



Curriculum Council
Government of Western Australia



Sample WACE English Paper – 2008

Marking Guidelines

Note from Chief Marker marking panel members:

Please remember to feel free to make suggestions about the content of these guidelines in light of your small group discussion. They are only a draft. Thank you.

Sample WACE English 2008– Marking Guide – Reading
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General Principles**Points to keep in mind with both questions**

- WACE tertiary entrance marking is a ranking process. This has two consequences. First, markers must use the **full range** of marks. Markers should not wait forever to award a 13, 14 or 15. Second, markers must avoid using cut-offs based on limited criteria. Rather, answers are to be marked and discriminated according to **the extent** to which they meet the criteria. The notion of pass/fail **does not** apply to this process. Just one of the negative effects of such a notion would be an average much lower than with our target of 17.5 marks for the section. Markers are constantly to ask themselves “To what extent?” and, when they find a good response, ask themselves “Am I realistically going to see anything better than this?”
- Markers are to use tally sheets to keep a visual check on their mark range and any clumping that might occur, but do not average each bundle. Bundles may have different averages.
- Markers are to look for what to REWARD. Avoid the “penalty mentality” with undue emphasis on just spelling, as examination scripts are essentially first drafts completed under time pressure.
- Answers should be marked on the quality of their content. The focus in this section should be on the **reading** outcome.
- Remember that this is a tertiary entrance examination, so markers are not simply making judgements about “functional literacy” but also about “critical literacy”.
- We are looking to award higher marks to candidates who can develop an argument, sustain a point of view, use evidence from passages or texts to give weight to a point, etc.

Content

- A key criterion in assessing content is **engagement with the question** rather than the reproduction of memorised information about techniques. The questions examine **reading**. Answers should be assessed according to the extent to which the passages are used to support arguments **in relation to the question**.
- Markers should award higher marks to candidates who can comprehend and interpret specialised conventions and describe how texts manipulate the conventions of genres, whilst showing sensitivity to linguistic and cultural nuances. Candidates achieving higher marks may be able to discern subtle or complex generic patterns. Candidates who can relate texts to social, political or cultural contexts as well as other texts should be awarded higher marks. Similarly, candidates who can read critically and identify gaps, silences and contradictions within texts should also achieve higher marks. It may be possible that the very best candidates will be able to refer to more than one critical framework in their discussion.
- Answers may make use of personal experiences, values and responses to support or explain arguments. These may help to strengthen answers; however, as reading comprehension is being assessed, the main focus should be on the passages.

Structure and expression

Candidates must be aware that the **reading** section of the paper is about making their reading practices transparent. At the same time, it should also be obvious that evidence of achievement in this section can be gleaned only from what they have written. The more understanding they display in explaining their ideas, the clearer their expression, the more fluent and organised their response, the more likely it is that the examiner will be able to find evidence of their understanding of reading practices. Key elements include:

- the presentation of a central argument and clear organisation of ideas
- fluency

- mastery of vocabulary that is appropriate to demonstrate reading skills
- mastery of the conventions of English, but minor spelling, punctuation and grammatical errors should not be unduly penalized, as examination scripts are essentially a first draft written under time pressure, and
- voice - in regard to voice, there is no requirement on candidates to write in a highly formal or impersonal manner or to avoid the first and second person. Colloquial and/or personal responses are acceptable if effectively presented.

Special Note: Use of texts for primary reference

If a question requires reference to other texts, candidates must make primary reference to a print text. Very short references to non-print texts may be made if they assist to clarify a point; however, the use of references to texts viewed may result in difficulty in making links to specialised conventions and structures associated with print texts.

In the unlikely case of a candidate using a text type other than a text type listed for stages 2 and 3 as a primary reference, mark the script on its merits and then 'flag' the script for discussion with the Chief Marker to determine if a penalty should be applied.

Specific points on each question**Question 1**

**Explain the ideas that are suggested by either Passage One or Passage Two
(15 marks)**

- In their response some students may make reference to the contextual blurb preceding the text.
- **Explain** implies more than just identify. It directs students to provide details about the ideas and some of the stronger responses may enter into a discussion in which they begin to account for the ideas suggested in either passage. ***A key discriminator will be the extent to which students explain the range of ideas.***
- In addressing this task, some students have entered into a discussion about how the ideas are presented; this is quite acceptable and in some cases supports the explanation of ideas effectively; however, it is not essential.

Passage 1

Students may contextualise the ideas as coming from a piece of fiction.

Students may explain some of the following ideas: (this list is not exhaustive and we must be cautious not to expect particular readings and reward them more highly than others)

- Alienation
- Age and experience
- Environmental concerns
- Loneliness
- The 'valley/hill' dichotomy
- Feelings of individual futility and disempowerment
- Gradual change
- Conflict between environment and materialism
- Some of the stronger responses may focus on the Australian masculine tone as an idea to be explained
- Political disempowerment
- Sea-change thinking

Passage 2

Students may contextualise the ideas as coming from a piece of non-fiction.

Students may explain some of the following ideas relating to Amy and/or the narrator: (again, this list is not exhaustive)

- Writer's use of Amy to explore experience of elderly women in nursing homes
- Aging

- Rebellion – i.e. the way in which Amy resists institutionalisation
- How institutions attempt to dehumanise patients in order to control them
- Senile dementia
- How society deals with those who suffer from senile dementia – e.g. removal from society, medication
- Some better responses may explain how the idea of humanity is explored
- Students may approach this from a very different perspective in writing from their own context. e.g. different cultures may treat their elderly citizens differently.

Question 2

Discuss how your wider reading (e.g. other print texts, reading practices) has influenced your response to either Passage One or Passage Two. You may refer to the other passage and / or other print texts you have read.

(15 marks)

- **Discuss** implies stating ideas clearly, providing examples from texts and/or practices that illustrate these ideas, and explaining them in detail. An argument does not need to be offered.
- **Response** can mean an emotional response or their understanding of one of the ideas or their reaction to it. Response can be a rejection of the representation of the ideas offered in the text.
- **Wider reading – e.g. other texts**
Students may focus on the various strategies we use in reading texts and making links with other texts – to come to some understanding of what they suggest about specific ideas / issues etc. For example:
 - examining the construction of characters
 - the point of view
 - the language choices
 - the structure of the plot and its resolution/s,
 - themes / issues / ideas
 - subject matter
 - style
 - narrative positioning

Some of the better responses may discuss how reading of other texts influenced their response, while weaker responses may just cite a connection.

Better responses may focus on one or two connections and discuss these in depth, while others may list a range of superficial ‘similarities’ without exploring the ‘influence’.

Avoid making judgements about the worthiness of the ‘other texts’. A connection to a Simpsons episode may be used as effectively as a connection to *A Handmaid’s Tale*.

- **Wider reading – e.g. reading practices**

Students may make links through e.g:

- Understanding of genre
- Discussion of context
- “Reading for gender” or “reading for class” etc
- the construction of the text
- their reading pleasure or otherwise
- how they respond to the process of reading

Some of the stronger responses may discuss how their reading practices influence the particular meaning they make.

“reading practices” must not be read in a limited sense ... a general, simple definition could be “the things we do to make sense of a text ... the things we do to construct an interpretation”

MARKING GUIDELINES**ENGLISH**

It is not essential for students to identify a specific “other text” to rank highly in responding to this task.

General Principles

Points to keep in mind with all questions

- WACE tertiary entrance marking is a ranking process. This has two consequences. First, markers must use the **full range** of marks. Markers should not wait forever to award a 28, 29 or 30. Second, markers must avoid using cut-offs based on limited criteria. Rather, answers are to be marked and discriminated according to **the extent** to which they meet the criteria. The notion of pass/fail **does not** apply to this process. Just one of the negative effects of such a notion would be an average much lower than with our target of 17.5 marks. Markers are constantly to ask themselves “To what extent?” and, when they find a good response, ask themselves “Am I realistically going to see anything better than this?”
- Markers are to use tally sheets to keep a visual check on their mark range and any clumping that might occur, but do not average each bundle. Bundles may have different averages.
- Markers are to look for what to REWARD. Avoid the “penalty mentality” with undue emphasis on just spelling, as examination scripts are essentially first drafts completed under time pressure.
- Remember that this is a TERTIARY ENTRANCE examination, so we are not simply making judgments about “functional literacy” but also “critical literacy”.
- Answers should be marked on the quality of their content in relation to the question being attempted in the context of the particular section.

Content

- A key criterion in assessing content is **engagement with the question** as opposed to the reproduction of memorised information about a text. The questions require students to select a form that best suits their chosen purpose. Answers should be assessed according to the writing skill they demonstrate **in relation to the question**.
- Answers that make use of personal experiences, values and responses to support or explain arguments, or descriptive writing skills are quite acceptable. All questions allow for such responses.
- Students may make reference to texts studied, if such reference supports their writing purpose. Markers must not penalise students who do not refer to specific texts, unless the question requires the student to refer to texts read or viewed.
- We need to remember at all times that we are ranking students in this section on their WRITING SKILLS, not their understanding of particular texts and not their reading and/or viewing skills.

Special Notes: Use of texts for primary reference

If a candidate has used a text in this section as a primary reference and also used the same text in another section of the paper as primary reference, mark the script on its merits and then divide the mark by two. Indicate in the penalty box the marks penalty that has been applied.

In the unlikely case of a candidate using a text type reference other than a text type listed for stages 2 and 3 as a primary reference, mark the script on its merits and then ‘flag’ the script for discussion with the Chief Marker to determine if a penalty should be applied.

Section 2 – Writing

Writing provides candidates with the opportunity to demonstrate their control of language, sense of audience, knowledge of generic conventions and the ability to shape them in relation to the examination questions.

Written expression

- Answers should be marked on the quality of the writing. In this section it is not realistically possible to ignore the content of the writing. Writing skills and knowledge of content are often closely related, **but the focus of the marking in this section must be on the demonstrated writing skills**. We rank the students on their viewing and reading skills in the other two sections.
- In this section aspects of writing that may prove useful discriminators include vocabulary, textual cohesion, contextual understandings and use of generic conventions. Markers should be looking to reward students who can: develop an argument or write descriptively; write creatively and effectively; sustain a point of view; use appropriate texts effectively where required; employ means of communication to shape reader responses; engage effectively with a question and so much more (but not, of course, all of these).
- Some further useful discriminators to use in ranking writing include, as appropriate to form and audience : use of vocabulary; use of syntax; logical sequencing of ideas; fluency; succinctness; punctuation; cohesion; use of supporting information; appropriate use of tone; connection with the designated or implied reader's/listener's context; use of language for persuasive, emotive or rhetorical effect; use of generic conventions; impact; pre-emption of possible reactions; use of an appropriate persona/voice; use appropriate texts effectively to illustrate and/or support a point where textual reference is required by the question; employ means of communication to shape reader responses; however, this should **not** be used as a checklist.

Structure and expression

The key elements in assessing written expression are:

- structure - the presentation of a clear structure of ideas
- fluency and expression
- mastery of vocabulary, appropriate to audience, purpose and form
- mastery of the conventions of English, but minor spelling, punctuation, structural and grammatical errors due to exam pressure should not be unduly penalised
- voice - in regard to voice, there is no requirement for candidates to write in a highly formal or impersonal manner or to avoid the first and second person. Colloquial and/or personal responses are acceptable if effectively presented and it is the level of expression as related to audience, purpose and form that we must take into account when ranking such responses
- these answers are a draft; therefore, we can't expect all the conventions of layout of a genre (e.g. feature article) to be demonstrated.

SPECIFIC POINTS ON EACH QUESTION**Question 1**

In a public discussion, argue for or against film to be considered the most important cultural text of this decade.

- 'Public discussion' suggests students could use a range of text types in their response, e.g. debate, dialogue or conversation, transcript of a speech, feature article, letter to the editor or essay.
- Cultural text invites students to discuss the representations of culture offered in texts or the role played by film in the student's or society's culture. The response may include discussion of values that inform the text, attitudes reflected in the text, the technology of film and film as cultural artefact.
- Students are expected to mount a case for or against. That is, free ranging discussion that does not mount a case is not addressing the question as thoroughly.
- Some better responses may define the 'culture' being discussed. They may also discuss various notions of culture.
- A key discriminator may be the extent to which students tackle the word "most" – i.e. the comparisons they make or the case they mount.

- There is no requirement for students to refer to a particular film in detail in responding to this task. Some of the strongest responses may come from students who are able to dip in and out of a whole range of films; others may be more theoretical and discuss broader notions of film as a cultural indicator.
- A key discriminator will be how well students control or manipulate the generic conventions of their chosen form.
- A key discriminator will be how well students display an understanding of the relationship between purpose, context and audience in the construction of their written response.

Question 2

Explore how your experience of studying one or more texts has enriched your understanding of your world.

- This question requires a personal response, which can be fictitious.
- Students are being asked to make links between their study of print and / or visual texts and their own world.
- The question requires students to do more than just retell plot; the question requires discussion of how different texts enrich their understanding of their world in different ways. They must shape their response to the form they choose.
- Some better responses may explain how different texts allow them to experience alternative worlds but it is HOW they do this that is important.
- Some responses may also discuss that some, but not all, study of texts enriches.
- It is possible to answer the question in the negative, that is, the study of texts does not enrich understanding.
- A key discriminator will be how well students control or manipulate generic conventions of their chosen form.
- A key discriminator will be how well students display an understanding of the relationship between purpose, context and audience in construction of their written response.

Question 3

Incorporate the following statement into a piece of writing: “You wonder whether the weather is, after all, the greatest of human crises. Isn’t the gush and tosh of celebrity culture every bit as threatening?”

- While all answers must incorporate the quote, some candidates may choose to use the content of the quote as the focus of their response; others may not.
- There is no requirement for candidates to discuss the content of the quote in their answers. It may, for example, be used to develop a character.
- Some candidates may simply copy the quote down then write an essay or other form dealing with the ideas in the quote.
- The question allows students great control over their choice of purpose, context and audience.
- We should be careful not to rank students on the basis of their ideas, which may or may not align with what we want to see – it is the WAY they express their ideas that we must take into account when ranking.
- A key discriminator will be how well students control or manipulate generic conventions of their chosen form.
- A key discriminator will be how well students display an understanding of the relationship between purpose, context and audience in construction of their written response.

Question 4

Discuss the influences of place and / or landscape on character in one or more texts that you have read or viewed.

- Candidates may make links between place / landscape and characters' decisions, actions, relationships, understandings, values, attitudes, beliefs; but of themselves these aspects are the content, and not the discriminators that will determine the score for each response.
- Candidates may make links between the place / landscape created by the writer and the consequent construction of character in a text.
- 'Character' may belong to fiction or non-fiction, print or non-print.
- We may expect, and accept, candidates to read 'character' as the quality of "character" or as a particular character (person or other) in a text.
- One discriminator could be the extent to which students are able to show how place or landscape influence the character in terms of the clarity and level of the EXPRESSION of ideas.
- A key discriminator will be how well students control or manipulate generic conventions of their chosen form.
- A key discriminator will be how well students display an understanding of the relationship between purpose, context and audience in construction of their written response.

Question 5

Create the document to which this image could be attached.

- 'Document' can be very widely interpreted, but as this is the Writing Section the focus should be on the writing. Thus, for example, a slogan for this image on a billboard would not rank very highly.
- There is no requirement for the image to be discussed, although it may be. However, it does need to be 'attached' to the document. The image is intended to be open to wide interpretation.
- A useful discriminator may be how well the writing uses the image to enhance the written text.
- A key discriminator will be how well students control or manipulate generic conventions of their chosen form.
- A key discriminator will be how well students display an understanding of the relationship between purpose, context and audience in construction of their written response.

General Principles

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- Look for what to REWARD. Avoid the “penalty mentality” with undue emphasis on just spelling, as examination scripts are essentially first drafts completed under time pressure.
- Answers should be marked on both the quality of their content in terms of their response to the task and the demonstration of **viewing** skills
- Remember that this is a tertiary entrance examination, so markers are not simply making judgements about “functional literacy” but also about “critical literacy”.
- We are looking to award higher marks to candidates who can develop an argument, sustain a point of view, use evidence from passages or texts to give weight to a point, etc.

Content

- A key criterion in assessing content is **engagement with the question** rather than the reproduction of memorised information about techniques. The questions examine **viewing**. Answers should be assessed according to the extent to which the images and texts are used to support arguments **in relation to the question**.
- Markers should award higher marks to candidates who can comprehend and interpret specialised conventions and describe how texts manipulate the conventions of genres, whilst showing sensitivity to visual and cultural nuances. Candidates achieving higher marks may be able to discern subtle or complex generic patterns. Candidates who can relate texts to social, political or cultural contexts as well as other texts should be awarded higher marks. Similarly, candidates who can view critically and identify gaps and contradictions within texts should also achieve higher marks. It may be possible that the very best candidates will be able to refer to more than one critical framework in their discussion.
- Answers may make use of personal experiences, values and responses to support or explain arguments. These may help to strengthen answers but the main focus should be on the texts discussed and the viewing process.
- Candidates must refer to at least TWO of the images for question 1 and at least one of the images for question 2. This does not mean that there is a set percentage of the script that must relate to the images provided in the paper. A brief reference to the images may sometimes be far more pertinent than a long-winded reference that is not particularly relevant to the discussion.
- The focus of this section is on the viewing outcome. Candidates should be judged on how well they demonstrate understanding and skills in this outcome. Candidates who write a clearly structured discussion or explanation would generally achieve higher marks than candidates whose explanation or discussion is difficult to follow, but this may not always be the case. There may be some candidates who show exceptional skill and understandings in the viewing outcome who have great difficulty in expressing their ideas in a well-structured format.

Structure and expression

Candidates must be aware that the **viewing** section of the paper is about making their viewing practices transparent. At the same time, it should also be obvious that evidence of achievement in this section can be gleaned only from what they have written. The more understanding they display in explaining their ideas, the clearer their expression, the more fluent and organised their response, the more likely it is that the marker will be able to find evidence of their understanding of viewing practices. Key elements include:

- the presentation of a central argument and clear organisation of ideas
- fluency
- demonstrated mastery of key terms related to viewing skills
- spelling, punctuation and grammatical errors should not be penalized, as examination scripts are essentially a first draft and we are ranking demonstration of **viewing** skills, and
- voice - in regard to voice, there is no requirement on candidates to write in a highly formal or impersonal manner or to avoid the first and second person. Colloquial and/or personal responses are acceptable if effectively presented.

Special Note: Use of texts for primary reference

If a question requires reference to other texts, the candidate must make primary reference to a non-print text. Very short references to print texts may be made if they assist the candidate to clarify a point; however, the use of references to texts read may result in difficulty in making links to specialised conventions and structures associated with print texts.

In the unlikely case of a candidate using a text type other than a text type listed for stages 2 and 3 as a primary reference, mark the script on its merits and then ‘flag’ the script for discussion with the Chief Marker to determine if a penalty should be applied.

Specific points on each question

Question 1

Discuss the ways in which at least **TWO** of the images provided could promote, challenge or subvert popular ways of seeing groups and/or individuals.

- Candidates need to clearly identify the group or individual that they are discussing.
- Some of the stronger responses will address the idea of representation, and what might be meant by ‘popular ways of seeing’.
- Students should clearly identify and offer some explanation of whichever terms they use from “promote, challenge or subvert”, with reference to texts.
- “Ways in which” can be generic features; it can also be contextual factors.
- Discussion of generic features might include:
 - the framing of the image
 - the positioning of the viewer and, in each case, the central figure/s in each of the images
 - the role of the gaze of those central figures
 - the idea of portraiture vs. full-body shots
 - the use of foreground, middle-ground and background
 - the camera angle employed
 - the positioning and significance of items displayed in the frame
 - clothing and accessories.
- Some students may discuss connections between these images and cultural stereotypes, while others may focus on ideas such as gender or heroes; however, these do not exhaust the possibilities, and you should be flexible in recognising unusual/unexpected but relevant connections.
- Students may use the contextual information provided, or their wider contextual knowledge, in their response.
- Some students may discuss the differences between various types of images.

- A key discriminator may well become the extent to which students focus on 'how' the texts operate to influence meaning. In other words, some of the stronger answers may show an understanding both of generic features, contextual factors *and* of the role they play in representation
- A further discriminator may prove to be the extent to which the candidates **answer the question** rather than simply describe the images with or without discussion of features or conventions.

Question 2

Discuss the factors which influence your response to a group and/or individual in at least **ONE** of the images provided **and** in a non-print text you have studied.

- A useful discriminator may prove to be the extent to which candidates address “influence your response” rather than just analyse the texts.
- Students may focus on the influence of context in exploring the factors in their response.
- Students are expected to do more than just retell plot.
- Answers may show awareness that these non-print texts are not ‘natural’ but cultural productions – e.g. without familiarity of the genres used, the candidate would not be able to ‘read’ the images in the way in which someone used to such genres could.
- Students could make links such as:
 - Theme
 - Character
 - Understanding of genre
 - Values promoted
 - Contextual links
 - Stereotypes.
- A key discriminator may well become the extent to which students focus on ‘how’ the texts operate to influence meaning. In other words, answers need to show an understanding of both generic features, contextual factors *and* of the role they play in representation.
- Candidates must have some discussion of at least one image and at least one non-print text studied in their response.