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**Year 12 English ATAR Course Examination, 2021**

**Booklet 1 - Comprehending**

Marking guide Comprehending

**Text 1**

*Text 1 is an excerpt from the opening of the 2021 novel The Serpent’s Skin by Australian writer Erina Reddan.*

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Dad said she’d gone.

I didn’t reckon. I reckon she’d had enough, all right, but she couldn’t be gone gone. Mothers didn’t take off. Not any of the mothers I knew. And not my mum. She was too set on yanking my hair into twisty plaits, no matter what I might or might not have done to make her go.

Philly said Dad wouldn’t lie. ‘Dad hates sin more than he hates the devil.’

‘Shut your gob and go to sleep.’ I jammed my arms behind my head and got my eyes busy counting cobwebs on the ceiling. You couldn’t keep ahead of those spiders. Philly jumped up in her flannel jarmies. Even in the moonlight, I could tell Mum’d ironed em. Those jarmies made me bloody mad. I flung back the blankets and bolted to our chest of drawers, the chill of the floorboards nipping at my feet.

I ripped open Philly’s drawer. She had her clothes in piles like soldiers, all squared up.

‘Get your filthy hands off my stuff,’ she said.

‘Your PJs are dirty. I’m getting you another pair.’

‘You’re a lying snake in the grass, JJ.’ She pushed back the covers and was on all fours.

‘It’s on ya collar—bleedin great stain.’

She twisted her head, plucking at her jarmies, like a maggie, over and over at the ground for a worm. She gave up and launched herself at me, roaring. At nine, she was only a year younger, but so little, I caught her scratching hands easy. She pushed her face into mine and hissed like a cat.

We both stopped, listened. Normally, Mum would be belting down the passageway, floor vibrating, yelling at me to stop riling up Philly again. But this time there were just the rats scratching about like nothing had changed on their side of the wall.

**Question 1 (10 marks)**

Discuss how language features create a particular voice in **Text 1**.

* Label voice correctly. You can’t just use any descriptor for voice. Descriptors must be relevant to the text. Here, you needed to identify the voice of denial in the character JJ – synonyms such as disbelief or doubt were also correct. You could have discussed the angry voice of either character – emotions such as frustration, upset, sad weren’t marked as highly. Finally, students were awarded for identifying the distinctly Australian voice throughout the text – fewer marks were awarded for lower class voice, informal voice. Incorrect answers included a childish voice, an innocent voice, confident voice, authoritative voice, controlled voice, American voice etc. Students were awarded for being able to discuss more than one descriptor of voice.
* Language features used to create voice: Students tended to find any language feature they could identify but often the examples were not discussed in terms of voice being created. Correct answers: **repetition** of ‘didn’t’ and ‘not’ and ‘gone’ to create the voice of denial. **Swearing and emotive language** ‘bloody mad’ along with the **verbs** JJ chose to describe her own actions such as ‘jammed’ ‘flung’ ‘ripped’ all create the voice of anger. (It is important that these verbs are discussed in terms of JJ choosing the words to describe her actions.) Philly’s voice of anger is also created through the **metaphor** ‘roaring’ and the **simile** ‘hissed like a cat’. Distinctly Australian voice constructed through **colloquialisms** such as ‘reckon’ ‘gob’ ‘jarmies’ ‘bloody’ ‘ya’ ‘bleedin’ and the **simile** ‘like a maggie’.
* Show your process of analysis and make it clear. You can’t just identify a voice and language feature and then give an example. You are missing the opportunity to gain marks. You must identify the voice, identify the language feature used to create that voice, give an example and THEN explain the meaning of the example by unpacking the meaning of words in the example and explaining how these create the voice. This last step is missed out by many students and it is necessary to do this to gain marks.

**Text 2**

*Text 2 is an excerpt from a personal essay published online in 2021.*

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**Slow down and embrace nature – how to create better cities when the pandemic is over**

April 16, 2021

**Author: Bjorn Wickenberg**

Throughout the past year of working from home, I have gone for numerous morning, lunchtime and evening walks around my neighbourhood in the Eastern parts of Lund in Sweden. My neighbourhood has three dams for storing stormwater in the event of extreme rain. These help slow the water instead of overburdening the city’s underground water sewage system, which would increase the risk of flooding.

It was at one of these stormwater dams where I first made friends with a beautiful and majestic heron. Like other birds, the heron seems to have found its home here – and it moves between the three dams depending on the time of the day.

I once saw the heron catching a fish, like a better version of one of these TV shows about nature. This vivid image of the heron with the fish has stuck with me – maybe because I observed it directly with my own eyes.

I find myself returning to the image of the fish-catching heron and pondering on the fact that this bird and I depend on the same ecosystem. The heron for habitat and food, I for recreational purposes (like my pandemic-induced walks) and being saved from flooding. We are so separate, and yet connected.

These dams aren’t just a water management solution. When it’s cold, they freeze over and provide ice-skating facilities. As well as looking visually striking, they also provide ecosystems and a habitat for animals and wildlife to thrive in.

This kind of multifunctional infrastructure is becoming increasingly popular, with [many cities](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jclepro.2019.119154) adopting so-called “[nature-based solutions](https://naturvation.eu/about)” to not just solve environmental problems and safeguard biodiversity, but to also provide local people with recreation space.

Being aware of nature and its life-supporting functions, including how we as humans relate to it, is important. It helps our societies to function more sustainably and to recognise the symbiotic relationships we have with the plants and animals around us.

<https://theconversation.com/slow-down-and-embrace-nature-how-to-create-better-cities-when-the-pandemic-is-over-155818>

**Question 2 (10 marks)**

Evaluate the effect of structural choices **in Text 2**.

* Students need to revise structure: it refers to the order and organisation of ideas in a text. Appropriate structural choices to discuss for this text include compare and contrast; cause and effect; ubiquity. An anecdote is used as a structural device also, but students often discussed this only in terms of connecting to the reader, rather than how Wickenberg used this anecdote to structure the text.
* Anecdote: Wickenberg begins the text by illustrating an experience and then structures the remainder of the text around connecting that experience to wider interpretations and ideas
* Compare and contrast: Wickenberg examines the similarities and differences between himself and the heron
* Cause and effect: Wickenberg shows the cause of the dam being built was at first protective and function for the city. Then he shows that the effect of this construction was wider creating environmental and recreational benefits
* Ubiquity: Wickenberg concludes by showing the multifunctional infrastructure is a mainstream solution that is successfully used globally
* Not relevant to this text: point of view, sentence structure, paragraph structure, syntax.
* Discussion of effect was often vague such as ‘make a change to the environment’ ‘appreciate nature’. Discussion of effect needed to be very specific to this text.
* Few students evaluated – this meant to make a judgement about the effectiveness or value of the structural choices
* Remember, this was an interpretive text, not persuasive so it offered ideas and meanings to consider rather than push for specific action from the reader

**Text 3**

This is a Seattle magazine cover published in Spring 2017. *Seattle University is an American private university with over 7000 students.*

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<https://image.isu.pub/170524223411a096b2a491c5871243a4799230d4f575/jpg/page_1_thumb_large.jpg>

**Question 3 (10 marks)**

Analyse how written and visual elements in **Text 3** appeal to a specific audience.

* Written: students needed to explain the connotations of ‘shaping the world of tomorrow’ or the connotations of next 25 years’. This should have been connected to a discussion of prospective university students who are interested in further education and value an academic pathway to future opportunities
* Some students may have made the connection between ‘Jesuit’ and ‘Jesus’ to show the university appeals to a specific religious academic audience who hold religious values
* Visual: appeal to young, possibly female, possibly ethnically diverse audience through the choice of model representing this demographic. Eye gaze out of frame symbolic of looking into the distance. This represents the idea of future possibilities and creates a connection by the composition with the text placed next to the eye gaze of the young woman. Symbolism in the silhouette: charts/graphs: upward direction of arrow indicates something is increasing, possibly increasing in financial value like a stock so can symbolise financial success in the future through studying at this university; cityscape: more than just the location of the university, cities symbolise the corporate world such as business success that may come from studying at this uni; maps: symbolise travel and global opportunities; mountain landscape: symbolise adventure and pushing boundaries as well as the importance of the natural environment; formula: symbolises science/math and discovery. Together all these elements of symbolism create the idea that there are multiple pathways to success available a this uni for students to create an exciting future. Lighting – bright on the model’s face symbolising a bright future through this university. All of these elements should have been connected to a discussion of the values of a prospective university student such as education, broad opportunities, financial success, career success, creativity/curiosity/discovery, enjoyment of STEM type subjects etc.
* Many students focused on less or irrelevant aspects of the written or visual elements. Many students didn’t discuss values of intended audience.