



WACE examination marking workshop – Specific marking guidelines

These guidelines were prepared by Curriculum Council officers based on examination questions used by a school in Semester 1. They have been emended by the chief marker for the WACE English examination for the marking workshop.

Participants may amend the guidelines further after trial marking and discussion of selected examination scripts.

Section 1 – Reading

This section will not be used in the workshop. For further information on marking this section, please go to *Specific Marking Guidelines for the Sample WACE Examination* at http://newwace.curriculum.wa.edu.au/pages/courses/course_english.asp

Section 2 – Writing

Points to keep in mind with all questions

- Marking is a criteria-based process that is used to develop ranked lists of students, which demonstrate relative achievements. 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 (for example, when awarding high marks, 28, 29 and 30 should be awarded)
- Markers are to use tally sheets to keep a visual check on their mark range and any clumping, but should not average each bundle.
- Answers should be marked on the quality on the writing. In this section, 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.
- Markers are to look for what to REWARD. Avoid the 'penalty mentality' with undue emphasis on spelling, as examination scripts are essentially first drafts completed under time pressure.
- Remember that this is an external examination which in many cases will be used in the process of selection for tertiary studies, so we are not simply making judgements about 'functional literacy' but also about 'critical literacy'. 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; 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 useful discriminators to use include: 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. However, this should **not** be used as a checklist.

Content

- A key criterion in assessing content is **engagement with the question** as opposed to the reproduction of the memorised information about a text. The questions require candidates 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.
- Candidates 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 candidate to refer to texts read or viewed.

Written expression

The key elements in assessing written 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

Write a response to the idea that a range of the texts we read and view can open our eyes to the world around us.

- The word ‘text’ should be read as it is used in the syllabus.
- The candidate needs to make some attempt to indicate what is understood by the term ‘open our eyes’.
- Better answers may be expected to indicate what they interpret as ‘the world around us’. This could be in terms of the personal, local, state, national or global contexts, or a combination of some or all of these. A particular contextual view such as ‘personal’ or a colloquial or general understanding of the phrase is quite acceptable.
- Candidates may choose from a range of appropriate forms to express their response. They should be rewarded for the extent to which they effectively use their chosen form.
- Weaker responses may simply focus in detail on one or two texts.
- Extensive retelling of the content of texts will probably not rank highly.
- It is possible that some candidates may respond by writing an imaginative piece based on the idea presented in the question.

Question 2

Construct an argument for or against the statement that when it comes to celebrities, fame is in the name, not the achievement.

- A key discriminator in this question may be the extent to which the candidates display an understanding of the ideas of ‘celebrity’, ‘fame’ and ‘achievement’.
- This question requires the construction of ‘an argument’. Responses should be ranked on how well the candidate uses language to present that argument.
- The question asks candidates to develop an argument for or against the assertion. However, it is possible that an answer might recognise the complexities of the issue and offer a more ambivalent response in arriving at a position.
- An essay is not the only way to present an argument. Responses should be marked according to the extent to which they demonstrate control and understanding of the chosen form.

- The word 'celebrity' may be interpreted broadly.

Question 3

Write a piece in which you imaginatively explore the possibilities that may be suggested by the following quote:

I am one in a row of specimens. It's when I try to flutter out of line that he hates me. Me being alive and changing and having a separate mind and having moods and all that was becoming a nuisance.

John Fowles, *The Collector*, Vintage, 1998

- This question specifically invites an imaginative response. This could take many forms. Candidates should be ranked on the extent to which they effectively use their chosen form and demonstrate their mastery of the Writing Outcome
- Some candidates may know the novel *The Collector*. Candidates who write a response which uses settings, characters or style similar to those used by Fowles should not be seen as having 'the correct' type of response.
- Candidates should be judged on their use of language rather than their ability to imagine settings or characters.
- Markers must not see one particular form of text as 'the preferred text' form.
- The audience may be either designated by the candidate or implied by the candidate's response.
- There is no requirement in this question that a print or non-print text should be referred to. Candidate may use imaginative possibilities associated with the quotation without referring to a text studied.

Question 4

Construct a piece of writing in which you present an argument for or against the proposition that texts can mean different things to different people, referring closely to a range of texts that you have read or viewed.

No responses to this question were selected for discussion.

Question 5

The following image is an example of some urban graffiti that was found on a city wall in Tasmania. The background is black, the numbers out to the side are light green, and the man himself is painted in oranges and yellows.

Write a text that relates to this image.

The image used in the examination cannot be transmitted electronically as the authorship of the image cannot be established. Hard copies of the image will be distributed at marking workshops. The cartoon-type image is of a man with a barcode and the numbers 666 stamped on his forehead. We see only his head and shoulders. There are 3 rows of numbers curving horizontally away from the man in the background.

- The instruction for this question is very broad – 'relates' needs to be read fairly openly.
- This question can elicit an imaginative, expository or other appropriate form of response in which candidates can demonstrate skills and conventions of writing.
- There are many possible ways in which the image could be interpreted.

- Better answers may acknowledge features such as the barcode and the numbers.
- Answers may use many different forms – for example, a discussion of the amount of surveillance in our society, a dialogue between two characters in an Orwellian-type society, and so on.
- The contextual information relating to urban graffiti may evoke responses that are critical of society.
- A script that analyses the image should be judged on its ability to demonstrate the use of language rather than on demonstrated skills in analysing a visual image.
- There is no requirement in this question that a print or non-print text should be referred to. Many candidates may write using the image as stimulus without referring to a text studied. These candidates should not be penalised.

Question 6

With reference to a wide range of texts you have read and viewed, convince an audience of the validity of the statement that there is nothing new to be found in texts.

- This question specifically elicits an acknowledgement of audience.
- A key discriminator may be the extent to which a response is able to ‘convince’.
- Answers may be in many different forms – e.g. reports, newspaper articles, speeches, letters and so on.
- Candidates are asked to discuss the validity of the statement that ‘there is nothing new to be found in texts’. Candidates who simply discuss texts or re-tell content rather than explore the idea of ‘newness’ would score less highly.
- There is a specific requirement to refer to a wide range of texts. In the context of writing in a timed examination, a ‘wide range of texts’ can be interpreted liberally – it is ‘range’ rather than number that matters.
- Some candidates may discuss the issue without referring closely to any particular texts.

Section 3 – Viewing

Points to keep in mind with all questions

- Marking is a criteria-based process that is used to develop ranked lists of students, which demonstrate relative achievements. 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 (for example, when awarding high marks, 28, 29 and 30 should be awarded)
- 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 an external examination, which in many cases will be used in the process of selection for tertiary studies, so we are not simply making judgements about ‘functional literacy’ but also about ‘critical literacy’.
- Answers should be marked in 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.

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 candidates’ understanding and skills in the Viewing Outcome. Answers should be assessed according to the extent to which the candidates demonstrate these understandings and skills **in relation to the question**.

- 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 will be rewarded higher marks. More able candidates may be able to discern subtle or complex generic patterns.
- Candidates 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. Candidate 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 be rewarded more highly than candidates whose explanation or discussion is difficult to follow, but this may not always be the case. There may be come candidate who show exceptional skill and understandings in the viewing outcome who have great difficulty in expression their ideas in a well-structured format. These candidates would be the exception rather than the rule.
- In the examination the images were presented in black and white and the word 'inconvenient' disappears from the poster with the image of the penguins.
- Take note of the instruction that candidates need to refer to texts viewed and to the images in the paper.

Specific Points on each Question

Question 1

Discuss the ways in which visual texts may reflect or challenge society's values.

- Answers need to demonstrate some understanding of the terms 'reflect' and 'society's values'.
- 'reflect' can have a range of meanings, including literal mimesis or symbolic reflection. 'Challenge' can be read as: to call to explain, to question, to doubt, to dispute, to object to, to demand attention to, to suggest invalidity etc. "Society's values' can be read as local, national, or western European etc.
- 'society's values' can be expressed as prevalent attitudes (either positive or negative) towards such issues as environment, sex roles, violence, and entertainment etc.
- For images in Set 1, gender roles are perhaps the obvious issues. The visibility of weapons could also suggest weapon related issues. However, it is possible for students to make different readings of the images than the ones just mentioned. For Set 2, issues relating to climate change obviously are the main focus. 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 film posters, magazine covers, website images etc. – It seems that all images are manipulated photographs to advertise texts, but candidates need to discuss how the images have been constructed to reflect or challenge social values. It is possible that some of these 'photographs' are 'stills' from either documentary films or feature films.
- **Note** then that candidates who locate the images in other ways should not be penalised. This includes, for example, candidates who do not recognise the title of the magazine or some of the film titles. In the examination the images were presented in black and white and the word 'inconvenient' disappears from the poster with the image of the penguins in the desert (beach?) setting.

- Answers will need to recognise the cultural similarity of the images may focus on the American or 'western' view of the world. This type of discussion may include a discussion of the use of mass media to promote a particular ideology. This may be evident with candidates who notice that China and India are identified as potential saviours or destroyers of the world in the Time magazine image, which remains silent on the role the USA plays in contributing to global warming. Discussions 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.
- Answers for images in Set 2 will probably be more competent if they link the discussion to the global warming debate, either nationally or internationally.
- Some better answers might also engage with the print material include with each image, particularly with the 'Time' image - and may well take issue with these values or ideas.
- Some answers might want to address the society's values and changing influence of the magazines and films as media.

Question 2

Consider the ways that visual texts may serve the purpose of making you think about yourself, about your own society, or about the world.

- The key words 'the ways', 'visual texts may serve the purpose' and 'making you think' should be addressed.
- 'making you think' can be seen as a softer form of 'challenge' (see Q 1).
- The candidates may write on either themselves, their society or the world. Some candidates may attempt to cover all three.
- For images in Set 1, gender roles are perhaps the obvious issues. The visibility of weapons could also suggest weapon related issues. However, it is possible for students to make different readings of the images than the ones just mentioned. For Set 2, issues relating to climate change obviously are the main focus. 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 film posters, magazine covers, website images etc. – It seems that all images are manipulated photographs to advertise texts, but candidates need to discuss how the images have been constructed to reflect or challenge social values. It is possible that some of these 'photographs' are 'stills' from either documentary films or feature films.
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- Some answers might want to address the society's values and changing influence of the magazines and films as media.

Question 3

Explain how the conventions of visual texts can be used to convey the representations of a group or individual in society.

- The key words in this question are 'how', 'conventions of visual texts' and 'representations'. Better answers will address all of these key points.
- Students can write on representations of either 'groups' or an 'individual', some response may cover both.
- 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 use of light and dark
 - 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 conventions of landscape or portraiture shots
 - the use of foreground, middle-ground and background
 - the use of print text
- In turn, such features might be related to the 'how' of representation. For example, in Set 1 one image has a female gazing at the male, while the other image does not. What kinds of world are these images offering? Similarly, the use of light and dark in Set 2 may be useful to consider.

Question 4

Explain how your wider viewing and knowledge of social/cultural issues can influence your understanding of visual texts.

- Answers need to address the words "wider viewing", "social and cultural issues", and the word "how".
- Among the possibilities for social contexts are contemporary western society, America, Australia, Asia, Africa, The Arctic, Antarctica .
- 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 knowledge with the context of each image (in terms of the 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 film posters and magazine covers or posters, as well as with issues of audience.