



WILLETTON SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL
Literature ATAR Examination,
Semester One, 2023

Question booklet

YEAR 12
LITERATURE

Time allowed for this paper

Reading time before commencing work: ten minutes

Working time: three hours

Materials required/recommended for this paper

To be provided by the supervisor

This Question/Text booklet

Three Answer booklets (one for Section 1, and two for Section 2)

To be provided by the candidate

Standard items: pens (blue/black preferred), pencils (including coloured), sharpener, correction fluid/tape, eraser, ruler, highlighters.

Special items: nil

Important note to candidates

No other items may be taken into the examination room. It is **your** responsibility to ensure that you do not have any unauthorised material. If you have any unauthorised material with you, hand it to the supervisor **before** reading any further.

Structure of this paper

Section	Number of questions available	Number of questions to be answered	Suggested working time (minutes)	Marks available	Percentage of examination
Section One Response – Close reading	1	1	60	30	30
Section Two Extended response	8	2	120	70	70
Total					100

Instructions to candidates

1. The rules for the conduct of the Western Australian external examinations are detailed in the *Year 12 Information Handbook 2023*. Sitting this examination implies that you agree to abide by these rules.
2. Write your answers in the Answer booklet preferably using blue/black pen. Do not use erasable or gel pens.
3. For each answer that you write in Section Two, indicate the question number and the genre that you are using as your primary reference.
4. You must be careful to confine your answers to the specific questions asked and to follow any instructions that are specific to a particular question.
5. The examination requires you to answer three different questions in total, each question making primary reference to a different genre so that you must choose one question to be on poetry, one on prose fiction and one on drama.
6. The texts you choose as primary reference for questions in Section Two must be taken from the prescribed text lists in the Literature syllabus.

Penalties

If you do not comply with the requirements of instructions 5 and/or 6 listed above, you will receive a penalty for each, of 15 percent of the total marks available for the examination.

Section One: Response – close reading**30% (30 Marks)**

This section has **one** question and three texts (A, B and C), provided in this booklet. You must answer the one question in response to Text A, B **or** C.

Suggested working time: 60 minutes.

Question 1

Present a close reading of **one** of the three texts.

Text A

This is the opening extract from the short story "The Silk" (1965) by New Zealand writer Joy Cowley, published in *Some Other Country: New Zealand's Best Short Stories*.

THE SILK

When Mr Blackie took bad again that autumn both he and Mrs Blackie knew that it was for the last time. For many weeks neither spoke of it; but the understanding was in their eyes as they watched each other through the days and nights. It was a look, not of sadness or despair, but of quiet resignation tempered with something else, an unnamed expression that is seen only in the old and the very young.

Their acceptance was apparent in other ways, too. Mrs Blackie no longer complained to the neighbours that the old lazy-bones was running her off her feet. Instead, she waited on him tirelessly, stretching their pension over chicken and out-of-season fruits to tempt his appetite; and she guarded him so possessively that she even resented the twice-weekly visits from the District Nurse. Mr Blackie, on the other hand, settled into bed as gently as dust. He had never been a man to dwell in the past, but now he spoke a great deal of their earlier days and surprised Mrs Blackie by recalling things which she, who claimed the better memory, had forgotten. Seldom did he talk of the present, and never in these weeks did he mention the future.

Then, on the morning of the first frost of winter, while Mrs Blackie was filling his hot water bottle, he sat up in bed, unaided, to see out the window. The inside of the glass was streaked with tears of condensation. Outside, the frost had made an oval frame of crystals through which he could see a row of houses and lawns laid out in front of them, like white carpets.

'The ground will be hard,' he said at last. 'Hard as nails.'

Mrs Blackie looked up quickly. 'Not yet,' she said.

'Pretty soon, I think.' His smile was apologetic.

She slapped the hot water bottle into its cover and tested it against her cheek. 'Lie down or you'll get a chill,' she said.

Obediently, he dropped back against the pillow, but as she moved about him, putting the hot water bottle at his feet, straightening the quilt, he stared at the frozen patch of window.

'Amy, you'll get a double plot, won't you?' he said. 'I wouldn't rest easy thinking you were going to sleep by someone else.'

'What a thing to say!' The corner of her mouth twitched. 'As if I would.'

'It was your idea to buy single beds,' he said accusingly.

'Oh Herb.' She looked at the window, away again. 'We'll have a double plot,' she said. For a second or two she hesitated by his bed, then she sat beside his feet, her hands placed one on top of the other in her lap, in a pose that she always adopted when she had something important to say. She cleared her throat.

'You know, I've been thinking on and off about the silk.'

'The silk?' He turned his head towards her.

'I want to use it for your laying-out* pyjamas.'

'No Amy,' he said. 'Not the silk. That was your wedding present, the only thing I brought back with me.'

'What would I do with it now?' she said. When he didn't answer, she got up, opened the wardrobe door and took the camphorwood box from the shelf where she kept her hats. 'All these years and us not daring to take a scissor to it. We should use it sometime.'

'Not on me,' he said.

'I've been thinking about your pyjamas.' She fitted a key into the brass box. 'It'd be just right.'

A right waste, you mean,' he said. But there was no protest in his voice. In fact, it had lifted with a childish eagerness. He watched her hands as she opened the box and folded back layers of white tissue paper. Beneath them lay the blue of the silk. There was a reverent silence as she took it out and spread it under the light.

'Makes the whole room look different, doesn't it?' he said. 'I nearly forgot it looked like this.' His hands struggled free of the sheet and moved across the quilt. Gently, she picked up the blue material and poured it over his fingers.

'Aah,' he breathed, bringing it closer to his eyes. 'All the way from China.' He smiled. 'Not once did I let it out of me sight. You know that, Amy? There were those on board as would have pinched it quick as that. I kept it pinned round me middle.'

'You told me,' she said.

He rubbed the silk against the stubble of his chin. 'It's the birds that take your eye,' he said.

'At first,' said Mrs Blackie. She ran her finger over one of the peacocks that strutted in the foreground of a continuous landscape. They were proud birds, iridescent blue, with silver threads in their tails. 'I used to like them best, but after a while you see much more, just as fine only smaller.' She pushed her glasses onto the bridge of her nose and leaned over the silk, her finger guiding her eyes over islands where waterfalls hung, eternally suspended, between pagodas and dark blue conifers, over flat lakes and tiny fishing boats, over mountains where the mists never lifted, and back again to a haughty peacock caught with one foot suspended over a rock. 'It's a work of art like you never see in this country,' she said.

Mr Blackie inhaled the scent of the camphorwood. 'Don't cut it, Amy. It's too good for an old blighter like me.' He was begging her to contradict him.

'I'll get the pattern tomorrow,' she said.

* 'laying out' refers to the clothing worn by the deceased in their coffin.

Text B

This is the opening of the play *Them* by Australian playwright Samah Sabawi, first performed in 2019.

Them

CHARACTERS

LEILA, a young mother in her early 20s, married to Omar

OMAR, Leila's husband, a young father who used to be a school teacher before the school was bombed

MAJID, Omar's friend, a small-built man in his mid 20s

MOHAMED, Omar's best friend. He is in his late 20s and is the leader of the local resistance militia

SALMA, Omar's sister and 'matchmaker'. She's in her late 20s and has a prominent scar on her face

GUARDS 1 and 2, can be played by actors performing the roles of Omar and Majid

PIANO MAN, man in his mid 20s

MARWAN, to be substituted with a baby doll

SETTING

In what was once a quiet neighbourhood, somewhere in the Arab world.

DIVERSITY PLEDGE

I encourage the producer to collaborate with artists from diverse backgrounds in the realisation and presentation of this work.

PROLOGUE

Street. Dusty with scattered rocks and debris. There is a piano on right, three chairs and a sheesha in the middle and a checkpoint on the left.*

As the audience comes into the theatre, the PIANO MAN is sitting at the piano and playing a lively tune while MAJID, OMAR and MOHAMED stand next to him, casually singing along or dancing. Once the audience is seated, the sound of an explosion interrupts the music. The men run offstage in a panic. The PIANO MAN pushes his piano off stage. Lights go out as the sound of bombing ensues and continues into the next scene.

SCENE ONE

Bedroom. Lights fade on to a modestly furnished bedroom. There are a few scattered baby toys on the floor. The bombing finally stops and is followed by a moment of silence. LEILA and OMAR's voices are heard speaking in loud whispers from underneath the bed.

LEILA: They stopped.

OMAR: About time!

The sound of the dawn call for prayer is heard.

Dawn is breaking. How is Marwan?

LEILA: [*sighing*] He sleeps whenever the explosions are loud. Here, put your hand on his heart. Can you feel how fast it's beating?

OMAR: Like a horse on a racecourse.

LEILA: I wanna wake him up.

OMAR: No. Let him sleep.

Pause

LEILA: I need to get out.

OMAR: No no no no ... don't. Not yet.

Baby Marwan stirs.

Don't move him. He'll wake up.

LEILA: So what? Just leave him under the bed?

OMAR: We should all stay under the bed for a few more minutes just to be sure they're done playing with their big guns.

LEILA: I can't. I'm going crazy down here. I've got to get out.

OMAR: [*seductively*] Would a little bit of *this* help convince you to stay? You know, we've never tried it down here before?

Sounds of kissing.

LEILA: Oh, please! Really? *It?*

OMAR *laughs lightly.*

Careful. Marwan will wake up.

OMAR: You're right. Let's go somewhere else. Meet me under the left side of the headboard, right next to the slippers.

LEILA: As sexy as your proposition sounds, and I mean what girl in her right mind would say no to a romantic rendezvous next to a pair of slippers, but I'm going to have to decline.

OMAR: You're breaking my heart.

LEILA *crawls out from under the bed.*

Wait! Stay with me.

* *sheesha*: also known as a hookah or water pipe

LEILA: I can't! I need to remind myself I'm human, and not some frightened insect hiding under the furniture.

The baby grizzles.

OMAR: Shhhhhh ... you see what you've done? Now he's awake.

LEILA stands and stretches her arms and legs before she sits down on the floor and leans her back on the bed. She reaches for her phone and starts to scroll on it. OMAR follows her and gently pulls the baby out from under the bed. The baby makes a crying noise, OMAR stands up and begins to pace the room with Marwan in his arms, gently humming a lullaby.

LEILA: Omar.

OMAR: Yes.

LEILA: We shouldn't sleep together anymore.

OMAR: [*dramatically*] Woah woah woah. This is all we've got!

LEILA: Can you be serious?

OMAR: Never! It would kill me.

LEILA: Well, you might be killed anyway. We are in the middle of a war.

OMAR: You don't know that. This could be the end of the war.

LEILA: Or it could just be the beginning.

OMAR: All the more reason not to be serious.

LEILA: Let's spread out. Sleep in opposite corners of the apartment, so when a bomb falls-

OMAR: *If* a bomb falls.

LEILA: Fine. So *if* a bomb falls, one of us might still survive ...

OMAR: And live to mourn the other ...?

LEILA: If I die, Marwan would at least have you.

The baby cries, LEILA puts her arms out gesturing to OMAR to hand him over. She starts to breastfeed the baby while continuing the conversation. OMAR sits next to her and looks on with loving eyes.

OMAR: What if Marwan is with you and I'm the wretched one that survives? I don't want a life that doesn't have you and Marwan in it.

LEILA: We have to increase our chances. For Marwan's sake.

OMAR: I don't have a chance without you. I will sleep with you. Live with you. Die with you.

[*Jokingly*] Darling ...

LEILA: Yes?

OMAR: Would you be so kind as to share a bomb with me?

LEILA: Not funny.

LEILA and OMAR grab their mobile phones and scroll quietly for a moment.

OMAR: You'll be relieved to know, according to the news, the fighting was all in the South.

LEILA: And once again only bad people ... terrorists ... were killed?

OMAR: Absolutely!

LEILA: Why is that?

OMAR: Because civilians here have a special protective skin. Bombs bounce right off it.

LEILA: Of course!

OMAR: Most of the fighting was literally three streets down from here.

Pause

LEILA: You know what this means?

OMAR: They're practically at our doorstep.

LEILA *leans closer to OMAR, holding her phone up.*

LEILA: Smile!

They both fake a smile. She snaps a selfie with her phone camera.

OMAR: What was that for?

LEILA: Mama. I messaged her to say we're fine but she demanded proof.

OMAR: Don't post it online. I don't want my friends to see it. They're perverts.

LEILA: With the way I look now, you really shouldn't worry.

OMAR: The way you look? Do you have any idea how beautiful you look?

LEILA smiles tenderly as he gets closer.

Is Marwan sleeping?

LEILA: Not yet. He's still feeding.

OMAR: Man ... I swear this kid has it in for me. He only sleeps during the fighting and is wide awake whenever there is calm.

They return to their phones.

LEILA: We should have left with my parents. Look! They posted new photos ... they seem so ... happy.

OMAR: Everyone smiles in photos. We just did. Doesn't mean they're happy.

LEILA: They're safe. I know that would make me happy.

OMAR: They live off charity in a foreign country in some stranger's home.

LEILA: It's temporary. They'll be settled soon. Look!

She shows him her phone screen.

This is their new neighbourhood. It's so lush and green. Can you imagine Marwan running through this park?

OMAR: *Their* new neighbourhood? *Habibti**, that is not now, nor will it ever be *their* neighbourhood. They will always be made to feel like outsiders there. Besides, their old neighbourhood used to be green too.

LEILA: Not anymore. Everything here is now so grey, even the trees are now coated with layers of ash, rubble and dust.

OMAR: Things will go back to how they used to be. Remember how your parents used to invite us every Friday?

LEILA: Ahhh ... the smell of my mother's fresh bread.

OMAR: And your father's secret falafel recipe.

LEILA: He was so proud of his falafels he almost disowned my brother once for saying it needed more salt.

OMAR: The smell of mint tea on the balcony.

LEILA: Watching children play in the street ...

OMAR: Mmmm ... and eating sweets from Abu Abdo's baker ...

LEILA: They'll never appreciate him the way we did.

LEILA: I miss them.

OMAR: It will be over soon. Things will return to the way they used to be.

OMAR gently kisses LEILA's hand.

* Habibti: darling

Text C

This poem "In Position" by New Zealand poet Lauris Edmond was part of her collection of the same name, published in 1997.

In Position

I want to tell you about time, how strangely
it behaves when you haven't got much of it left:
after 60 say, or 70, when you'd think it would

find itself squeezed so hard that like melting
ice it would surely begin to shrink, each day
looking smaller and smaller - well, it's not so.

The rules change, a single hour can grow huge
and quiet, full of reflections like an old river,
its slow-turning eddies and whirls showing you

every face of your life in a fluid design -
your children for instance, how you see them
deepened and changed, not merely by age, but by

time itself, its wide and luminous eye; and you
realise at last that your every gift to them - love,
your very life, should they need it - will not

and cannot come back; it wasn't a gift at all
but a borrowing, a baton for them to pass on in
their turn. Look, there they are in this

shimmering distance, rushing through their kind
of time, moving faster than you yet not catching up.
You're alone. And slowly you begin to discern

the queer outline of what's to come: the bend in
the river beyond which, moving steadily, head up
(you hope), you will simply vanish from sight.

End of Section 1

See next page

Section Two: Extended response**70% (70 Marks)**

This section has **eight** questions. You are required to respond to **two different** questions. You must use texts **studied this semester** as your primary reference.

Each response **must** make primary reference to a different genre from that used in Section One.

If you make reference in Section One to:

- (i) Text A (poetry), then in this section, one response **must** make primary reference to prose and one response **must** make primary reference to drama.
- (ii) Text B (prose), then in this section, one response **must** make primary reference to poetry and one response **must** make primary reference to drama.
- (iii) Text C (drama), then in this section, one response **must** make primary reference to prose and one response **must** make primary reference to poetry.

Your **second** response **must** make primary reference to a different genre from that used in Section One and a different genre from that used in your first extended response question.

A text discussed as a primary reference **must** be from the prescribed text lists in the syllabus.

Questions 7, 8 and 9 require you to make reference to the genre specified in the question.

Suggested working time: 120 minutes

Question 2**(35 marks)**

With detailed reference to at least one text, discuss how a knowledge of production context influences a reading.

Question 3**(35 marks)**

Literature is one of the few places where the voices of the marginalised can truly be heard and understood. Discuss how this is so in at least one **Australian literary text** that represents a marginalised voice.

Question 4**(35 marks)**

With detailed reference to at least one text, discuss how an individual, group and/or event has been represented to elicit a particular response.

See next page

Question 5

(35 marks)

With detailed reference to at least one text, explain how it gains its power by critiquing aspects of its own society.

Question 6

(35 marks)

With reference to at least one text, discuss the ways in which stylistic techniques, including language, shed new light on familiar ideas and/or problems.

Question 7

(35 marks)

With detailed reference to at least one poem, explain how it can be both beautiful and confronting.

Question 8

(35 marks)

With detailed reference to a **play** discuss how the dramatisation of one or more character's inner life reveals the impact of larger historical and/or political forces on the individual.

Question 9

(35 marks)

With detailed reference to at least one **prose fiction narrative** explain how it uses characterisation to offer valuable insights into human imperfection.

End of examination