

**2011 English as a Second Language (ESL) GA 3: Written examination**

**GENERAL COMMENTS**

The 2011 English as a Second Language (ESL) examination paper consisted of three sections: Section A required a response to one text, Section B required a response to a prompt related to a selected Context and Section C required completion of two different tasks in response to unseen material.

Assessment is holistic, using the published assessment criteria. Assessors relate student performance directly to these criteria. Their judgments are assisted by the use of a set of descriptors. Both the criteria and the descriptors are fully explored and directly related to the range of student responses in intensive assessor training before and during the marking process. Teachers and students should be aware of the assessment criteria, the descriptors and the sample examination paper, which are published on the VCAA website.

**SPECIFIC INFORMATION**

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

**Section A – Text Response**

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Average
%	0	1	2	7	12	21	25	19	9	3	1	5.7

Students were required to produce one piece of analytical or expository writing in response to one text. There were two topics for each of the 20 prescribed texts. The descriptors used for assessment relate to knowledge of the text, the structure and relevance of the response and writing skills (the control of the mechanics of written English). Knowledge of the text includes consideration of its concepts and construction. Reference to structural features was again more evident with films, with few students tackling this aspect of print texts. There were fewer than 10 responses to each of the poetry texts.

The most successful responses demonstrated an in-depth understanding of the topics and texts through an ability to craft meaningful, analytical and relevant discussion in direct response to the chosen question. Successful responses were able to skilfully weave knowledge of the text into the fabric of the analysis. Student writing generally reflected awareness of the construction and interpretation of texts, but the less sophisticated responses focused on the plot. Almost all responses displayed at least some knowledge of the text and an adequate knowledge of essay structure.

The most popular texts and their mean scores are shown in the table below.

Text	% of students	Average mark
<i>Maestro</i>	19.5%	5.5
<i>On the Waterfront</i>	18.7%	5.9
<i>Twelve Angry Men</i>	18.6%	5.9
<i>Interpreter of Maladies</i>	9.2%	5.8
<i>Cosi</i>	8.8%	5.7

Stronger responses were characterised by a sharp focus on the key words in the topics, selective and considered use of the text and ideas expressed with strong language skills. There were very few short or incomprehensible responses. In planning, students need to brainstorm all the key words, paying particular attention to modifying words and comparatives within the question. A well-planned response is less likely to slip into retelling the story or trying to adapt a previously written response to fit the question. Students also need to be able to explore how texts are constructed and the effects of the writer’s choices in developing a narrative.

Both questions on *Maestro* provided an opportunity for strong responses to demonstrate their depth of understanding. The first topic enabled students to present good knowledge of the text. Sections on Keller were well done, but arguments relating to Paul’s guilt were often less well done. The second topic was more popular, with some interesting and insightful interpretations of the ‘greater’ influence on Paul’s development. It was a question that invited students to



evaluate and contrast, providing an opportunity to analyse in a relevant way while showing detailed textual knowledge. Most students argued that Keller was more influential, and weaker responses ignored Paul's parents' influence.

The *Cosi* questions produced a range of responses. The first topic was popular, but many students seemed unsure of the meaning of 'manipulator'. Such responses tended to be a summary of the roles of Roy and Lewis. There were fewer but better responses to the second topic. Many showed understanding of the role of the opera to present themes such as fidelity and love, and produced well-considered responses that linked the content of the opera to the events of the play.

There were detailed and relevant responses to both questions on *Twelve Angry Men*. Both questions contained terms that could be examined, balanced or contrasted. The simple 'why' directive of the second question produced confident and thoughtful responses. Responses to both questions demonstrated good understanding of the play. Most responses to the second topic clearly identified reasons why it was difficult for the jury to reach its final verdict. Some responses were thematic and others addressed the topic character-by-character. Some appeared confused between the two questions.

Most responses to *A Christmas Carol* showed good general knowledge of the story but not the depth of understanding that both topics invited. Many responses to the first topic simply retold the story. Some appeared challenged by the meaning of 'Christmas spirit', as opposed to Christmas spirits in the form of apparitions, and wrote about the three spirits. Very few mentioned the prevailing views on what happened after death, in which lies the power of the story in its original context. In the second topic most responses addressed the educational thrust of the novel but without reference to 'entertaining' or 'enthraling'. This question invited discussion of the author's point of view and values, although few students mentioned Dickens' views on the poor.

*On the Waterfront* was a popular text, with successful responses showing a detailed knowledge and understanding of both the text and the topics. Students seemed familiar with the idea of Terry's change from a 'failed boxer to hero' and could readily identify the influences on this change. This topic was often answered with a straightforward structure – one paragraph on each person who influenced Terry in his transition. The more successful responses considered how the film technique supported that transition. The second topic challenged students to demonstrate an understanding of 'collective action'; many responses did not succeed in this. The most successful were able to incorporate appropriate film techniques to support their understanding of the topic.

Both questions on *Interpreter of Maladies* drew responses that went from one character or story to another. Nevertheless, the responses demonstrated understanding of the key words in the topics. The more successful responses were structured thematically rather than story-by-story.

Responses to *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* showed a good understanding of the story but often lacked an understanding of the themes and key concepts. The 'reluctant' was often dealt with vaguely as information about the story was retold. The most successful responses were able to deal with the meaning and concepts behind 'fundamentalist'. The first topic was the most popular, with some students arguing that he was not 'reluctant'.

The first *Year of Wonders* topic had a clear focus on the notion of choice, which helped students to analyse effectively and maintain relevance. Not all students realised that the quote was from towards the end of the text, and some wrote only about Anna rather than other characters in the village. The second topic invited consideration of the construction of the text, and only the stronger responses incorporated an effective discussion of authorial choices.

During their preparation, students need to consider how construction, language and other authors'/directors' choices add meaning to the text, rather than merely looking at what happened, the themes and the characters. The importance of integrating text construction and authorial choices into responses needs to be emphasised, as well as discussing characters or themes. Language is the key. Students need to write analytically, not descriptively, and need to develop writing skills that will enable them to incorporate knowledge of the text into their analysis or exposition. Students should be encouraged to explore questions fully by unpacking topics in ways that allow their own ideas to emerge. With collections of stories, students should be encouraged to look for the links and connections between the stories.



### Student Response – Example 1

This response is controlled, relevant and well structured. It demonstrates a clear point of view through a considered exploration of the film and seamless integration of text references. Confident use of language is sustained. There are some lapses in expression, which are not unusual in ESL student writing.

#### ***What changes Terry Malloy from failed boxer to hero?***

*The film, 'On the Waterfront' directed by Elia Kazan is a story of Terry Malloy who was a former prize-fighter but his life was ruined after Johnny Friendly 'bought a piece' of him. However, the film tells the transformation of Terry from a failed boxer to a hero who is admired and respected by his actions through his own awakened conscience. Also, Edie's innocence and faith in him, alongside Father Barry's sermon on the dock start to give a sense of justice. And Terry's beloved brother, Charley's death was the final catalyst to lead Terry to be a hero who is the first person to stand up against the corruption.*

*Terry begins his life as a 'bum', following orders given to him from Johnny Friendly, but starts to realise his own conscience after his unintentional involvement in a murder. When Terry lures Joey to the top of the roof, the sharp iron bars in front of Terry's face clearly shows that Terry is trapped in Johnny Friendly's control and powerless. This also shows when Terry asks I thought they would just 'lean on him a little bit', which clearly demonstrated that he has been the decoy to murder Joey. After Joey's death, Terry's feeling of uneasy and depression about his unintentional involvement in murder was shown when he refuses Charley's request of a drink and when he puts his right hand inside his left side of his jacket, where Joey's pigeon used to be. Furthermore, in Johnny Friendly's bar, when Terry says to Big Mac, 'You're not too funny today, fat man', clearly demonstrates his feeling of anger and depression about the fact he has not been told, which also shows his sense of conscience inside him, which other people would not care or feel anything about the silence of the murder. Furthermore, though the panning shot in Johnny Friendly's bar focusing only on Johnny shows his power of dominance, Terry had bravery and a sense of justice to say 'No, Johnny, I thought I should have been told,' but only interfered by Charley who was trying to protect Terry to get in trouble. Terry's feeling of uneasy and depression about the fact he has been alienated by Johnny gives him a sense of conscience which simmers throughout the film and helps him to be a hero later in the film.*

*Also, the influence from Edie and Father Barry definitely encourages Terry to transform into a man with justice. Life has taught Terry to 'do it to him before he does it to you'. But after he met Edie, his philosophy of life is challenged by 'shouldn't everybody care about everybody else?' And in the bar scene, when Edie asks Terry, 'help me if you can for God's sake', the close-up shot on Terry's face clearly demonstrates Terry is deeply touched by her faith in him and cares for him which makes Terry to feel more guilty, responsible and frustrated about his involvement in Joey's death. This definitely makes Terry to have desire to confess everything to Edie, because he cannot bear the feeling of guilt anymore and Edie is 'first nice thing happened' to Terry. However, Father Barry's sermon in the hold definitely provokes Terry's conscience. Father Barry gave a speech intended to rouse the longshoremen to take actions against the corruption, by shaming '...who let's it happen – keep silent...shares guilt of it' clearly touches Terry and this was shown when Terry halt Tillio from throwing rubbish at Father Barry despite the fact that Johnny Friendly was watching him shown with a high angle shot from Johnny Friendly which explains that Johnny Friendly dominates the dock but Terry was fearless. And therefore, after the sermon, Terry went to Father Barry to discuss about his sin: Father Barry persuades Terry to tell the truth to Edie by saying 'How much is your soul worth if you don't?', which eventually made Barry to confess to Edie in this scene, the whistle of a ship overwhelms the Terry's word, which is barely heard and this sound effect puts more tension and more weigh into the depth of feelings and maelstrom of emotions. Hence, it was Edie's and Father Barry's influence to gain a sense of justice but not yet he takes solid actions to label him as a hero.*

*Moreover, the Charley's death is the final catalyst to make Terry to take solid actions which eventually lead him to be a hero. When Terry was called out by a voice saying, 'Terry, your brother's down here,' as Ms Collins explained that it is the same voice as they called Andy the night she lost him, clearly demonstrates that Terry is definitely the other side of Johnny Friendly. And when Terry saw Charley's corpse hanging by the hook which also visualise Jesus on the cross, Terry's rage and revenge floods out and says 'I'm going to take it out of their skulls.' And Terry went up to Johnny Friendly's bar, but it was his feeling of anger which lead him there. But after Father Barry's 'tough love' towards Terry it again awakes Terry's conscience. Finally Terry went up to Johnny with bravery and justice and said, 'You're a cheap, lousy, dirty, stinking mug.' This clearly exemplifies that Terry was fearless with his own morals. And after Terry being beaten up, Terry stands and walks unconsciously to finish what he has started. Though the sway angle of Terry's point of view explains that he is unconscious, the reverse shot on Terry face and the longshoremen's faces show that Terry gained their respect because Terry was the first person to stand up against the union. And Terry's heroic act was shown when he walks to the pier unconsciously to give a new chance and a new beginning of life for the longshoremen. Therefore, though it was Charley's death which lead Terry to give the reason to act heroically but there indeed was his own moral responsibility.*

*Terry's unintentional involvement was the start point when Terry gradually changes from a 'bum' to a person of justice with his own conscience. But there was Edie's innocent point of view. Father Barry's sermon and*



*encouragement which provoked Terry's morals and the death of his brother Charley which made him to take solid actions to go against the corrupt union. However, eventually it is Terry's own conscience and moral responsibility which made him to become a real hero by gaining the respect from the longshoremen and by giving them a new start of life.*

**Student response – Example 2**

This mid-range response to *Maestro* is organised, structured and attempts to stay relevant to the question. It expresses a view on the topic and demonstrates an adequate knowledge of the text. Ideas are supported by the text, even though clarity is sometimes affected by the limited expression skills. In an attempt to explore ideas thoroughly, the response slips into storytelling at some points.

**Who has the greater influence on Paul's development: his parents or Keller?**

*In the book Maestro Eduard Keller plays the main character along young Paul. Many readers after finishing reading this book would ask themselves who has the greater influence on young Paul. Minority would say Eduard Keller. I would completely agree with them. In the times when Paul needed someone to cry on, Keller was there; in the time of happiness Keller was right there next to him celebrating the success. Paul's parent were great but the fact that Keller is the one who teaches Paul life lessons, makes reader to believe that Keller had a great influence on Paul's development.*

*From the day one when Pauls parents called Keller it was evident that he will play major role in young Pauls development. When the two first meet, Paul through of Keller as a wiered guy who is collecting news articles, and at the same time plays piano extrimly well. Keller never told Paul how good he was. He would always find something to tell Paul that he is not perfect. Reason why Keller did this is because he didn't want Paul to think he is the best. Keller didn't want Paul to have a big head because that was his biggest mistake. Mistake that killed his family. To many readers this would apeale as a great influence. This is a very important life lesson.*

*Whenever Paul would go to Keller's apartment for his piano lesson, at the end of a session he would leave it with another new life lesson learnt. Keller taught Paul of what perfection is. When Keller asked Paul to learn a piece of music for homework Paul didn't do it. He said its half done. Kellers simple replai was is 50°C water half boiling and moved on. What he tried to say was that thinks in life can't be left half done. Another life lesson that his parent should teach him but they didnt.*

*When Paul went and traveled Europe he had Kellers words in his head saying not to trust beautiful. Viena its a great place and its very beautiful, but in this city is where the most WWII was organised. By trusting the beautiful Eduard Keller lost his wife and son. He didnt want the same to happen to Paul. At the first Paul didnt understand but later on in life he realised that in life everything has its dark sides and that if something is beautiful doesnt mean you can trust it.*

*Keller learnt Paul what piano teoritical perfection is but he didnt teach him what musical perfection is. This is not meant to be just playing piano, but playing piano with the emotions. Paul didnt know this until he met one of Kellers old friends from WWII. He didnt believe Paul so he made him play piano, he said yes technique is much like Kellers but you have no emotion while you play and that what Keller had a lot of while at the piano. Just then is when Paul realised what musical perfection is.*

*Paul wasnt in Darwin when he heard the news that Keller is in hospital seriously ill. He took first flight there. This is where all emotion came out. Paul admited that Keller was like a father to him. To Paul it took sometime to get on with this lose.*

*By teaching him what perfection is, and while teaching him an important life lessons, Eduard Keller was very much like a father to Paul. All this showes reader that Keller truly was Pauls greatest influence while developing into adult.*

**Section B – Writing in Context**

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Average
%	2	1	3	8	16	22	24	15	6	2	0	5.3

Students were required to complete an extended written response that was an expository, persuasive or imaginative piece of writing. They were required to base the writing on the ideas in the prompt and draw directly from the selected text studied in the Context. The more successful responses were characterised by original ideas in response to the prompt and an ability to link these ideas to a broad range of texts. In some responses the ideas were explored through thought-provoking and insightful personal stories, often beginning with an interesting anecdote. Some responses attempted to include a 'point of difference'. There was a broad range of writing, including reflective and personal pieces as well as creative pieces. The most obvious weakness was a tendency to write another text response, using the prompt as a text response question with little or no reference to ideas outside the selected text. These responses began with a short introduction then gave a long analysis of the text and a brief reference to the prompt. Some wrote directly to the



text without first presenting ideas that the text illuminated. Weaker responses began with a standard definition of the Context without grappling with the prompt or indicating how the task would be approached.

The majority of the responses were to Context 4, Exploring issues of identity and belonging. *Growing up Asian in Australia* was the most popular text, used in 59 per cent of responses to this Context, while *Witness* was used in 36 per cent of responses. The prompt addressed the central concerns of the Context and gave scope for a wide variety of responses. The strongest responses used an expository style with considered insights into the main ideas of 'connection to others' and 'no me'. There were some creative responses using an interview format, but often only a small amount of the response was actually about the prompt. In many responses, students wrote about themselves as overseas students and their friends from similar backgrounds. Weaker responses were lengthy first-person narratives that focused on feelings of loneliness on losing connection with people from home and that didn't really understand or explore the concept of 'me'. Some responses equated 'connection' with social network connections – Twitter, Facebook and even the telephone – and how people can be influenced by them. The negative construction of the prompt did not appear to be a problem, but some students wrote very generally about ideas within the Context rather than on the aspects generated by the prompt.

Context 3, Encountering conflict, was chosen by 26 per cent of students. In this Context, *The Crucible* was the most popular text, used in 54 per cent of responses, while *The Rugmaker of Mazar-e-Sharif* was used in 32 per cent of responses. Some students appeared to find the concept of 'compromise' challenging and some translated it as meaning giving in or giving up everything. This resulted in the use of inappropriate examples from some texts. Some responses showed minimal understanding of 'compromise', with the words of the prompt thrown in at the end of a paragraph without a connection to what had been written. Some distinguished between voluntary compromise and forced compromise. Others showed a strong understanding of how compromise connected with conflict by exploring ideas such as sacrifice, understanding others, seeking a solution, showing someone the way or seeking to overcome difficulties. Some responses challenged the prompt and pointed to circumstances when compromise was not the best response; for example, when facing a high moral challenge.

Context 2, Whose reality?, was chosen by only 4 per cent of students. *A Streetcar Named Desire* was the most popular text, used in over 80 per cent of responses. The concept of 'shared experience' was explored in many ways. Some students simply wrote about sharing experiences with others and some about the idea that experience is 'shared' after we tell someone else about it. Some wrote about experience shared simultaneously; for example, siblings growing up together (Blanche and Stella). Some wrote about attitudes towards an experience they have in common with someone else; for example, being an international student. Some ignored the idea of shared experience and just wrote about why people see things differently, such as age, education or culture.

Context 1, The imaginative landscape, was chosen by 4 per cent of students. *One Night the Moon* was the most popular text, used in 39 per cent of these responses. *Island* and *The Poetry of Robert Frost* were almost equally popular in responses to this Context.

It is recommended that the Section B response be taught as a writing task and not as a text task. Working with the ideas of the prompt and/or stimulus material should be the focus of this piece of writing. The Context is about exploring ideas, and students need lots of classroom practice at teasing out ideas before they tackle the selected text. It will be a source of ideas to explore later in their study. In the best pieces of writing it will not dominate. Models of student writing should be used to explore how connections between texts, the prompt and/or stimulus material and students' own experiences are made. This task rewards students who read widely, consider ideas carefully and synthesise them. Students need an 'idea bank' and an 'example bank' from which to draw on for this writing. Not every item in the 'bank' can be used with a particular prompt or stimulus. Students should be encouraged to keep their own files of material during the year, including keeping reflections in a journal. Teachers should provide students with a number of activities that encourage them to write a variety of pieces in different forms and styles. Choosing to write three short, different pieces for the SAC task is one way of doing this. Teachers could also model different ways in which the ideas of the chosen text could be incorporated into a piece of writing.

### Student Response – Example 1

This strong response to Context 4 demonstrates how this task draws on very different writing skills from those required for Section A. It uses the writer's own reflections about his life at a given point in time to explore the prompt beyond the text in a sustained and thoughtful response. It also demonstrates how considered exploration and synthesis of ideas are important to this task.



*I turn eighteen years old in about a month. I will be celebrating my birthday thousands of kilometres away from where I was born. Strangely enough, I will be reaching adulthood in a place that feels like home to me. Becoming an adult brings about a whole host of responsibilities, expectations and opportunities. I can drive, drink, gamble, live on my own and do wonderful adult things that no innocent child would ever dream of... But because of my connection to Malaysia, these opportunities will present themselves differently to me compared to any other Australian. Because of this connection, what I can do and who I am will be different. I am still 'me'. Just a different 'me'. Your identity is dependent on your connections, your relationships and your sense of belonging, regardless of where you are in the world.*

*It is said in Growing up Asian in Australia that 'To know a culture, you have to live in it'. I have lived in Melbourne, Australia for three years now and although I don't know everything there is to know about it, Melbourne is certainly familiar to me, a place that I can safely call home. I have a connection here, whether it is the people I've met, the experiences I've had or the time I've spent, there is no definitive way to describe it. But Melbourne has become a part of my identity, it is added to the every growing entity that is 'me'. But what is 'me'? Is it simply an accumulation of self, a collection of descriptive terms, an identity? Is it subjective? Can I change 'me' into something else? Something I want to be? The simple answer (well, not really) is both yes and no.*

*My identity is shaped by connections, like a network. Connections to people, connections to places, connections to events, things and concepts and beliefs. Each of these connections imprints like a sculptor's touch to shape the blank mould that is 'me'. We are born with connections, my connection to Malaysia, my parents, my Chinese heritage and expectations, there is no escaping it. I cannot change 'me' in this sense. Sometimes, like my love for 'Laksa', my hatred of vegemite and my fondness of Australian weather and my childhood memory of growing up in a rainforest, it is not something that needs to be changed or should be changed. My connections describe me but do not define me. Unlike Joo-inn chew who said 'We were half-half for a long time, we didn't belong anywhere' my half-half connection described me in two ways, 'Malaysia' and 'Australian'. Though it is true that 'being born in Australia and being Australian is not the same' (Ken Chau), the connections that we feel to this land is very similar if not wholly same. When I look at 'me' I see a pandemonium of different connections all existing in chaos and confusion but at the same time, achieving a subtle state of harmony manifesting themselves as who I am.*

*On the contrary, without these connections, 'me' still exists. It can be explained in the words of William Shakespeare, 'All the world is a stage, all its men and women merely players. They have their exits and entrances. Each man in his time plays many parts.' The absence of these 'parts' does not make a man any less a player on stage. Quite simply, his definition as an actor is his ability to play parts and so is our concept of identity and our ability to form connections. 'Me' is an innate quality that gives us a blank slate of our life and tells us to write our own story. Though my story started as a baby born in Malaysia, the setting has changed and I continue the rest of my odyssey here in Melbourne forming new connections every day. My story as 'me' is just a point in time. Everything behind it is the connections I have made and everything in front is the connections that are still to come.*

*As I turn eighteen and open a new chapter of my life, I will be making some life changing decisions that will affect who I am and what I become. 'Me' will be an ever changing concept, limited only to my imagination and my connections to others. God described himself in the Bible, 'I am who I am' and that is exactly how I view myself. I guess great minds think alike. So, with my concept of 'me' safely tucked away into the confines of my heart and mind, I will be climbing the steps to adulthood, facing adversity, challenges and opportunities that will forever define me as a man. Wish me luck.*

## Student Response – Example 2

This upper mid-range response uses the form of a speech to draw an audience into consideration of the place of 'compromise' in resolving conflict. It uses an everyday experience to connect with the audience before drawing on the text and other ideas. Expression problems do not detract from the engaging liveliness of the piece. Awareness of the listener is maintained, even though the ideas fade away at the conclusion.

*Ladies and Gentlemen, today I am here to talk to you about the importance of the ability to compromise when responding to conflict. I am sure many of you here listening to me here has had to give things up to settle an argument with someone, that is 'compromise'. When you are trying to take a step back and sacrifice something to try and stop an argument, this is also the same. To most conflicts, by compromising both parties may be getting one step closer to what they may have wanted to. When trying to stop or lessen the conflict, the ability to compromise is very important.*

*Does anyone in the audience have children? Or had any experience dealing with children? When children do not get their way it is highly probable that they may start crying or get really stubborn in the public. Now how do you get out of this situation? You can give in to let them do what they want or get what they want, to compromise on your side, or maybe find a way to get them to compromise, by offering them something else. This is a more common example of ways which we compromise to try and resolve conflicts in our daily lives. But what if the conflict is a lot more different compared to dealing with children? What will happen if we do or do not try to compromise or negotiate in an attempt to lessen a conflict?*



*Ladies and Gentlemen, conflicts are all different and unpredictable, especially as those who are involved in the conflicts are different. However all conflicts can go one of three ways, either to escalate, not change, or to lessen. If no attempt to compromise is made than it is almost certain that the conflict will escalate. In Salem Reverend Parris did not try to resolve the conflict of his niece dancing in the woods but escalated it by turning it into a witch hunt as described in The Crucible. When two parties in a conflict face each other without backing down the only way to resolve this conflict is for one party to overcome the other by force. The witch hunt in Salem was one of these forces. When conflicts are not responded to in the right manner it may escalate to a breaking point where one or more parties are over powered.*

*Compromise through negotiation is one of the more useful ways which I had found that can stop conflicts. However both parties must agree on what the compromise is for the conflict to be stopped or lessened. How would all of you feel if you were forced to compromise? Well, history has shown us when people are forced to compromise they usually are not to happy about it. At the end of World War I Germany surrendered and was forced to sign the treaty of Versailles. Couple of decades later, World War II starts, again with Germany at the centre of it. It is obvious that whoever is forced to compromise will not like it and would likely want revenge. Also, both sides must agree for the compromise for the conflict to be stopped completely. Before his death sentence Proctor was willing to compromise his name by saying he was guilty of witchcraft but was unable to sign off his name, this however was not what the judge agreed on, and Proctor was still hanged. For a compromise to be able to stop a conflict both sides must accept it voluntarily for it to work.*

*Ladies and Gentlemen, after all that talk about solving conflicts, I would just like to state for the very last time that the best ways to respond to conflict is to compromise, and both parties to agree on it voluntarily.*

*Thank You for listening.*

## Section C – Analysis of language use

The task material about how perceptions of tattoos have changed was presented as a blog. The topic was engaging and relevant. The form, word length and language were all appropriate for the task, but some students struggled to grasp the writer’s point of view.

### Part 1

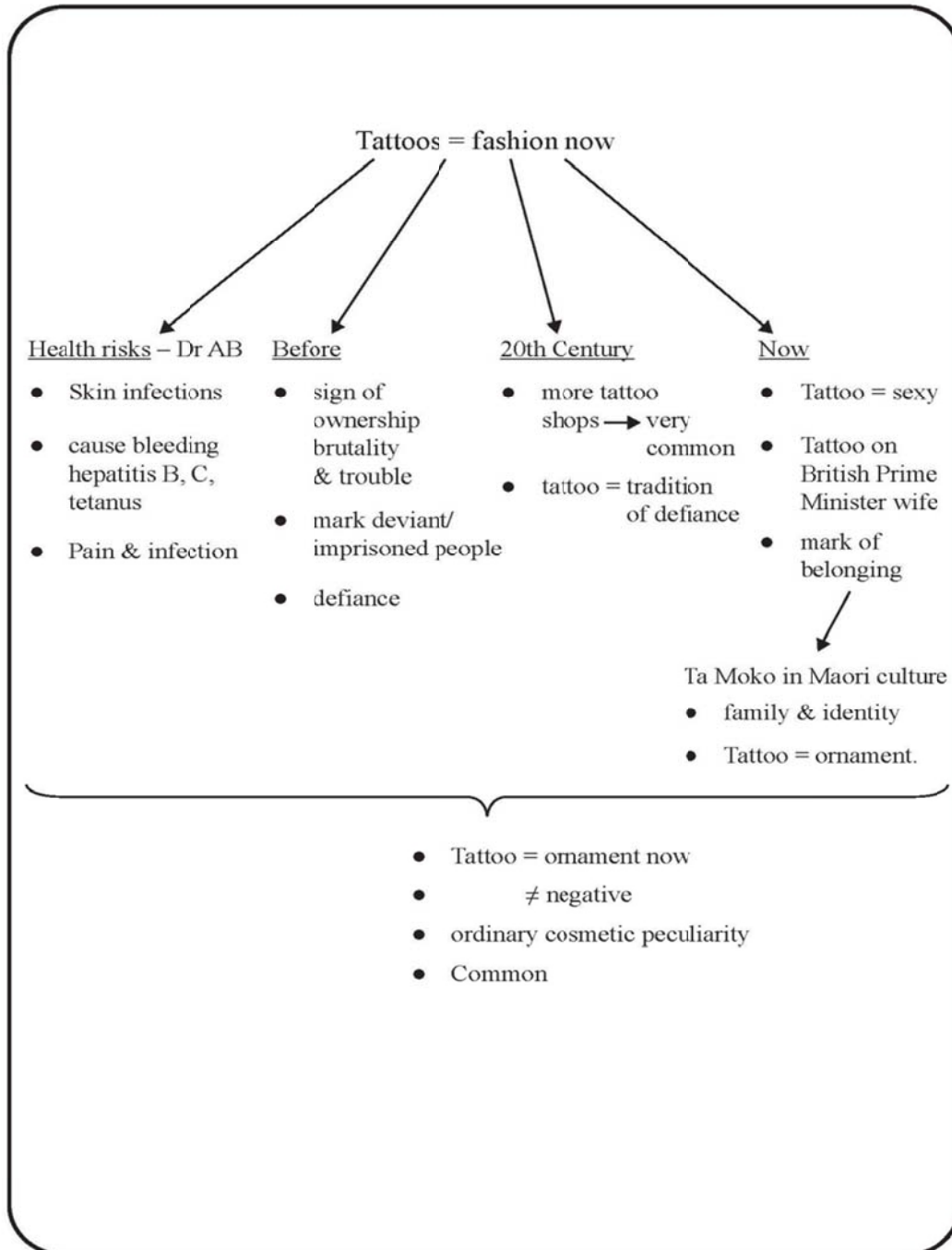
Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Average
%	4	3	7	11	14	17	18	14	8	3	1	5

The note-taking responses demonstrated some general understanding of the material, even if many missed the overall message that perceptions about tattoos have changed. The challenge in this task was to design a structure (for the summary) through which processing of the material could be demonstrated. For/against was not an appropriate strategy for this material but some students attempted a response in this form. Some also attempted a response in the form of advantages and disadvantages. Some of the main ideas could be satisfactorily presented in these forms, but many of these responses reflected a misunderstanding of the overall message of the piece.



**Student Response – Example 1**

This response demonstrates an understanding of the material and an ability to select the key ideas and show how these ideas are linked to the main message of the speech. The structure used conveyed this in a meaningful way.

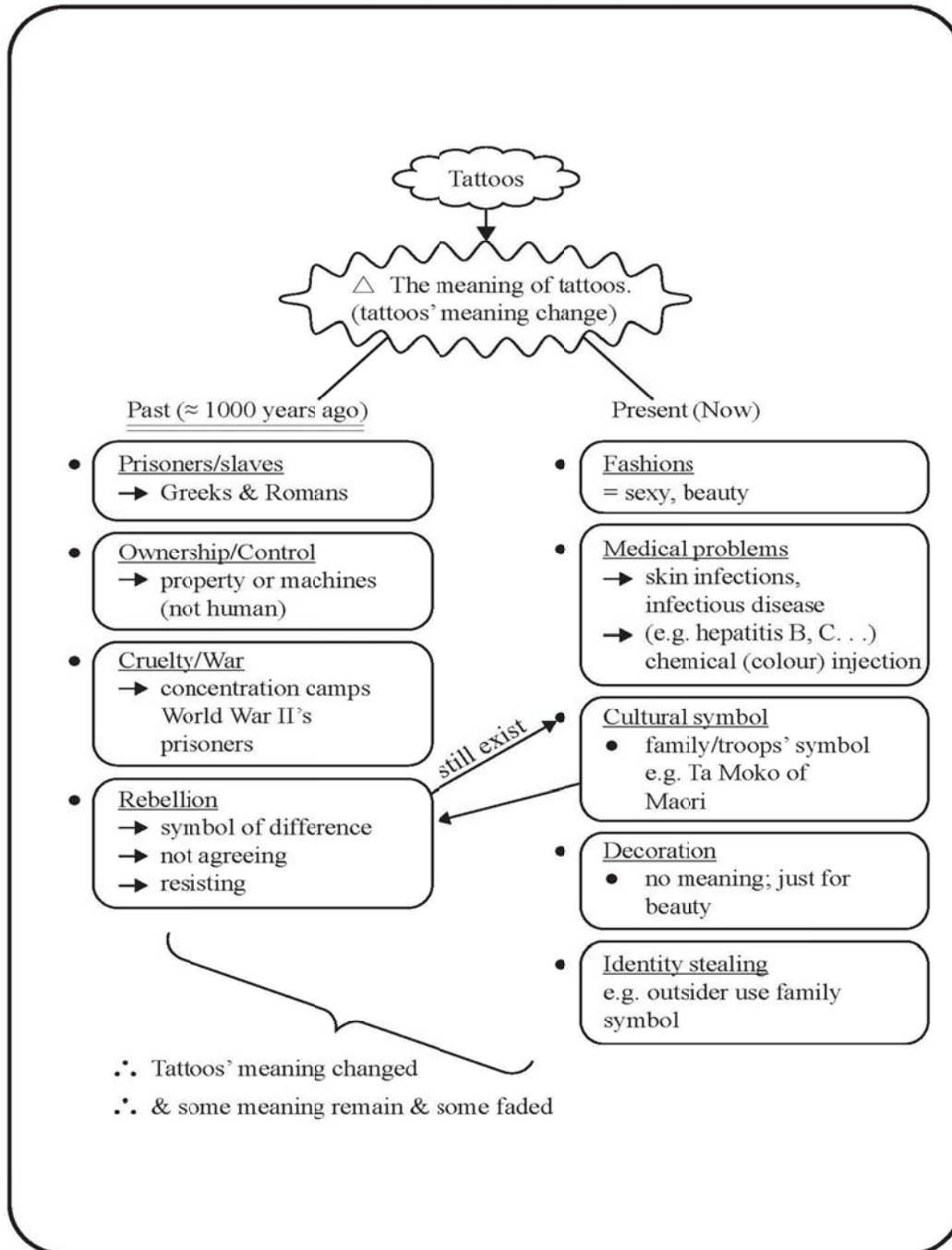






Student Response –Example 2

This response demonstrates similar skills to Example 1, but uses a different method of presentation.





**Part 2**

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Average
%	5	7	10	14	19	18	14	9	4	1	0	4.2

In Part 2, misunderstanding of the material detracted from the quality of the responses. Many students failed to grasp the subtle nature of the writer's technique in presenting a point of view. Confusion about the writer's point of view made it difficult to organise writing around three points. Many responses just worked through the piece. Some responses were structured around the techniques rather than the ideas. Many responses demonstrated a good knowledge of persuasive techniques but not an ability to apply this knowledge effectively to the task material. Weaker responses were descriptive rather than analytical.

Many responses treated the visuals separately. Many tried to interpret the visuals as supporting an idea that tattoos were a bad thing. Some responses did not link the Maori tattooing to the point of argument it supported, namely the cultural significance of some tattoos.

Examining and analysing model answers could assist students in understanding the requirements of the tasks in Section C. They should practise note-form responses with shorter one-sided pieces. Students need skills in presenting their notes in a variety of ways. It should not be assumed that a neat division of points into advantage/disadvantage or yes/no will always be possible. These skills are developed through practice and could be connected to other areas of study, for example, using material related to the Context study, and practised from early in the year. Short letters from the media that present only one point of argument using several persuasive strategies are a useful starting point for Part 2. Generic explanations of language devices are insufficient; knowledge of a writer's possible tactics must be applied directly to the unseen passage. Set language stems will only help if there is understanding of the material in the task. Students do not need to be able to label persuasive language, they need to write about how it persuades and to look for subtleties in language choices. Students should focus on specific words and phrases and fully explore their connotations.

High-range responses were well written and demonstrated a strong understanding of the ways in which language and visual features were used through effective analysis of the material. Some of the things noted by high-range responses were:

- the author's use of historical references to illustrate the change in attitudes
- examples of how popular tattoos have become
- the inclusion of cultural and medical material
- reflection on the author's personal experience.

Mid-range responses showed awareness of the task, but some moved between explaining the material and an attempt at analysing it. Limitations in these responses included:

- difficulty in applying knowledge of the task to the material
- misunderstanding of some of the historical material
- lack of reference to the visuals or difficulty understanding them.

The VCAA is unable to publish student responses to Part 2 of the 2011 English (ESL) examination. Teachers and students may refer to previous years' Assessment Reports for illustrations of student responses.