

Marking Guidelines for Sample English Examination

These guidelines are a sample of draft guidelines prepared by examiners. They are typically added to or modified by the chief marker, once she/he has seen the paper on the day of the examination; and the marking panel after trial marking and discussion of selected examination scripts.

Section 1 – Reading

GENERAL MARKING GUIDELINES

Points to keep in mind with both questions

- Tertiary entrance examination marking is a criteria-based process which is used to develop ranked lists of students that are statistically moderated. This has two consequences. First, markers must use the **full range** of marks. 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 in this process.
- Markers use tally sheets to keep a visual check on their mark range and any clumping, but do not average each bundle.
- Answers should be marked on both the quality of their content and the quality of their expression, but not on a half and half basis. The focus in this section should be on the reading outcome.
- Markers are to look for what to reward and avoid the “penalty mentality” with spelling, expression, quotes, etc.
- 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 reward students who can develop an argument, sustain a viewpoint, use evidence from text/s to give weight to a point, etc.

Content

- A key criterion in assessing content is **engagement with the question** as opposed to the reproduction of memorised information about techniques. The questions examine reading comprehension. Answers should be assessed according to the extent to which the passages are used to support arguments **in relation to the question**.
- Higher marks will be awarded to students who can comprehend and interpret specialised conventions and describe how texts manipulate the conventions of genres, whilst showing sensitivity to linguistic and cultural nuances and are able to discern subtle or complex generic patterns. Students who can relate texts to social, political or cultural contexts as well as other texts should be awarded higher marks. Similarly, this is also the case for students who can read critically and identify gaps, silences and contradictions within texts. It may be possible that the very best answers be awarded refer to more than one critical framework.
- Candidates 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.

Expression and structure

- The key elements in assessing written expression are:
- structure - the presentation of a central argument and clear organisation of ideas
- fluency and expression
- mastery of vocabulary, and especially demonstrated mastery of key syllabus essential content
- 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
- 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.

Specific points on each question

Question 1a

Explain how the conventions of this text influence the meanings you make from it.

- Answers will at least implicitly address the words 'conventions' and 'influence', as well as the idea that meaning is 'made' by the reader (and not just passively received).
- 'Conventions' include the position of the speaker (e.g. omniscient versus limited 3rd person narrative), point of view, tone, language (e.g. the boy's language as opposed to the narrator's language), the representation of consciousness, the 'gaps' in the text (from which the reader has to infer connections and/or information), the two uses of white space between sections of the passage, dialogue versus narrative, and so on.
- Some better answers may be sensitive to relationship between conventions and textual nuances, such as the capitalisation of the word 'House', the use of italics, pauses represented by '...', the use of rhetorical questions, or the use of verbs related to law enforcement and legal proceedings such as 'loitered', 'patrolled' and 'contest' and link this to the conflict over the possession of property.
- Answers might also consider such aspects as ideology, audience, and cultural context. For example, answers might focus on gender, or make a post-colonial reading of the emphasis on the ownership of property using the setting of southern Queensland, perhaps speculating on the word 'White' in the title of the novel. Or they might consider how a young female might read the passage in contrast to a middle-aged male.
- Answers might consider the overall structure of the given passage, from claustrophobic enclosure to sense of liberation and expansion, and the relation of this to the presentation of consciousness.
- Some better answers might deal with the slide between the omniscient narrator and the boy's consciousness, and the degree to which the text moves closer to his consciousness or further away.

Question 1b

Briefly describe how your reading of at least one other print text helped you to identify and analyse the effects of one of the conventions you discussed in question 1a.

- Answers will need to suggest a breadth of reading experience. For example, they might show how different reading practices and strategies used in reading a text such as **Cloudstreet** has assisted in making meaning with this text, or offer reflections on the role of specific reading contexts such as how the reading of another Australian text that such as **It's Raining in Mango** has contributed to the filling of gaps in the reading of this text particularly in relation to gender, class or other social issues.
- Answers might address how other writers have used conventions such as third person limited omniscient narration or sympathetic setting to shape reader responses.
- Answers might refer to how the use of the symbol of the house in texts such as **Wuthering Heights** and **Cloudstreet** has assisted in making meaning with this text, or consider the use of narrator and the slippage in positioning of voice that occurs in comparison to texts such as **Cloudstreet**, or refer to how techniques of character construction used in texts such as **The Well** have assisted in analysing the construction of character in this text.
- Answers might consider how readers may value different aspects and thus attach different meanings and purposes to both texts, and show an awareness that texts can be ambivalent
- Some better answers might consider the idea of gaps in texts, the types of gaps and the way this contributes to the release of information, and the meanings made by the reader.

Section 2 – Writing

GENERAL MARKING GUIDELINES

Points to keep in mind with all questions

- Tertiary entrance examination marking is a criteria-based process which is used to develop ranked lists of students that are statistically moderated. 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 essay, 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, but do not average each bundle. Bundles may have different averages.
- 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, but the focus of the marking should be on the demonstrated writing skills. Writing skills and knowledge of content are often closely related. However, markers should not award half the marks for one and half for the other. The focus should be on the demonstrated writing skills.
- Remember that this is a tertiary entrance examination, so we are not simply making judgements about “functional literacy” but also the aspects of higher standard writing such as precise vocabulary, use of nuance, textual cohesion, and use of generic conventions. Markers should be looking to reward students who can develop an argument or write descriptively; sustain a point of view; use appropriate texts effectively; employ means of communication to shape reader responses; engage effectively with a question; and so much more.

Content

- A key criterion in assessing content is **engagement with the topic** 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 topic**.
- Answers which 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 should not penalise students who do not refer to specific texts, unless the question requires the student to refer to texts read or viewed.

Expression and structure

The key elements in expression are:

- structure - the presentation of a clear structure of ideas
- fluency and expression
- mastery of vocabulary, and especially mastery of key syllabus essential content
- mastery of the conventions of English, but minor spelling, punctuation 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.

Specific points on each question

Question 1

Present a case for a film version to be made of a fiction or a non-fiction text that you have read.

- 'Presenting a case' is the specific requirement of this question, and involves:
 - Constructing a reasoned argument
 - Using a fiction/non-fiction text to demonstrate specific points
 - Showing some understanding as to why film is a pertinent medium for the written text
- Candidates should not be penalised if they argue for a film to be made of a text, even though they may have already seen an existing film version of the text.
- More marks will be awarded to candidates who might query whether the film is a 'version' of the written text or a completely different text in its own right.
- Writing should be judged on 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 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
- The above list should not be seen as a checklist that the best responses all have to do. Rather there should be a holistic judgement on how well the student has presented a case using some or all of the above. The better students will use most of the above listed features very well.

Question 2

Identify an issue from your own reading or viewing and write to convince an audience of an age group other than your own of the importance of the issue.

- This question specifically elicits an understanding of the idea of audience, and includes the recognition and use of appropriate conventions. These include:
 - Purpose
 - Tone
 - Cultural location
 - Language grading
 - The position of the speaker/writer
- It is essential that 'an age group other than your own' is at the heart of the response. Do not assume that all candidates are teenagers.
- Answers may explore many different forms – e.g. reports, newspaper articles, speeches, and letters and so on.
- Students are not asked to discuss the importance of a text. Students that discuss texts rather than issues would score less highly.
- Moreover, there is no requirement to refer to a print or non-print text. Some candidates may discuss the issue without even referring to the text, and these candidates should not be penalised.
- There is a requirement that the candidates identify a single issue. Students that write on a number of issues would score less highly.
- Markers should not make value judgements on the importance of the issue discussed. All judgements should be related to how well the candidate is able to convince the reader.
- Writing should be judged on 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 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
- The above list should not be seen as a checklist that the best responses all have to do. Rather there should be a holistic judgement on how well the student has presented a case using some or all of the above. The better students will use most of the above listed features very well.

Question 3

Present arguments for and against the proposition that technology will improve some aspects of society and the future.

- The focus of this question is on the skills used to make arguments for and against the proposition.
- The notion of technology can be interpreted by students quite widely:
 - It may be interpreted as something as simple as a pencil or as complex as blue-toothed linked internet connection devices.
 - It may be treated as a single item, or as a word that refers to a range of knowledge, practices and items
- Markers should not make value judgements on the importance of the issue discussed. All judgements should be related to how well the candidate is able to convince the reader. For example, some answers may treat a relatively trivial topic in terms which are ironic or satirical. This is perfectly acceptable.
- Some better answers may well leave the question open or express ambivalence.
- Candidates may assume that 'society' refers to current western society. It is possible to read 'society' as a society that existed in the past or a society other than western society.
- There is no requirement in this question that a print or non-print text should be referred to. Many candidates may discuss technology without referring to a text studied. These candidates should not be penalised.
- Some candidates will write more arguments 'for' than 'against', others will do the opposite. An imbalance in the time presenting the arguments with either 'for' or 'against', should not be seen as a weakness, provided the students has presented more than one argument on each side.
- Writing should be judged on 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 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
- The above list should not be seen as a checklist that the best responses all have to do. Rather there should be a holistic judgement on how well the student has presented a case using some or all of the above. The better students will use most of the above listed features very well.

Question 4

Write a text that could accompany the image reproduced below: (Neuhass, 1895)

- This question elicits an imaginative response in which candidates can demonstrate skills and conventions of writing.
- There are many possible ways in which the image could be interpreted, but answers which ignore the date given – namely, '1895' – are at a disadvantage. In other words, the candidate's own cultural/historical position needs to be taken into account in the answer.
- Answers may use many different forms – for example, an entry in an encyclopaedia about the history of flight, a dialogue between two spectators in 1895, an essay on the desire to fly, and so on.
- There is no requirement in this question that a print or non-print text should be referred to. Many candidates may discuss the image without referring to a text studied. These candidates should not be penalised.
- Writing should be judged on 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 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
- The above list should not be seen as a checklist that the best responses all have to do. Rather there should be a holistic judgement on how well the student has used writing conventions to produce a text.

Question 5

Write a response to the idea that engaging with a text involves escaping from your contemporary experience and putting yourself into other people's stories and their place and time.

- The focus of this question is the use of language conventions in responding to the idea that reading/listening/viewing involves escape, vicarious experience and empathy
- The word 'engage' implies more than just 'understanding'. More perceptive candidates may well pick up on this word.
- 'Contemporary experience' could relate to very personal experiences or to broader social experience.
- There is no requirement in this question that a print or non-print text should be referred to. Some candidates may discuss the idea without referring to a text studied.
- It is possible that some candidates may respond by writing an imaginative piece based on the idea presented in the question. These responses should not be seen as inferior or inappropriate but judged on the student's ability to use language conventions.
- Writing should be judged on 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 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
- The above list should not be seen as a checklist that the best responses all have to do. Rather there should be a holistic judgement on how well the student has presented a case using some or all of the above. The better students will use most of the above listed features very well.

Question 6

Write to convince an audience of the need for the inclusion or exclusion of Australian texts in the English course.

- This question clearly elicits an argument, and responses should be judged on how well the student uses language conventions to 'convince an audience'.
- It is assumed that candidates will take note of the 'or' in the question, and develop an argument for or against. However, it is possible that a sophisticated answer might recognise the complexities of the issue and offer a more ambivalent response.
- The word 'convince' implies that the student will write to persuade the reader with a structured argument.
- It is possible, if unlikely, that some students could see this as an opportunity to present imaginative writing with an Australian focus. Those responses should be marked according to the demonstrated control and understanding of writing conventions.
- 'Australian texts' may be interpreted as texts written and produced in Australia, or as texts that have a strong Australian focus.
- There is no requirement in this question that a print or non-print text should be referred to. Some candidates may present an argument without referring to a text studied. The higher achieving responses may respond with concrete examples to support points made.
- Writing should be judged on 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 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
- The above list should not be seen as a checklist that the best responses all have to demonstrate. Rather there should be a holistic judgement on how well the student has presented a case using some or all of the above. The better students may use most of the above listed features very well.

Question 7

Write using the imaginative possibilities of the following:

‘When war had finally become too dangerous, and more to the point, too expensive for everyone, the world leaders met informally to devise a substitute.’ Margaret Atwood. *Good Bones*. Toronto: Coach House Press, 1992.

- This question specifically invites an imaginative response. This could take many forms.
- Judgement of what is an appropriate text form based on the quotation should take into account the wide number of possible ways in which the quotation could be interpreted.
- Markers should not see one particular form of text as ‘the preferred text’ form.
- The audience can be either designated by the candidate or implied by the candidate’s argument.
- There is no requirement in this question that a print or non-print text should be referred to. Some candidates may use imaginative possibilities associated with the quotation without referring to a text studied. These candidates should not be penalised.
- Writing should be judged on 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 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
- The above list should not be seen as a checklist that the best responses all have to do. Rather there should be a holistic judgement on how well the student has used understandings of writing conventions to produce a text.

Section 3 – Viewing

GENERAL MARKING GUIDELINES

Points to keep in mind with both questions

- Tertiary entrance examination marking is a criteria-based process which is used to develop ranked lists of students that are statistically moderated. This has two consequences. First, markers must use the **full range** of marks. 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.
- Markers use tally sheets to keep a visual check on their mark range and any clumping, but do not average each bundle. Bundles will have varying averages.
- Answers should be marked on both the quality of their content and the quality of their expression, but not on a half and half basis. The main focus should be on the Viewing Outcome but written expression skills should not be totally ignored as writing skills and content are usually closely related.
- 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 reward students who can develop an argument, sustain a point of view, use evidence from text/s to give weight to a point, etc.

Content

- A key criterion in assessing content is **engagement with the question** as opposed to the reproduction of memorised information about techniques. The questions examine students’ understanding and skills in the Viewing Outcome. Answers should be assessed according to the extent to which the students demonstrate these understandings and skills **in relation to the question**.
- Markers must aim to reward to reward students who can comprehend and interpret specialised conventions and describe how texts manipulate the conventions of genres, whilst showing sensitivity to linguistic and cultural nuances. More able students will be able to discern subtle or complex generic patterns. Students who can relate texts to social, political or cultural contexts as well as other texts should be rewarded. Similarly, students who can read critically and identify gaps, silences and contradictions within texts should also be rewarded. It may be possible that the very best students 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; the main focus should be on the texts discussed and the viewing process.
- Students must refer to ONE of the two sets of images supplied with the paper. 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. Students should be judged on how well they demonstrate understanding and skills in this outcome. Students who write a clearly structured discussion or explanation would generally be rewarded more highly than students whose explanation or discussion is difficult to follow, but this may not always be the case. There may be some students who show exceptional skill and understandings in the viewing outcome who have great difficulty in expressing their ideas in a well structured format. These students would be the exception rather than the rule.

Expression and structure

- The key elements in expression are:
- structure - the presentation of a central argument and clear organisation of ideas
- fluency and expression
- mastery of vocabulary, and especially demonstrated mastery of key syllabus essential content
- 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
- 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.

Specific points on each question

Question 1

Discuss the ways in which visual texts may serve to shape cultural values.

- Answers need to demonstrate some understanding of the terms 'shape' and 'cultural values'.
- 'Shape' can have a range of meanings, including influence, have input into, mould, structure, configure etc. 'Cultural values' can be expressed as prevalent attitudes (either positive or negative) towards such issues as environment, sexuality, ageism, art and science etc.
- For images 1 and 2, gender/domesticity are perhaps the obvious issues, and for images 3 and 4, childhood/freedom/ethnicity/beach culture etc. However, these do not exhaust the possibilities, and markers should be flexible in recognising unusual but relevant understandings.
- Answers will need to engage with the role of visual images – which may include films and film stills, cartoons, paintings, etc. Obviously, images 3 and 4 are photographs adapted for book cover purposes, but what kind of images are 1 and 2? It seems likely that they are both photographs, but it is possible that 1, for example, is a still from a television show.
- Candidates who locate the images in other ways should not be penalised. This includes, for example, candidates who do not recognise the photograph cue (the name of the photographer in brackets beneath the description) and who (being from a TV culture) assume that both images are from television, unaware that 1940 is too early for free-to air-television.
- Answers will need to recognise the historical difference between image 1 and image 2. This might involve such things as:
 - of the role of different visual media in shaping values,
 - the intended audience
 - the changing nature of audience, and so on.Is 'The Housewife in Kitchen' American, English, Australian or even perhaps (given the name Keppler) German? Answers which point out the ambiguity may well be rewarded, but this is not the point of the question. Answers which raise the issue of audience may vary on this matter and should not be penalised for doing so.
- Answers for images 3 and 4 will probably be more competent if they spot the different cultural contexts – South Africa and Australia respectively – from which the books emerge. Again, however, this is not obvious from the information given on the sample paper.
- Some better answers might also engage with the *writing* on the book covers in 3 and 4 – the values explicit in the advertising references to the Nobel Prize and 'Major ABC Series' - and may well take issue with these values.
- Some answers might want to address the cultural value and changing influence of the magazine and the book (and television) as media.

Question 2

Consider the ways that visual texts may serve social purposes or power relationships.

- Some attempt to understand 'social purposes' or 'power relationships' is necessary. 'Social purposes' suggests an agenda (whose?) while power relationships refers to asymmetrical relations.
- Again, answers will probably engage with issues of gender, childhood, and ethnicity and so on, in order to tease out purposes/relationships.
- Answers may engage with the issue of authority, comparing for example, the relaxed and somewhat cocky Oliver in 1 with the thoughtful/perplexed Housewife in 2, or the sense of dejected introspection of 3 with the sense of joyous expansion in 4, in order to develop an argument about the relations between gender/ethnicity, culture, power etc.
- Answers may also engage with the idea of celebrity (in 1) and the idea of anonymity (in 2), perhaps relating them to gender, leisure, historical period, media and so on.

Question 3

Explain how the generic features of visual texts are used to construct representations of our world.

- Answers need to address the idea of 'generic features' and the idea of 'representation'.
- The word 'how' needs to be addressed. In other words, answers need to show an understanding both of generic features *and* of the role they play in representation.
- Discussion of generic features might include:
 - the framing of the image
 - the positioning of the viewer and, in each case, the central figure in each of the images
 - the role of the gaze of those central figures
 - the idea of portraiture vs. full-body shots
 - the use and use of foreground, middle-ground and background
- In turn, such features might be related to the 'how' of representation. For example, Image 1 has a good deal of empty space, while Image 2 is full of detail. What kinds of world are these images offering? Similarly, the use of enclosure and expansion in Images 3 and 4 may be useful to consider.

Question 4

Explain how your context and your knowledge of genre influence your response to visual texts.

- Again, answers need to address the words "context" and "genre", and the word "how".
- Among the possibilities for context are historical period and age (both of the people represented in the images and the age of the candidate), and culture and geography (England, possibly America, South Africa and Australia).
- Answers will need to show awareness that these visual images are not 'natural' but cultural productions – i.e. 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.
- Better answers may integrate ideas of the viewer's context with the context of each image (in terms of the historical conventions of the image, the media in which they appear and so on).
- There is scope here for highly individualistic responses which draw upon particular experiences in the candidate's own personal life.
- Answers might also deal with the generic conventions of book covers or magazine photography, as well as with issues of audience.