and she finds trouble gasping the concept of illusion as it isn’t something that she is able to control. During the scene in Cosi where the power goes out Ruth tells the story of her abusive ex-love who would lock her in the cupboard for extended periods of time. This story reveals Ruth’s sadness and the cause for her disorder as the aroma of not being in control of her life and being helpless against her ex-lover has scared her into having an obsession for control in her life. From this point within the play the audience feels sympathy for Ruth as they understand her sadness.



Along with the patients of the asylum we also come to realize the sadness with the life of the protagonist Lewis Riley. We first encounter Lewis as a university drop-out who takes the directing job at the asylum. Lewis 'lacks direction...in life and only takes the job' for the money. During the scene where Lewis' friend Nick comes to help direct is where the audience truly comes to realise the sadness with Lewis' life as the audience realises that Lewis' beliefs and values are not genuine and derive from his dependence on his girlfriend Lucy and Nick. We see his political views, views on love and fidelity and whats important in life are just mimicing Nick and Lucy's, which shows the sadness of Lewis' lack of self and dependence on others. Lewis does redeem himself by the end of the play by finding happiness that he lacked before and finding his identity.

Cosi is more than a comedy. It draws the audience in as they become immersed in the lives of the cast. The revelation of the sadness felt by the characters helps to deepen our connection as we relate to them and see them as imperfect humans life ourselves.

Assessor comments

- A competent essay which provides an accurate response to the topic, dealing in a sometimes superficial way with its main concerns.
- The piece is organised around a discussion of the sadness felt by some of the characters: an approach which is appropriate, but which also results in a somewhat narrow selection of evidence from the play.
- The student shows adequate knowledge of the text through some pertinent description of key events and some close referencing via quotes.
- The student's expression is generally fluent, although it is marked by slips in spelling and punctuation.

The following example is a mid-range response.

Year of Wonders (ii)

Mompellion warns the villagers: 'Fear will be your only faithful companion, and it will be with you day and night'. How does fear affect the lives of the people in the village?

In 'Year of Wonders' by Geraldine Brooks, fear is something that every character has, but there are many different fears and each character has their own fear. The plague strikes fear into the hearts of every person, this transforms into fear of spreading the plague by going outside of the village. Josiah Bont is also afraid of leaving the village but this is because of the navy. Fear also transforms some of the villagers into murderers and forever affects their lives. Fear of God is the most constant fear and this creates Protestants, Puritans and Flagellants.

The fear of travelling outside the village affects the lives of the people, because they have to stay in the village surrounded by death. It was decided that everyone would stay in the village, 'Let the borders of our village become our entire world', so as to contain the plague from spreading. And when Maggie Bakewell and Brand went outside the village and nearly killed, 'it's a woman from the plague village', it cements the fear in everyones hearts not to travel outside the village, showing how fear can affect people and the way they try to live. Josiah Bont's fear is also travelling outside the village, because he doesn't want to join the navy again, 'lived ever after in fear that he somehow be pressed again', this fear and his experiences in the navy change his life he becomes a 'violent, drunk man' showing just how much a fear can ruin a life, it also creates an anger against him from the villagers. The fear of the plague is shown throughout, but sometimes it is disguised as fear of witches.

The townspeople fear of witches turns many of them into murders and affects the whole village. Some of the townspeople decided to release their fear out on the Gowdies, who they thought of as witches, 'I can't see my reflection in her eyes, sign of a witch', showing just how far their fear had gone to the point where they didn't even need a good reason. The fear and killing of the Gowdies by these few was to have major affects on the entire village, because with her last breath she claims that their wives, 'have lay with the Devil' accusing them of being witches and 'I am the child of the Devil, mark me, I will be revenged for my life' creating an even greater fear for the village, because they killed their only two healers and the two experienced to birth a child, by killing the Gowdies the villagers had nothing to keep them healthy. A fear that was deemed necessary was the fear of God's wrath and this fear was constant.

The fear of God affected the lives of the villagers by turning them into Protestants, Puritans and Flagellants, and bringing them to Church every Sunday. The villagers were first Protestants, then Puritan who were stricter, 'banned bright colours', they thought drab clothes was the only clothes God approved of. Then they turned back to Protestant which was less authoritative of what people wore, but still believed in the judgement of God, 'fear the wrath of God' and 'I think He would want us to face it where one was', Mompellion their rector believed that God had sent this plague to test them and they should face it head-on. This affects the lives of the people in the village, because they believe that they will survive if God deems them worthy, showing the control the fear of God had over their lives. Their are other people like John Gordon who are flagellants, 'Their believe is that by grievous self-punishment they can allay God's wrath', showing that some people were truly afraid of God and would hurt themselves in an attempt to save themselves, they become themselves become a fear that others will join them. The fear of God affects the lives of the villagers by making them to church and fuelling this fear that they hold.



Every person in 'Year of Wonders' by Geraldine Brooks holds at least one fear, whether it be fear of the outside like the villagers and especially Josiah Bont. There is the fear of witches, which ruins the lives of the villagers by getting rid of their healers and turning some of them into murderers. Then there is the constant fear of God held by villagers and spoken about by Protestants, Puritans and Flagellants, this fear affects all the lives in the village by telling them what to do, what to wear and going to church every Sunday.

Assessor comments

- This question elicited a wide range in terms of quality but this student remains on task throughout the essay.
- The less successful pieces simply agreed that fear was everywhere and described individual's situations and their reactions, while this student makes detailed and often telling use of the text to support a coherent discussion.
- The vocabulary and phrasing are quite good, clearly placing this above less fluent essays.
- The conclusion gives a pleasing and thoughtful sense of completion.
- This essay is at the top end of the mid-range responses.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response.

A Farewell to Arms

To what extent is love an escape from the horrors of war in A Farewell to Arms?

In Ernest Hemingway's novel A Farewell To Arms, the love between his two protagonists Catherine Barkley and Frederic Henry begins as merely a shallow distraction and escape from the horrors of war, yet develops into mutual and devoted dependence, which is much more than a simple avoidance of the chaos and distraction around them. Love is shown to provide meaning in a hollow and empty world where nothing else inspires devotion, yet like all things in life – good, bad, innocent or deserving – love cannot last. The death of Catherine Barkley which occurs independently from the random destruction of war proves to Henry that war is only an extension of a cruel world, which refuses to preserve or protect anything in life, including true love.

Catherine and Henry's relationship, in its early stages, may be considered as only a shallow diversion and quick escape from the horrors of war. Indeed Henry reflects that 'By God, I did not want to fall in love with her. I didn't want to fall in love with anyone'. Both Catherine and Henry initially consider their affair as 'a game, like bridge in which you said things instead of playing cards'. However, it is in the hospital in Milan where the couple truly fall in love. In falling for Henry, Catherine may be seen to sacrifice her identity to Henry, telling him that, 'There isn't any me anymore, only you'. However, by marking Catherine's changes and progressions throughout the novel, we learn that she is not a submissive, subservient character, and it is in fact through her purposeful and meaningful devotion to Henry that her anti-heroism comes to life. Self-denial becomes self-transcendence as the love they have willed becomes authentic. Their initially escape from the war into each other, treated merely as a 'game', develops into mutual devotion and refuge from the dour, dark and difficult struggle of war around them. Love provides purpose and meaning for the lovers, rendering the senseless misery and death of war to appear utterly 'vain'.

Indeed, the considerable value of love renders the couple utterly disillusioned with the events and progress of the war, as their love becomes all-consuming. The 'gratuitous' deaths of Aymo and Passini, the disastrous wet, muddy and demoralizing Italian retreat from Caporetto and the arbitrary killings perpetrated by the carabinieri involve the intense horror and destruction of war which prompts Henry to 'make a separate peace' in his desertion. 'Anger washed away in the river along with any obligation. It was through ... it was not my show anymore'. Henry's desertion from the war illustrates the powerful pre-eminence of love to war. 'Abstract words like honour, glory and hallow appeared empty beside the concrete names of the villages,' as war has lost every contrived resemblance to meaning. Catherine has in fact taught Henry to be braver than a soldier and more devoted than a priest in the service of romantic love. Love is proven to be much more than a mere escape from the horrors of war, but a phenomenon of far greater value and worth. Love indeed provides an alternative to war, yet the dependence and seclusion Catherine and Henry find in the other, far exceeds any contrived meaning in the empty cause of war.

When having truly escaped the destruction and misery of war, in the secluded, snowy mountains of Switzerland, Catherine and Henry experience temporary euphoria in their love together, triumphing over their former loneliness. They achieve ordered meaning in their lives, contrasting to the random chaos in war. They envisage a happy future together in which their lives will be 'fine, grand' and 'lovely'. The symbolism associated with the snow in the mountains illustrates the couple's sense of seclusion and happiness, by contrasting with the wet and muddy plain where the fighting occurs, and through its association with the Priest's homeland in the Abruzzi, where the snow was 'cool and hard and dry'. They come to distinguish between 'us, and in the world there's the rest of them', revealing how the passionate romance between Catherine and Henry has progressed to be so much more than just an escape from the war – they are the meaning to each others lives, as Catherine replaces Henry's previous perception of bravery as military virtue, with love.

In many of Hemingway's novels, when the heroes or heroines have found what makes their lives most meaningful, or worthwhile, the 'dirty trick' is that the dualities of life or death intervenes and takes it away. Henry reflects after the death of his baby, 'I wished the hell I'd been broken like that'. He ruminates bitterly, 'They threw you in and told you the rules, and first time they caught you off base they killed you. Or they killed you gratuitously like Aymo. Or gave you the syphilis like Rinaldi. But they



killed you in the end. You could count on that. Stick around and they'd kill you. Hemingway does not present the death of Catherine as an isolated act of an otherwise benevolent providence. The 'dirty trick' suggests a malevolent providence that waits until life is most valued before taking it away. When Catherine meets her end she is not broken by death despite feeling to the contrary. She recognises the 'dirty trick', and winks at the joke. She gains victory and immortality through bravery and stoicism, telling Henry 'Don't worry darling, I'm not a bit afraid. He exemplifies Hemingway's own definition of bravery, which is 'grace under pressure'. In the face of a hostile world, the only answer is a refusal to give in and to accept fate bravely. Catherine carries this message, resenting death, but not cowardly before it. It is all part of 'the rotten game of life', applying to both love and a retrospective irony in light of the ending. Catherine shows a lust for life and a cheerful disregard for doom. She is an image of Hemingway's perfect woman: wise and cynical in many ways, someone whose wisdom cannot contain her desire. Her death illustrates that 'the world kills the very good and very gentle and very brave impartially', completely independent from war. Catherine teaches Henry the power and the value of love, and her death teaches them both of its limits. However, the valuable knowledge of Catherine's bravery in the face of death is the primary example of courage Henry remembers by the time he relates his wartime experiences, proving that the value of the love between them had far exceeded any mere distraction from the war that it initially was used as.

In the central antithesis between life, love and home (the mountain) and war and death, Catherine has a very significant part to play. It is indeed required of her that she become, as novel moves on to its denouement, more of an abstraction of love than a portrait of an actual woman in love and pain. For when Henry 'closes the door of the hospital' in order to be alone with his dead wife, he learns at once, as if by fact, the finality and totality of his loss. It is the loss of a life, and love and a home. 'Saying goodbye' is like 'saying goodbye to a statue, before Henry tragically 'walks back to the hotel in the rain', validating Catherine's fear of rain associated with her death, previously expressed. The utter tragedy of the novel's final events prove the extent to which love has far exceeded being only an escape from the war, becoming instead, a 'home' for Henry and denoting all meaning to his life.

A Farewell To Arms, both anti-war novel and romantic drama, portrays the development of the passionate relationship between Catherine and Henry, which primarily began as a way for each of them to personally escape from the war. However, 'love' in the context of the entire novel, is demonstrated to be so much more than a simple distraction as it completely consumes the couple with the war seeming 'as far away as the football game of someone else's college'. Yet the death of Catherine illustrates the impermanence of all things, and that death – the basis of all life – is inevitable. The bravery of Catherine in the face of death replaces Henry's initial perception of courage as military accolade. The only kind of immortality that one can achieve is proven to be gained not true love but courage. It is certainly a poor substitute for victory over death gained through everlasting love or life, yet it is the only kind of immortality or religion a Hemingway hero can know, with the understanding of love's perpetual pre-eminence over war.

Assessor comments

- Sophisticated in both the ideas presented and the language used to present those ideas.
- Understands and deals with the implications of the topic.
- Thorough use of the text to support the ideas – shows both breadth and depth.
- The piece is well developed and organised, and fluently written.

Section B – Writing in Context (Creating and presenting)

The task in each Context required students to write an extended piece for a specified purpose and audience, exploring ideas and using detail from at least one text selected from the English Text List 2 published in the VCAA Bulletin and available from the VCAA website <www.vcaa.vic.edu.au>. In all cases students had something to say and it was clear that some very interesting approaches to and interpretations of creating and presenting were studied in classes.

Most students demonstrated that they had gained a number of insights about the Context they had studied and many showed the capacity to present those insights in a controlled, fluent and well-written manner. In 2010 there were far more imaginative approaches to writing and texts were used to inform the pieces of writing in a more evocative way.

Assessment was based on the interrelationship among:

- the quality of writing in relation to the specified purpose
- the handling of the prompt
- the quality of ideas (this, of course, is formed by the study of the Context and from the texts studied).

Students presented a range of approaches to writing in their responses. While the expository approach was still the most popular, it was evident that students are being encouraged to choose an approach that best suits their writing and thinking. This year there were fewer bland textual responses. It was pleasing to see the varied and imaginative ways that students were able to explore the Context, the nominated text and the prompt.



Students who wrote excellent responses were obviously thinking about responding to the prompt as written. They used their understanding of the text(s) and concepts from their Context study to inform the ideas they explored within their writing. The less successful responses did not think critically about the idea that the prompt was communicating or ignored the prompt altogether. The more successful responses got to the core of the prompt instead of treating it like a text response. Students need to be reminded that there is an important distinction between the Context they have studied and the task they are required to complete in the exam – that is, to explore the idea that is represented in the prompt.

Students should not come to the examination with pre-prepared responses relating to the concepts/issues central to their Context study and ignore the idea the prompt is communicating. While the prompt is seen as a springboard for effective writing, the ideas of the prompts must be explored. It is important that students have an exact understanding of the core of the prompt.

Although students were more adventurous in their writing, this did not always lead to better responses. It is expected that students will have sophisticated insights into the Context they have studied and the capacity to explore them in the direction dictated by the prompt. Weaker responses tended to be either too broad and neglected discussion of the prompt, or consisted of pre-prepared responses that did not respond to the prompt directly at all.

Use of text

It is very important that teachers and students understand the requirements of Section B in the examination. While students are free to create a response that is an expository, persuasive or imaginative piece of writing, the piece itself must explore the nominated Context and respond to the prompt offered for that Context. In addition, the instructions are quite clear about the expectation of the connection of the response to the student's nominated text.

It is expected that the study of the texts forms the basis of a detailed exploration of the Context. While many classrooms supplement the study with a variety of other material, and this is a rich way to develop an exploration of the central ideas in the Context, the more specific aspects of the study of Context comes from the selected texts. In the examination students who compose seemingly gratuitous creative pieces or simply label one of their characters 'Abigail', 'Blanche' or 'Holden' have not fully examined or explored the ideas of the text in relation to the prompt. They must ensure that the connection between the piece of writing and the nominated text is discernible and central in the ideas of their pieces. There is no provision for reflective commentary in the examination, so the connections between the text and the prompt must be obvious within the piece.

The most successful responses drew thoughtfully from the text; however, the least successful only used a scene or a feature of character in a superficial way or retold the plot of the text. This approach was not always relevant to the prompt. There can be no definitive advice on the success of relying on a single text or employing both (or more). Some students used the two texts expertly to demonstrate exceptions and qualifications, while others did little more than use the second text to add yet more of the same examples. While students writing using an expository approach tended to employ both texts, a number of students explored only one text. Students who used more than one source to illustrate their ideas often produced pieces with a strong sense of unity and purpose. This cohesiveness was contrasted by pieces where one idea followed the next as students went through their list of examples. The product was more a plan for an essay than a thoughtful, finished piece.

The transference of ideas from the texts is critical. Students who understood and could convey sophisticated ideas from their texts were the most successful, regardless of the approach to writing selected.

Responding to the task

Students and teachers must not disregard the fundamentals of good writing, including audience, purpose, form and voice. These are set out in the assessment criteria and the fundamentals of good writing should be embedded in the writing itself. Students are reminded that some forms of writing are difficult to complete under examination conditions and students should take this into account when creating their responses.



Information on assessing the Context

CONTEXT	%	Mean	Most popular text
Encountering conflict	39.8%	5.3	<i>The Crucible</i>
Identity and belonging	31.7%	5.5	<i>Witness</i>
Whose reality?	18.7%	5.5	<i>A Streetcar Named Desire</i>
The imaginative landscape	10.9%	5.6	<i>Island</i>

Some critical advice

- Formulaic approaches were limiting.
- Memorised responses failed to address the prompt(s).
- Use texts as vehicles, not as the centre of the task.
- Avoid retelling the plot.
- Work on the transference of ideas that are offered by the texts.
- Teach/learn a variety of forms of writing.
- Incorporate texts in ways appropriate to the form.
- Practise writing in a range of approaches, styles and forms.
- Ensure there is adequate practice and strategies for exploring the prompt.
- Develop more sophisticated imaginative pieces.
- Develop pieces which are well crafted.
- Teach/learn the use of text(s) to explain complexity, not as simple illustration.
- It may be useful to ask the question: ‘What does the text suggest about our Context?’

Sample pieces for each Context appear at the end of this report.

Section C – Analysis of language use (Using language to persuade)

Most responses showed a very good grasp of the expectations of demonstrating an understanding of the way language is used to persuade.

The unseen material was based on a presentation given in Nagoya at the International Biodiversity Conference 2010. Most students showed good comprehension of the material and were able to understand its intention. A holistic approach to the material was required; students who attempted to work laboriously through every sentence found the task difficult. Students needed to choose which parts of the material they would use to explore the way in which language was being used. The more successful responses included insightful and sophisticated analysis. Weaker responses showed an understanding of the task but tended to be generalised and lacked depth. Some responses were just simple summaries or lists of the techniques used, with little development. These pieces did not score well as they did not fulfil the task.

This is an upper-range response which has control over the exploration of how Lee’s language is positioning listeners to support his views.

Appealing to the readers sense of social justice, Lee reminds the audience why biological diversity is ‘so important’ in protecting the living standards of the ‘poor’. Highlighting how reduced genetic variation and increased biological similarity within ecosystems will impinge upon ‘food security’, ‘nutrition’ and the health of the ‘rural poor’ in exacerbating ‘extreme poverty’, Lee asserts that it is our humanitarian duty to ensure that such injustice is not inflicted upon our fellow human beings. Metaphorically presenting ‘us’ Westerners as the ‘powerful economic giant’ and callous ‘affluent hunters’ ‘subordinating’ the interests of the poor to pursue personal wealth and ravish the environment, Lee urges us to ‘hunt less, gather less and preserve more before it is too late’, effectively summarizing the crux of his argument into a useful repetition of metaphor. By evoking imagery in the reader with ‘us’ – the affluent, greedy giant, insatiably destroying habitats and marginalising the livelihood of the third world, the reader’s sense of justice and righteousness is inflamed to urge compliance to Lee’s contention.

Students with a good vocabulary for analysis were able to explore language use explicitly.

The context of any piece of writing is crucial to understanding how language is being used. Thoughtful responses understood that the audience consisted of participants in the conference and that they had come from a number of different countries around the world. Some students did not consider the audience carefully enough in this respect.



An important feature of the 'Background information' given on the examination was the clearly nominated purpose of the conference, and important insights were offered that underpinned everything Chris Lee opined. Students who did not understand and articulate the basis of the material found it more difficult to contextualise their analysis. The more astute responses were aware of the nature of a presentation that was about reviewing progress already made and looking forward with plans for biodiversity.

It is worth noting that many students who struggled in analysing the language were still able to make insightful comments about the images. It was evident that most students understand the implications of a visual but some were not able to transfer that knowledge to language. The following is a successful analysis of one of the visuals.

The image summarizing the presentation enhances the ideal of humanities' responsibility and impact upon biodiversity through depicting the globe resting in our hands. This image creates the sensation that we control the well-being and future of the world inspiring an overwhelming sense of responsibility.

Many students treated images separately from text, and only the very good responses drew the visual into analysis of the written material. It is important that the connection between the passage and visuals is understood and explored. In this case the visuals were the opening and closing slides to the presentation and the context was important in analysing how these slides contributed to the persuasiveness of the presentation.

Some critical advice

- Work on analysis throughout the year.
- Use a wide range of persuasive texts.
- Focus on the language.
- Avoid technique identification and explore how language is being used to persuade.
- Focus on the tone – why it is being used and how it may change throughout a piece.
- Explore how a visual adds to the persuasiveness of a piece.
- Work on incorporating visuals fluently into the response.

The following is an example of a mid-range response.

In 2010, a conference was held introducing International Biodiversity year, focusing on the needs of biodiversity in the world today. Through this presentation, the writer uses many language uses to get their point across to the audience. An informative and serious tone is used throughout the presentation to help have an effect on readers.

When first drawn to this speech, readers are automatically driven to focus on the visual images provided. One image has a globe sitting in someone's hands. This would indicate to readers what this speech is about and that the message that the image is giving is that the world is in your hands. This would have a great affect on readers as they would feel responsible and needed to help in the world. The quote by Thomas Eisner that is given under the image is also significant. By referring to biodiversity as a 'treasure', readers are made to think that biodiversity is rare, that it cannot be replaced and that it must be taken care of. Readers would also be impacted that biodiversity's diminishment is to be prevented at all costs', as it would appear that nothing should stand in the way, which highlights the importance to readers. The other image given has a much lighter affect on readers. '2010' is imprinted with images to tell readers what makes up biodiversity. With these images printed over '2010', readers would presume that something to do with biodiversity is going to be done over this year.

The tone of the writer is given in the first few words of their speech. By introducing the speech with 'ladies and gentlemen'. This gives a serious and professional tone to readers. This serious and professional tone is used consistently throughout the speech, which confirms and reassures readers of the seriousness of the topic, 'vital significance to our world'. By using the words 'vital significance' tells readers that this speech is important. Giving facts and figures also tells readers the seriousness of the matter as when given facts, they can really believe what is being said is true, instead of just listening to and opinion, '38% are today threatened and 804 already extinct'. By finishing this figure with 'it is too late for them' tells readers that something should have been done before now, but because nothing was done, and the species could not help themselves, it is too late.'

By highlighting that a commitment was made to reduce the role of biodiversity loss 'eight years ago', tells readers that over eight years nothing significant has been done. It also asks readers to ask themselves, how long will it take until something is done? Because this issue has been going on for so long, the writer uses a sarcastic tone in presuming that everyone should know this by now, 'Is any of this new information? Of course not!' The writer's sarcasm is also shown answering his own question as though he knows what his audiences' answer will be. This use of sarcasm is used again in this speech. This time it is used to emphasise the stupidity of how the problem of biodiversity is being take,' Wonderful words, glossy brochures, inspiring documentaries are no substitute for real action'. This puts readers into realisation that these things may inform people of the problems associated with biodiversity, but it does not make them solve the issue.



The writer of this speech successfully connects with their audience as they often include them in the issue by using words like 'we', 'you' and 'our'. This is emphasised in the speech by using capital letters, 'what have WE – what YOU and Your country'. This helps readers feel involved with this current issue and causes them to feel some responsibility.

This importance of biodiversity is assured throughout the article as the writer uses words like 'critical', 'significance' and 'vital'. This assures readers of the importance of biodiversity in the world. Another language use that is used many times through the speech is the use of rhetorical questions. 'Honestly, how well have we done?' This causes readers to ask themselves the question with an obvious answer. The use of the word 'honestly' is significant as it tells readers to not just put in behind them or to think what everyone else thinks but to really truthfully give an honest answer.

Through the many uses of language, tone and effectiveness on the reader, the writer successfully convinces the audience of the seriousness and the desperate need of action on the issue of biodiversity today.

This also causes readers to wonder how long it will be until it becomes too late for them.

Assessor comments

- Understanding of the context in which Lee's presentation is made.
- Thorough exploration of the second visual with some thoughtful ideas.
- Shows the implications of language use (see paragraph 2 in particular).
- Quite general at times in relation to how language is being used and somewhat simplistic in places in its understanding of the argument.
- Too formulaic in approach.
- Handles the tone and the shifting tone well.
- Uneven expression with a number of spelling and grammatical errors.

The following example is a polished and insightful piece of writing.

A speaker Chris Lee at the 2010 international Biodiversity Conference speaks with conviction to his audience, attendees involved in the area of nature conservation, contending that action must be taken to safeguard the variety of life, or, biodiversity. At times an accusatory and disapproving tone is adopted, however alternates with an alarmist tone, the two complementing each other and utilised to successfully persuade the speaker's powerful and influential audience to take action to preserve biodiversity. The use of a visual aid in the form of a slide presentation assists the speaker, presenting the argument through a different medium.

Lee begins by introducing his contention, an issue of 'vital significance.' Immediately, the audience is drawn in by the warning carried in his words. This alarmist tone is further continued, Lee speaking of what has been lost in the past tense, implying that the problem is already here, and the effects are evident. 'Sadly', hundreds of species are 'already extinct' the speaker taking on a more nostalgic tone full of longing for what has been lost. The International Union for Conservation of Nature has assessed the 'negative trend' and situation, the organisation adding credibility to Lee's words and argument that more must be done to safeguard biodiversity. The short, blunt statement, 'It is too late for them,' the extinct species, once again raises alarm in the audience members, and also implies that it is perhaps not too late for others – action can still be taken to protect others.

The alarmist tone transforms into an attack on the audience, not in a vicious way so as not to offend the audience, but instead urges them to want to take action. Lee contends that it is due to 'our thoughtless human actions' that species are suffering, the 'destruction of natural habitats, hunting,' and the list continues. As it is 'our' fault that biodiversity is diminishing, the speaker declares that it should be 'us' who reverse the trend, 'We have no excuse for inaction.' The continued use of inclusive language engages the audience and the speaker implies that it is their problem and they must right their wrong. Lee's use of adjectives 'wonderful', 'glossy' and 'inspiring' all connote a glamorous, easy and passive method of convincing others to take action, and this is strongly contrasted when followed by 'real action'. Here, the speaker accuses the conservationists and other influential people of not doing what they are supposed to do, opening their eyes to the reality of the situation. Lee describes talk at the conference as 'platitudes,' this disapproving tone used to further reprimand the audience, and Lee passes on guilt with the words, a strong motivator for action.

An appeal to social responsibility adds to Lee's persuasive power. The audience are, as stated by Lee, to blame for the 'degradation' of the environment, 'rampant' illnesses and 'deepening' poverty. These words, of high importance carry strong negative connotations and aid him in affecting the audience's emotions. Lee alludes to the poor who are 'particularly vulnerable' and 'directly' dependent on biodiversity, these particular choice of words calling on the audience to take action, as even if they are not directly affected, others are, and cannot survive without biodiversity. The number of people that live in poverty, 'more than 1.1 billion', is stated to further reinforce how many are suffering while the audience sit in an 'air-conditioned, sumptuously catered' hall. This not only appeals to the audience's social responsibility, but also to their sense of justice and equality. The poor are 'subordinated to the interests of us.' Lee argues, and once again the audience is inclined to feel guilt associated with making others suffer as they prosper. As the 'powerful economic giants,' they have the resources and the power to take the 'real action' that is necessary to ensure that the less fortunate do not suffer as a result of diminishing biodiversity.



Lee converts to a colloquial tone, urging the audience to 'stop kidding' ourselves and when coupled with 'of course not!', he implies the solution is obvious. 'We know what damage' we are doing and the 'time for talk is over,' instead for 'serious action.' The alarming tone is again utilised, and he implies that time is 'now, truly' running out. Lee ends with a final call to action, and when paired with a visual, induces a strong effect. The image depicts the world in 'our' hands, and he calls on the audience to reinforce and pass on the message to everyone. The world, is in essence, relying on the conference attendees to care for it and ensure its safety and ensure biodiversity, our 'greatest treasure' is not diminished 'at all costs.'

The speech uses a range of different tones to appeal to the different emotions of the conference audience. The addition of visuals allow the audience to 'see' the argument Lee is presenting, and each slide complements his words. In doing so, the audience is able to be persuaded of Lee's conviction that the safeguarding of biodiversity is vital, and also convinces the conference attendees to take action.

Assessor comments

- A controlled piece of writing that is fluent and well structured.
- Analysis of specific language which is tied into the wider implications of the argument of the speech.
- Perceptive and sophisticated in its exploration of how language is used to persuade.
- Clear understanding of the context of Lee's presentation.
- Incorporates the visuals neatly and shows their role in the presentation of the ideas and point of view.
- Clearly an upper-range script that is strong in all aspects.

Section B Samples

There are two samples from each of the four Contexts: a mid-range example and an upper-range example. This set of samples includes responses on all of the new texts for 2010 and shows a range of writing styles.

Context 1 – The imaginative landscape

'The inner landscape and its relationship to the outer world is significant in people's lives.'

Context 1, Sample A

The inner world and it's connection to the outer world is significant in all areas of life as the relationship between them is strongly connected. As Chris Womersley once said 'our world lives in us as much as we live in it' meaning that the imaginative landscape and physical are connected as one that influence each other. The way that we see and view things in our minds has an impact on how we see the outside world.

The physical settings are viewed based on each individuals inner setting. The physical landscape is viewed based on experiences and views that an individual has, which helps create each individuals' unique lens. In the words of Richard Wagner 'imagination creates reality', suggesting that the inner landscape impacts on and creates the physical settings for each unique person.

The physical and imaginative landscape hold a strong relationship and have an affect on each other. In Robert Frost's poem 'The Road Not Taken' he uses the decision of which road to turn down to discuss the parallel choices between the metaphorical setting and the concrete setting. The line 'two roads diverged in a yellow wood' contains the physical element that the roads are splitting from one path into two, creating a fork in the road and creating the suggestion of picking one to go down; however the metaphorical meaning is suggesting picking a journey that must be taken by making a decision, and choosing one thing over another. In Jessica Anderson's 'Tirra Lirra by the River' the idea that Nova's inner conscience affects the concrete setting that she is in. She uses the phrase 'My Sydney' to describe her home in Sydney and how she feel at home in the physical landscape in the heart of Sydney, but also in the metaphorical sense that influences how she views her geographical setting: she feels free. The physical landscape is affected by the imaginative landscape as it helps in creating the concrete setting.

The inner landscape has a strong, influencing and ever-changing connection to the outer world. In Australian writer John Marden's 'The tomorrow Series' the idea of imaginative landscapes affecting geographical setting is explored. The main character, Ellie, finds the same yet somehow changed landscape after she learns that her family have been taken prisoners and her country is at war. While her physical landscape remains the same, the way that she feels about it has changed; thus changing the physical setting of it uniquely to her. In Frances Hodges Burnett's novel 'The Little Princess', Sara Crewe finds that she can change the way she views her landscape just by using her imagination. Her dream of having her dusty attic room turn into a luxurious attic room comes true for her in the physical setting as a result of her 'believing'. The geographical world is impacted by the metaphorical landscape.

The imaginative landscape has a big impact on the physical setting. In Ayodha, India, the current conflict occurring between the Muslims and Hindus is an example of how spiritual and geographical landscapes are connected. While both groups desire the concrete connection to the land they each also have a metaphorical connection to it, which is what the dispute is mainly surrounding. The metaphorical and geographical settings have a strong relationship which is very connected and influential on one another.



The imaginative or metaphorical landscape has a very influential relationship with the physical landscape. Not only are these two strongly connected, but how the physical landscape is viewed depends on each individual's imaginative landscape, which is based on the views and experiences that individuals may have been involved in and subjected to. Therefore, one can assume that we see the world, both physical and imaginative, through our unique lens. The imaginative landscape has a influential and individual affect on each physical landscape.

Assessor comments

- Slightly clumsy in its formulation.
- Focus for expository piece is sustained.
- Mostly understands the essence of the prompt and the Context, although '... is significant in people's lives' is largely ignored.
- Too glancing in its text appropriation and a bit driven.
- More textual detail is required.
- This is slightly better than a mid-range script.

Context 1, Sample B

In Tirra Tirra by the River, Nora is a woman struggling to find a sense of belonging and a reunion between her inner expectations and her outer reality. Throughout her journey, it is the contribution of her imaginative landscape to her surroundings that prevents her from losing herself, like Dorothy Rainbow, in the antipathy, mundanity and constructiveness that sometimes confronts her. This verdant imagination allows her to create beauty wherever she lives, artistic fingerprints that help transform a small part of her antipathetic environment into something that is one step closer to her inner world, her Camelot. This tendency to impose our internal landscape onto the physical reality is a facet of human nature that we all have the ability to employ, allowing us to alter and transform in a way that makes it easier to cope with life's challenges.

Nora's transformation of her outer landscape begins from an early age; when, as a child, of avid poetry reading, she would lose herself in the stained-glass realm of 'silver serpentine rivers, flashing lakes, and castles moulded out of any old stick or stone.' This urge to escape into a luscious, chivalrous world is one that accompanied her throughout most of her life, and though the longings took slightly different forms all stemmed from the one desire: to find somewhere where the outer world matched the inner. To belong. Nora expressed this once as 'Sometimes I felt all I wanted was to be left alone in my beautiful room, with people who did not ask, audibly or otherwise, who I thought I was, but were nevertheless interested in the answer to that question.'

Her longing created a paradox: it alienated her from those around her ('who does she think she is?') as expressed by both her sister Grace and also her friend David Snow, who pointed out to her that her need to forever be straining forward and crying for the moon had left her 'homeless on this earth'. However, this longing also provided her the means to survive the negative periods in her life: her marriage to Colin Porteous in suburban Sydney, her 'wanted periods' in Brisbane and London. It meant that she had the power to use imagination to carry a tiny part of the source of that longing, 'Camelot', into whatever environment she found herself.

In this way, inner worlds are imperative to survival for they allow us, like Nora, to transform part of an alien landscape into a little bit of 'home' and prevent it from overwhelming us. Examples of this are Nora's tapestries in Brisbane, her 'beautiful room' and the ambience at Bomera on Sydney harbour her non-tree inspired 'half-room' in Una Porteous's Sydney ('I took five from the yellow and green') and the haven of Number 6 in London.

I had a similar experience to Nora's when I travelled overseas for the first time to do a linguistic exchange in ... where, because of the culture shock and the isolation I felt as a result of both personality differences and language barriers that existed between me and my host family, for the first few months I devised means borne out of loneliness of finding access to feelings of 'home' and belonging. Blessed with both a gorgeous environment and a love of walking, I would take the dog for long promenades under the silent, overarching and encircling boughs of the nearby forest. Trees and animals are not inhibited by international borders, language differences, or even the better part of half a globe. Under the trees' familiar green shade I let loose my imagination, transforming the forest into a haven of magical beings and Lord of the Rings-esque fantasies. On my return to the lively bustle and incomprehensible unknowns that defined the house of my host family, I would still retain some of that confidence and familiarity generated through my re-connection with my sense of self and a world I had created on my walk that was all my own. In this way, my imagination was deeply significant if not essential to my mental well-being in a strange world. The strength I gained through such an experience has been well worth the struggle.

Nora also gained in strength as a result of her use of creativity and imagination to maintain sanity through adverse situations. In London, her search for self and striving for beauty both fulfilled her ('I have come a long and roundabout way to find out who I am') and almost destroyed her. Her tenacity in holding on, 'provisionally' is testimony to an inner strength, a spark of resilience, that has been nourished and fed through her ability to manifest her imaginative landscape up on the outer. She is rewarded when, at the end of the novel, Nora is finally able to reconcile her inner world in a harmonious 'one-ness' with Graces' garden. Here she finally feel she is home; she has come full circle and her 'globe of memory is in free spin'. It is interesting in that it was



eventually Grace who allowed her to find a place where she feels she belongs, wise Grace who while unable to find peace herself nevertheless allowed her sister to reach that 'state of grace' thanks to her beautiful garden. Perhaps Nora's early dreams of 'Camelot' affected Grace more than Nora knew, born out of their shared grief for the lost world of love and happiness that was provided by their father.

Throughout Nora's journey, we see that the places where she felt most happy were those places that most closely reflected – or were most transformed by – Nora's inner landscape. Those that were the antithesis to this landscape – the Brisbane of her youth where she 'walked to outrun oppression', and similarly the 'big flat chequerboard suburb, predominately iron-grey and terracotta in colour, and treeless' of Sydney and at one point London: 'one big, hard city', were those places where she felt that most discontent. Through Nora's experiences, and our own, we can all learn to seek out those environments that most closely match those of our inner world – or, failing that, imagination is always on tap to provide a sanctuary and 'home' in an alien landscape.

Assessor comments

- This response is very controlled.
- Deals exquisitely with all aspects of the prompt in a sophisticated and well-developed manner.
- There is no template for the construction of a piece and this student has chosen to begin by focusing directly on the prompt and the text before going into more universal conclusions, then using personal experience to link their world to both the text and the prompt.
- This is an upper-range script.

Context 2 – Whose reality?

'Sometimes people find themselves living in a world created by other people.'

Context 2, Sample A

'There is an objective reality out there but we view it through the spectacles of our beliefs attitudes and values.' David G Myers.

Hence reality is fickle and seldom consistent, just as similarities between the realities of others seldom arise. Our beliefs, attitudes, values and ideals all contribute to the individuals perspective and thus are the determining and constituent factors of one's subjectivity. Our subjectivity, the specific and defining factor of the individual, is shaped by the individuals circumstances. Furthermore, the subjectivity of human experience and emotion relate to this perspective of reality which is specific to the individual. Perspective alone however is not the only influence in the individuals version of reality, rather, the presentation of reality has an equal influence in contributing to the way in which that which is objective or impartially so continually eludes the individual. Reality may be 'constructed' or manipulated to further detract from that which is real, and objective and presented as a version reality.

Hollywood exemplifies the 'manipulation' and 'construction' of reality and how the subsequent presentation of this 'constructed world' detracts from that which is objective. Hollywood presents a 'constructed' reality which is reflective of the manipulation of the editors, directors, and film crews which construct it. Equally however, this version of reality is constructed in parallel with the dreams, fantasies and endeavours of the intended audience, as Hollywood seeks to gratify its audience with a version of reality deemed palatable and satisfying. This 'constructed' world and indeed its 'constructed' characters embody perfection in the physical and are often the object to which a viewer aspires yet for many it is a reality unattainable. The characters embody the aspects at the viewers like in which the viewer is lacking. Hence, a Hollywood experience is fulfilling at this sense of lack, these insecurities which are ultimately instilled by Hollywood. As Hollywood's presentation of reality is for many unattainable, the viewer lives vicariously, experiencing no through their own perspective but rather through that of their idealised film star, the life which they wish to but are unable to lead.

Just as Hollywood constructs reality and presents this to others, so to do facebook users who display doctored or visually enhanced images of themselves in a bid to be considered more appealing and more attractive. Ultimately such users seek to alleviate the insecurities of their own imperfections which Hollywood instills, exploits and manipulates. The advocacy of these users to present a false version of reality, a constructed visual person, is a by product of Hollywood's portrayal of perfection. Indeed, such individuals inspire to embody the perfection which their idealised Hollywood stars do. In doing so, these individuals exist in a created world, a world encouraged and integrated by that which Hollywood instigates.

Robert Altman's 'The Player', by way of its metafictional qualities blurs the line between reality and fiction. An example of this metafiction to 'Hakeas Corpus' 'the film within a film' which proves to be the constructed product of 'The Player', whereby presenting 'The Player' itself as that which is objective, instead they are Altman's constructed version of reality which is confused and undefined. Further exemplifying this metafiction is the casting and characterisation, whereby actors play themselves alongside others who play characters. In essence those that play themselves are presented to be real and those playing characters; constructed. 'The Player' therefore, ironically analyses 'Hollywood' and displays the manner in which this film presents the constructed world at 'Hakeas Corpus' as the product of yet another constructed reality; that of Griffin Mill.



Griffin Mill through his behaviour portrays the way in which the human mind, just as Hollywood is capable, constructs a version of reality thoroughly detached from the truth, from that which is objective. Mill 'constructs' David Kahane to be his stalker a fallacy which Mill was adamant to be truthful. This false belief was the product of anonymous postcards for which Mill believed Kahane was responsible. The psychological anomaly, his intense paranoia and pervasive mistrust in those around him, was the result of these postcards, postcards which were indeed facilitating in Mills construction of a false reality. The anonymous individual responsible for the postcards was directly attributable to Mills reality, hence those around us the reality which the present, our circumstances which contribute to our perspective, directly, influence one's own version of reality.

Reality is fickle and seldom consistent, it is subject to constant manipulation, alteration in its presentation, and the filtering affect of the individuals subjectivity. Reality itself may be constructed but indeed such a reality is not objective or impartially so. Such construction and manipulation of reality may be the direct influence of those around us or those who like Hollywood present a version of reality. In essence however our version of reality is the product of our subjectivity.

Assessor comments

- Some interesting ideas about reality.
- There is repetition of the ideas.
- Very good use and development of text to support ideas about the Context.
- Deals with the prompt indirectly.
- Reasonably fluent, although there are some issues with spelling and, more particularly, punctuation.
- Demonstrates a strong understanding of the breadth of the ideas associated with the context and clearly links this with the prompt – strong, intelligent opening.
- The use of the text is both broad and conceptual, and uses specific detail.
- This is an upper-mid-range piece.

Context 2, Sample B

It's different sunlight – one which imparts justice upon the world – that enters courtrooms, and it's cutting through the crumpling shadow of a man that is Eric Edgar Cooke. Ironically, it is almost an injustice that he is to commit the single murder alone - it is well known and widely accepted that he is responsible for six of Perth's murders over the past four years, possibly more. His gutless, bloody killings have shattered this city's innocence and culture. Our windows and doors are now locked, where as once we had the freedom of openness. Salty ocean mist would find no barrier to exploring the corners of our homes. No longer. The foul actions of one man have eaten away at our freedom. Our world has been forever changed.

Everyone in the room is staring at him – at us. The accusing stares of the prosecution, the witnesses, the victims' families not only center on him, but they also sear into me as if I, in some way am responsible for his gruesome crimes – the crimes which have destroyed the Perth which they once knew. I feel guilty. I am guarding a murderer – one who has butchered their family and friends. One who doesn't deserve the privilege of someone protecting them.

It is blight on the legal system that we must sit here and watch him have his moment in the sun, for he has forever shaded ours. No more do we sleep on our verandas; the cool, even rushing of the waves filling our ears has been replaced with gunfire and sirens. There is no need to put the families of the victims through this ordeal – the man is a murderer and should be committed, and then be convicted of murder, that much is certain. The voices of the prosecution and magistrate are dreary and drawn out. Surely everyone must know that there is only one possible outcome to this farce. Even he seems to know it. He revels in it – he is cruel smile unfading as he surveys the photographs of his bloodied victims – the means by which he has taken our innocent, beachside world and crafted it into one of misery and despair. It is incomprehensible to me as to how one so devoid of good is formed. His murders have challenged my faith, and though no one wishes to comment on such religious issues at present, a communal rethink of our beliefs is sure to follow in the aftermath of this man's murderous rampage. The man is evil, something I knew not to be possible on Earth. He must have nothing to lose, I doubt he would even be married, even if he wasn't so malformed in body. Out of the corner of my eye I can see his twisted mouth jittering as he laughs at the photographs of his bloodied victims. His lack of remorse is chilling, and his amusement at his handiwork and subsequent state of affairs is not secret to onlookers; their gaze forming into a glare of disgust. It is unsettling, I feel uncomfortable being in the same room as him, let alone sharing the individual attention which he is paid. I'm desperate for the magistrate's final words – the inevitable committal.

It's a different sunlight that enters courtrooms. Police, lawyers, the Press, they're all streaked by it. It's the sunlight of acknowledgement. I can feel its brilliant, luminous rays through this heavy, blue suit I inherited when my father died. I remember him wearing it home one night. In his drunken rage he straps my mother with the buckle end of this very belt and locks her outside for the night. I protest, only to have this dull, blue tie pulled around my neck and tightened – he's banging my head against the wall – it's still wrapped tight when I wake up. Yes – this suit has been party to monstrous acts. Perhaps it's only apt that I'm wearing it. I am a monster.



Splashed with sunlight, they're all watching me now. I'm not a 'misfit' anymore, the world accepts me now, I'm number one. Finally I'm being recognised – after all, I have changed their lives. They all thought that they were superior to me – they thought the world was theirs – but the tides have turned, they're not so high and mighty anymore. They know I've seen them in their cars, through their windows, on their verandas – they know the power I've held. 'Birdmouth,' they'd never call me that anymore, particularly not those posh girls from Dalkeith, they're all too scared. I'm too good for those girls anyway. They laugh at me, but I'm too smooth for them. Too clever. Their arrogance faded as soon as they stopped building those huge windows in houses, and when padlocks began appearing on doors. But that couldn't stop me. I still remember the exact house plans from the newspapers – my memory is exceptional.

I see fear and uncertainty in their eyes, their attention is unwavering. I hope this is drawn out for as long as possible. They only have themselves to blame. They cast me from their world, their society. It's not their world now though. I am in control, and they fear me because of this. Even my guard is nervous of me. I find it very amusing – I'm beginning to laugh. Everyone is watching me now...everyone except that young journalist at the Press table. What is he doing? Why don't I have his interest too? Hah – he's fainted, no wonder he's not paying attention to me. I recognise him, its Drewe's boy – Robert – I haven't seen him in years. Nice kid, always trying to impress me. I remember he was pumping up his bike tires on the way to North Cotterloe Beach in a pink business shirt. If only everyone knew how good my memory is. 'Scarborough Beach's the best' I told him. I was one of the best openwater swimmers at the club, plenty of practise on the way home from the embassy of course. The water was my world. I had conquered it, I could hide from the harsh words of the Nedlands girls in it, but there is no need to hide now.

He's come around, about time too – he must have been out for at least 10 minutes. He's the same as I remember: He still wants to impress someone; he's still trying to become a man. He wants to be what I am – recognised. He wants bigger, better things; the world at his fingertips. He's staring at me through the sunlight now. I see more fascination than fear or uncertainty in his eyes. I like him.

I think I'll wink at him. I wonder if he recognises me.

How about that –

He does.

Assessor comments

- Engaging and interesting piece of writing.
- Deals well with both the Context and the prompt.
- The use of text shows detailed reading and insight in relation to the Context.
- Expressive and well written, but not without its flaws.
- Nice use of metaphor in the writing.
- This is an upper-range piece.

Context 3 – Encountering conflict

'It is difficult to remain a bystander in any situation of conflict.'

Context 3, Sample A

Conflict itself derives from our individual differences and it is for that fact that it is an inevitable part of our existence. Conflict has a way of drawing people into it, especially when the ones you love are involved. For many the opinion of being a bystander in a situation of conflict is a good thing, a way of not getting involved. Though depending on the situation some find it hard to stand back especially if their beliefs, family or way of life is being hindered.

If we look at the colonisation of Australia by the Europeans in 1788 we can see some of the true effects conflict can have on the way in which we behave when confronted with it. Much of the conflict in Australia at the time of colonisation had to do with racial factors or land. A doctrine called Terra Nullius claimed that Australia was 'free land' no country or state held sovereignty on it. SO when the Europeans native aboriginal who studies have shown had lived there for up to 50,000 years. The aboriginals believe the land was theirs though so did the european settlers. This spark violent and racial conflict of the likes of which we can still see today.

Due to the lack of communication between aboriginals at the time violence seemed to be the only answer. It became hard for people on both sides to stand back from the conflict since everyone around them wanted solutions that would help them.

In Psychology there has been much study into how the effects of groups can effect the way in which individuals act. Extensive studies into this showed quite interesting results. People would more openly act violently if they were in a group due to the fact the consequence are shared among members. These studies also found people feel more comfortable when they belong to a group or social click. We can apply both these examples to the vicious conflict that was present in Australia due to being socially



isolated from many groups in their colony. When people in the colony became part of these violent groups they lose sight of what they believe is right and wrong because they are no longer an individual they are part of something bigger.

A perfect Example of this is in Kate Grenville's Novel 'The Secret River'. William Thornhill finally gets his piece of land at Thornhill's Point but can't shake the guilt he feels for being part of the massacre. He can't enjoy what he has gained because he is now burdened with the extinction of the aboriginals would leave him so unsatisfied. When he was part of the group he had one motive though when it was all over he finally realised the true extent of his actions.

In many conflicts people cannot stand by because the injustice is too great to ignore. If we look at the southern states of the U.S. in the 60s we can see the racism that was present in its time. A fascist group called the Klu Klux Klan were prominent in society and the Jim Crow laws that demanded segregation of the black and white people. For years members of the group Deacons for Defense and Justice stood by as their people were brutally beaten and intimidated just for the colour of their skin. The Deacons for Defense and Justice were an African American group in the 60's who armed themselves to fight back against their oppressors for their Civil rights and liberties. They could no longer stand back and watch their families being beaten, raped and intimidated. They wanted equal rights and opportunities, they believed they could no longer stand back from the physical violence visited upon them.

Like the racial conflict in the Secret River with Blackwood, Thornhill and Smasher. Blackwood and Smasher had very differently contrasting views on the aboriginals, whereas Thornhill was caught in the middle. Thornhill would seem to want to understand the aboriginals but eventually fought in the massacre. Smasher was always the extremist who would always handle his dealings with the aboriginals in repulsive and vicious ways until it all came to a head at Thornhill's Point and the aboriginals fought back for their land.

Assessor comments

- Cumbersome expression; uneven and there are a number of spelling and punctuation issues.
- On task, but the prompt moves in and out of view.
- Tries to broaden and explore but lacks the ability to develop this.
- Uses the text to support ideas but without the depth of upper-range responses.
- Touches on the prompt and the notion of 'bystander' but does not really develop or explore the ideas.
- This is a mid-range script.

Context 3, Sample B

In a sea of white faces his middle eastern features stick out like a sore thumb. Amongst the suit clad caucasian men, he wore casual, loose fitting clothes. Sitting on the bus he waits for his stop to come. One by one the suit clad men leave for their large monstrous office buildings. But for this middle eastern man he arrives at a humble little store, along the shop grounds lay majestic and beautiful rugs of all sizes. Each one telling a more and more vivid tale of his past experiences, each rug a reflection of himself.

Like every other day he sits at his store alone, waiting for the next customer. However he is not truly alone as he looks over at his many rugs and peers into his past. Reminiscing about all those he loved deeply and the long journey he has taken. He scans his shop and admires each rug he has made, each with meticulous care.

As he touches the spine of the rug he can smell the afghan air and feel it brush past gently across his face. On another rug he can picture his kind brother Grog Ali guiding him into manhood when he was a child. Although happy memories, he had also had intertwined his rugs with sad memories for, passionate feelings that fuelled his soul with the motivation to create something beautiful.

This one rug was different however, its colours red, charcoal, and onyx. Reflecting the sorrow he felt in his heart of that night. When all he could do was hide, the fear struck him like a killing blow. He could not move, he could not persevere through the screams either. The screams of his people. He could not help, nor could he have changed anything that day. But this memory burdens him, with sadness and suffering. Yet he continues to live with it and accept it.

That memory from long ago, almost twenty years from now. Out of a nightmare one night it came to him. That he had to remember all those lost that night. He no longer held grudges or hatred but of sentiment for the mazaan people.

Like any other rug it is displayed with care and respect in his shop. An old caucasian lady enters his shop at around two o'clock in the afternoon.

'Excuse me, but that red, and black rug is absolutely beautiful. Can you sell it to me?' she asked politely, the rug had caught her eye as she walked down the street.



'No, my sincerest apologies. But that rug is not for sale. It is a very beautiful rug. In fact more than a rug is a story,' he replied, he enthusiastically smiled and showed her another rug.

Assessor comments

- There is an effective use of metaphor.
- The writing is fluent and demonstrates a broad vocabulary appropriate to the style.
- Explores impact of 'bystander' in a subtle, clever way.
- It is somewhat brief.
- This is an upper-range script.

Context 4 – Exploring issues of identity and belonging

'Having a sense of being different makes it difficult to belong.'

Context 4, Sample A

It is human nature to want to belong. Each of us feels safer, protected and at ease if we feel as though we can identify with others belong somewhere. In a world where there are over 6 billion people and every single one of them is different there is no concrete group to which we can belong. It is our own choice whether we find it difficult to belong. We can accept who we are, or we can try to change ourselves in an attempt to feel as though we belong.

In the movie 'Witness' John Book a policeman in Philadelphia finds it extremely difficult at first to find a sense of belonging in the Amish community of Lancaster. His view and experiences of the outside world are an indicator of the difficulties he experiences in an environment in which he doesn't ultimately belong. His values, beliefs and morals are in stark contrast to those which are upheld in the Amish community. Book does become increasingly accepted but he never can truly belong because of his inevitable return to mainstream society. Book's experience in the Amish community demonstrate that it is difficult to belong if you are put in an extreme environment that you are unfamiliar with. But it also demonstrates that there are endless connections within different groups that enable you to find familiar territory and a sense of belonging.

In society countless numbers of people change their views, appearance, desires and beliefs to try and gain a sense of belongs that they feel is eluding them. It is this human desire to belong that motivates the insecure to change who they are. They clearly find it too difficult to belong when they have a more defined sense of identity in comparisons to those who they wish to identify with.

A strong sense of identity can often lead to a sense of independence or exclusion, but this is not always the case. Rachel Lapp, member of the Amish community is in countless aspects different from those in mainstream society. Evidently, Rachel does not find it impossible to belong her or find someone she can relate to. Her self-confidence is ever present in her opinion of those around her. While obviously more confident in her own environment she does not find it difficult to belong in a contrasting scenery. Potentially it is the identity, the power and confidence in one's own individual identity, that directly corresponds with the amount of difficulty felt when assessing whether or not one feels as though they belong.

If an individual finds it difficult to belong because of their differences then it is likely that the difficulty experienced will be repeated. Throughout a lifetime you will never encounter someone who posses a similar personality, but not in all aspects. Thus, it will be difficult to ever experience a completely solid sense of belonging. If being similar and having a similar identity to those you associate with is crucial to your level of comfort then inconsistency is guaranteed. Forever it will be difficult to feel as though you totally belong.

Evidently in 'Witness' different values, morals and beliefs make it difficult to belong. Even in John Book's more comfortable mainstream society. Book's work partners make it increasingly difficult for him to associate with them because of their involvement in drug trafficking. His sense of different morals, values and beliefs makes it impossible for him to identify with them because of the severity of the level of disagreement. This demonstrates that while it is possible to associate with many different people, and gain a sense of belong, if such essential aspects of our identity are being questions, our beliefs, values and morals, then it is difficult to gain any sense of belong.

People find it difficult to identify with others in many situations, and while they may not be able to identify because of differences this is not necessarily the main reason. Even though an individual is different, it is their sense of identity that conclusively makes it challenging to belong. It is the differences in identity that are difficult to bridge which is far greater than any sense of difference. The contrast is that while feeling uncertain and insecure may make us feel isolated, a strong sense of identity leaves us feeling to a degree superior. This is crucial when exploring our level of difficulty when assessing our degree of belonging.

Each individual feels as though they are different to those around them in one way or another. But it is our strength and self-confidence in our own identity that is critically important when assessing whether or not it is our differences that make it difficult for us to belong.



Assessor comments

- The opening sets out an insight and creates a direction that is not just a simplistic agreement.
- The text is used extensively, but this is not just reporting of plot. The selected detail is used evidentially to support a conceptual discussion of the Context.
- The higher-range pieces are often able to make more apt, judicious, and economical text use.
- A comprehensive discussion, which is coherent and confident.
- Shows thoughtful reflection on the Context and text.
- The complexity of ideas, and associated vocabulary, of the very top range pieces is not seen here.
- This is a mid-range script.

Context 4, Sample B

'The next stop is...' the drone of the metro voice echos over the crowd of commuters. The synchronized movement of shuffling feet as the crowd begins to move making room for those who are departing and those that are getting on.

From within the crush I daydream about getting off at a quiet station, with a couple of well dressed business types, in a leafy green suburb with a more homogenous population. One in which everyone knows each other by name. I'm shaken from my daydream by a still beeping signalling its time to disembark. It's a diverse crowd that gets off at my stop, one of all different shapes, sizes and colours of skin. The African dude beside me, unfolding himself to his full height whilst adjusting his LA Lakers cap backwards towers over the Vietnamese grandmother who has just awoken from a nap. We disgorge ourselves from the train, joining the crowd streaming towards the exit. It's a large crowd, but it's a crowd of individuals, each with our own distination and purpose. I watch as the African man strides confidently as the crowd parts before him. The grandmother weaves her way quickly through the gaps in the crowd. The rest of the crowd disperses quickly eyes down, hurrying towards home.

The population of my suburb changes rapidly and frequently as the waves of immigrants and refugees come and make it their home. The newest wave are the Sudanese, their cafes and hairdressers offering strong coffee and braiding. Their shops ring the restaurants and two dollar shops off the shoulder, they stand at least a foot above their Vietnamese neighbours. Groups of African men spill out onto the sidewalks in front of the coffee houses, joking and calling out to one another across the street. They share a bond that between the young and the old, shared experience that creates a connection that I can only witness from the outside, never involved.

For many the story is similar, some have fled war torn countries, others have come in search of a better life. With each wave of people, they each search for familiarity someone or something that they know and understand. Each group brings with them a small piece of their culture, their food and their language. The Vietnamese have gifted us with ... a market which could easily have been transplanted directly from Vietnam. Saturday is market day, the roads come to a stand still and a car park becomes a miracle find, as Vietnamese from all over come to shop. The air is thick with voices, hagglers arguing a price, hawkers spruiking their wares and old friends conversing about their week. Hundreds join the stream of people that flow thru the stalls filled with exotic fruits, whole pigs and noodle restaurants. For the Vietnamese this weekly ritual, this congregation, provides an opportunity to remain connected with the sights and smells that are so familiar and remind them of their previous home in a far off country which have been removed from their everyday lifes. For me it provides an experience, abet to the pristine aisles and precise stalking of the supermarkets you and I are so familiar to.

The only remnant of the earliest wave of immigration is a furniture store, long past its former glory and a single cake store on the main street. Fifty years earlier the Italians were the strange and unusual ones, with their pruscuito, pizza, pesto and romantic language. The bell above the door signals your arrival, when I was younger the service was accompanied by a pinch of the cheek and few extra sugar covered almonds. The family who owns the store have been there for years, there strong accents muffled, over time, by the nasal twang of the aussie strine. They have been here long enough to have watched the changing faces, that each press their heads against the glass, gazing longingly at the perfectly crafted biscuits on display. The Italians are long past the point at which the Sudanese and Vietnamese are currently at, they are ingrained into the Australian dinner table. They are no longer the different or an outsider they are part of the Australian lifestyle and most definitely belong.

It wasn't until I brought a friend home with me and she clutched my arm and said she was scared, that I realised what happened when I said where I lived. '...' I would state, the enquiree would recoil and frown ever so slightly, at which I felt the need to add 'the nice part'.

It was at this point I realised the difficulty others in my community must have in feeling as though they belong. If when asked I feel the need to distinguish myself and put a line between them and me.

Assessor comments

- This piece begins with a first person narrative, imaginative/personal style (even suggestions of the train as symbol, i.e. in Slessor's *Night Ride*).

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- The student has created a narrative that mirrors both the style of many of the stories from the nominated text, *Growing up Asian in Australia*, as well as dealing with the text's prevailing theme in relation to the Context.
- Many mid-range pieces continue in this mode, setting a clear link to the migrant experience, 'the stranger in a strange land', allowing the reader to see suggested, the problems of 'being different', but this piece does not stop here – the narrative voice becomes reflective and sees the universality of this, and the timelessness of the struggle to begin in a place where you know you are 'different'.
- While there are a few expression issues, these do not detract from the overall piece of writing.
- The voice becomes even more assured as it continues and the selected detail ('... , the nice part') gives charm to the essay, yet it also contributes to the argument that it's 'difficult to belong'.
- This is an upper-range script.