Study Guide

ATAR Literature Units 3 & 4

Based on the 2018 WACE Examination

ETAWA

English Teachers Association
Western Australia

Foreword

This Study Guide was published to support students and teachers who are working remotely as a result of COVID-19. The full *Good Answers ATAR Literature 2020* will be published and available to purchase in Term 2, as usual.

The views and opinions expressed in this book are those of the ETAWA. They are not necessarily the views of the School Curriculum & Standards Authority.

The first part of this guide contains general advice on studying ATAR Literature and preparing for your examinations. The second part deconstructs the 2018 WACE ATAR Literature examination. Both sections include activities to assist you in your revision.

We would like to wish you every success for your continuing studies in these challenging circumstances.

This publication may be distributed to students and teachers of Literature in 2020.

This Study Guide is produced by the English Teachers Association of Western Australia.

ETAWA
English Teachers Association
Western Australia

PO Box 8463, Perth Business Centre, WA, 6849
etawa@etawa.org.au
www.etawa.org.au

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Introduction

How to study successfully for the ATAR literature course

There are a variety of ways to ensure that you are thoroughly prepared for the exam. Some of these include the following:

Know the syllabus

The SCSA syllabus documents are the core of every ATAR Literature course. Every school, and every teacher, must teach the content contained within this document. Every examiner must construct their exams around the 'examinable content' in the syllabus – the bullet points that articulate the content of each unit. It is obvious, then, that **each student of Literature must be familiar with this document and its accompanying glossary**. Your teacher should have provided you with the syllabus. If not, ask for a copy, or download it from the SCSA website.

Practise active learning

Be aware of your individual learning style and acknowledge your strengths and weakness when you engage with the subject. When you are in class, reading a text or revising, be mindful of how you are making sense of this subject, and the practices you engage as you study Literature. Here are some useful methods for being 'active' in your learning this year.

Make notes. Take out a pen and paper as soon as you come into class. Don't just copy down what your teacher writes on the board; include points that arise in discussion. Afterwards, revise and reorganise your notes. Consider colour-coding, graphic organisers or a filing system to clearly organise your learning.

Think about what your teacher says. If you don't understand, say so immediately or see your teacher after the lesson. Actively focus on what is being discussed in class and avoid distractions. Turn the words over in your mind. Decide whether you agree or disagree. For example, after each lesson ask yourself: what was the main focus? What parts of the syllabus was the lesson addressing? How did my teacher illustrate the idea?

Ask questions. Your teacher is there – in part – to answer any questions you have, so make the most of this valuable resource. Find the most effective way to do this for you and the class situation. Maybe it is best to put your hand up straight away and ask for help, or perhaps it is easier to walk with your teacher to their next class, or email them when you have had time to consider your question and what you need clarified.

Engage in class discussion. Debate can be an important vehicle for developing ideas or raising further points. This is not about simply disagreeing with your teacher or another speaker in class; it is about challenging, refining, extrapolating and clarifying their comments, as well as advancing your own original thoughts. It is a testing ground for your own thinking.

Revise. Don't file away notes and handouts just to forget about them. Go over them that night. Use a highlighter and make notes on your handouts. Rewrite the notes you took in class. Make study notes where you summarise your learning on each text, using clear headings and subheadings to organise them. Go over them again on a regular basis throughout the year.

Practise active reading

When reading and rereading your texts, do so actively, **annotating your texts thoughtfully**. Keep a highlighter in your hand, a stack of sticky notes by your side and a pen at the ready. Make notes as you read. Ask questions in your head. On the sticky notes, write down questions or points you could ask your teacher to clarify or discuss with you. Simply placing stars, underlining or highlighting large chunks of text doesn't usually work. Often when we return to such vague indicators, we usually forget why we put them there in the first place! Accompany each indicator with concise annotations, leaving clear messages to yourself as to why it is significant.

In Literature, you will need to **read your texts a number of times** over the course of the year. Each time you do so, you will notice something new and interesting. You should certainly re-read your texts as part of the lead-up to the WACE exam. It is obvious when a student knows their texts well; it is also obvious when they do not. Audio books can be useful resources to keep your engagement with the text fresh. They should not replace your initial reading, but can be helpful when you need to remind yourself of sections of a novel and can be listened to as you exercise or travel.

Research your texts

To be able to write about a text with understanding, you need to do more than read the text itself. **Research the context** in which the text was produced, as well as the specific context of the author, poet or playwright. You should **engage with critical readings** on your text – essays and papers that explore various aspects of your text. Such reading can assist in refining your own understandings of the text, and well-chosen quotes from credible critical sources can add considerable weight to your arguments. Be discerning about the readings and reviews that you draw on – check the credentials of those who have written them.

Don't accept everything you read or hear as the truth

The point of studying Literature is to learn how to **construct critical readings of texts**, not to repeat someone else's readings. For nearly every interpretation of a text you find, there will be a very different interpretation available somewhere. So, when reading or listening to someone else's comments on a text, you need to do so critically. Don't be swayed just because the writer uses sophisticated discourse. Look for holes in the argument. Identify if a particular agenda, critical lens or reading practice is colouring the interpretation. Try to think of parts of the text which contradict the interpretation being offered, or of alternative ways a quotation or scene might be interpreted. Keep asking yourself whether the argument is fully supported.

Understand your readings and responses

The study of Literature is also about **understanding the ways we respond to what we read**. Such responses can vary widely, and you may have a variety of responses to the various texts you study. Responses to texts can be intellectual or they can be emotional; you may accept, resist, critique and/or defend the ideas they contain. Irrespective, you must become involved with the texts you study. You must have views, opinions and arguments about them. If you commit yourself to this, not only will you do better in the exam, you'll enjoy your experience of Literature much more.

The Literature course is intended to induct you into **particular ways of interrogating texts**, not simply teach you information about particular texts. It is those ways of interrogating texts that your teachers and the examiners hope will stay with you long after the details of the particular texts you studied in Year 12 have been forgotten. **Always remember, the exam is your chance to demonstrate your understanding of and control over the skills you have gained through your study of Literature. The texts you encounter will provide you with examples and evidence of these skills and concepts.**

Always remember, **there is no one 'correct' reading of any text**. There are only readings that make more sense within a particular framework or that are better argued than others. If you show in the examination that you are aware that your argument is just one of a number of possible arguments and that other interpretations are possible, then you are likely to increase your probability of achieving higher marks. You will only be able to do this, however, if you expose yourself to different readings during your course.

Having said this, it is important to **understand that there are dominant readings of texts**. Understanding the typical interpretation of a text – the one that is accepted by the majority of readers in a particular context – is the basis of understanding where your own reading might sit. Do you subscribe to this dominant reading? Or is your interpretation an alternate reading; one that, while not directly challenging the dominant reading, foregrounds different aspects? Or do you read the text resistantly, exploiting the gaps and silences, exposing the assumptions it makes or resisting the ideologies it promotes? Remember that readings are fluid, changing over time and across contexts. As well as being a unique artistic work, literary texts operate within cultural ideologies, reinforcing, challenging and/or subverting ways of thinking.

Readings can be based on a number of premises: they can be thematic, ideological, contextual, informed by a particular reading practice or even purely aesthetic. **You may develop several readings of a single text**. When answering particular examination questions, however, not all readings will be relevant. Offering too many readings of a text in a single response can also cloud your response. Be discerning when deciding which readings to discuss in your examination.

Undertake wider reading

The most confident Literature students, arguably, are those who have the greatest experience with literature. Don't confine yourself to the texts set by your teacher. **Read other works** as well, by the same authors and from the same contexts, as well as a wider variety. Learn how *literature* functions, not just the specific examples you study in your Literature course.

Read non-fiction and stay on top of current media as well. Learn about the contexts you study – including your own. Many students let themselves down by making sweeping generalisations about their own or other cultures. For example, the oft-stated generalisation in students' essays that we have attained gender equality in 21st century Australia as the basis of their criticism of gender representations in a particular text. Half an hour of research will reveal the fallacious or naïve nature of such a belief.

As stated earlier, **read critical discussions of your set texts**. Engaging with others' interpretations and analyses will expose you to ideas other than those you discuss in class. It will help inform your own understandings and readings. Using quotes from such critical sources to support your own readings can also be a valuable inclusion in your exam responses.

Start your own glossary of terms

Using the correct metalanguage is an essential criterion for success in the Literature course. Just look at the marking keys for the course to see how much your control of language and metalanguage is valued. **Keep a list** in your workbook, file or on your device. Identify key terms from the syllabus and record their definitions. Compose a sentence using them in context. Practise using them in both your verbal discussions and written notes, until you are employing them comfortably and correctly. Add terms that come up in your lessons and your wider reading, and keep lists of synonyms for words that reappear too often in your writing. The point of using appropriate terminology is twofold: it adds greater technicality and nuance to your writing as well as increasing sophistication.

As part of the Literature syllabus document, there is a glossary. This is an appendix to the syllabus and is intended to be a resource for teachers and students. The definitions are a useful starting point for your own glossary, but you should look beyond this list for definitions that you fully understand.

Know your conventions

There is no real excuse for not knowing the range of typical conventions of different genres and forms that you have studied. Similarly, you should know the names of, and be able to recognise, a wide range of language techniques and literary devices. This might mean having a checklist of the main narrative devices, or flash cards that describe the various poetic forms. This type of knowledge is crucial for a strong close reading performance and informs all analytical discussions.

Practise writing

You cannot reasonably expect to do well in your tests and examinations if you do not practise your writing. Writing a successful essay under timed conditions is a skill in itself. Try to **write a practice essay** at least once a fortnight as part of your study. Allow yourself no more than an hour from the time you first read the question, as per the recommendations in the exam.

If you are struggling to find time to do this – although you should make the time! – at the very least, **practise deconstructing questions and writing plans** for how you would approach the question. You might even plan multiple responses to the same question, experimenting with different texts and approaches to see which might be more successful. Often, our first thoughts are not our best, which is why your teachers ask you to slow down, think about the question and plan before committing to writing. Markers see many exam responses where the student suddenly 'gets' the question half-way through their response and changes tack, resulting in a disjointed or clumsy essay.

Know the Examination Brief

The syllabus document also includes the *Examination Brief*, a table that defines how the examination must be structured and the concepts that can be examined. It is important to be familiar with the brief – it will help you to be prepared for the examination and you will know what to expect when you open the cover on that day in November.

Work hard!

There is no substitute for this. Literature – like all ATAR courses – is demanding and it will require **regular and effective study** in order for you to maximise your success. This course is often recognised as having one of the strongest cohorts each year, and it has a high mean. This means your competition is going to be tough, so make sure you give yourself every chance to perform well.

The content of the ATAR Literature course

You might have noticed that the ATAR Literature course organises syllabus content into four strands:

- Texts in contexts
- Language and textual analysis
- Creating analytical texts
- Creating imaginative texts.

The first two strands are those that relate to your understandings regarding the texts you study. The other two, obviously, relate to the texts you create: your close readings, essays, creative writing and other texts.

'Texts in contexts' is a content area running through all parts of the course. Essentially, it suggests that texts are not created in a vacuum, but are intrinsically related to the contexts in which they are both produced and received by readers. A good way to get a handle on a text, and thus be prepared for the examination, is to construct a reading in terms of what ideas, events and people it represents in our world. For instance, you might construct a reading of a text in terms of cultural identity and then examine how characterisation, setting, symbolism, narrative structure and so on contribute to this reading.

At heart, the 'Texts in contexts' strand is concerned with the influence of contexts on the production of texts, the ideological functions of texts and the ways in which texts can be read from different perspectives. Another important point to remember about this strand of the course is that when studying the representation of such things as class, gender, race/ethnicity and cultural identity in a text, you should not assume that the representations are necessarily intentional on the part of the author.

Many candidates write sentences like:

> *'Through the careful construction of characters, the author comments on the construction of gender in society.'*

Be very careful before writing a sentence like this, unless you have clear evidence of an author's intentions. Reading texts in terms of class, gender, race, ethnicity and cultural identity is a *reading strategy*, not an attempt to uncover an author's intentions. What we uncover with this strategy is more likely to be the, possibly unconscious, influence of context on an author.

A more appropriate way of writing the above sentence could be:

> *'By focusing on the construction of characters, gender can be seen as a social construct rather than a universal constant.'*

The **'Language and textual analysis'** strand is concerned with the actual construction of the text; its composition. This strand requires you to critically analyse how the text's ideas are constructed through various features of structure, genre, language and style. Texts, and thus

everything contained within them, are products of the writer's craft. Nothing just 'is'; all aspects of a text have been shaped by the writer's selection of conventions, devices and techniques at their disposal. Even aspects of a text that may see to be unintentional on the part of the writer are nevertheless communicated through the medium of language – language which the writer has selected. To critically discuss your studied texts, you must be able to appraise how its ideas, representations, values and so on are constructed and conveyed through the various elements of the text's composition.

Analysing a text can be likened to being a car mechanic. Every layperson knows what a car looks like, and that it functions to transport people, but a mechanic can explain *how* the car functions in order to do so, and the role of the various components that make up its structure and mechanics. Similarly, anyone can read a book and tell you what they think it means, but a good Literature student should then be able to explain *how* the various components of the text have been purposefully shaped in order to create those meanings.

Unit 3

Unit 3 focuses on '*the relationship between language, culture and identity'*. These three key words – language, culture and identity – appear numerous times throughout the examinable content. This relationship includes how language is used '*to represent ideas, events and people*' in ways that support or challenge various ideologies; that is, sets of values, attitudes and beliefs. It notes that such representations, and the ideologies they challenge or support, can vary according to context. Literary texts are a medium through which a nation's identity is developed or called into question. A specific mention is made of representations of Australian culture and identity. As in all Literature units, skills of close textual analysis and composition of texts of various forms and genres is also included.

Unit 4

Unit 4 focuses on developing an understanding of '*the significance of literary study*' by developing the skills necessary for '*close critical analysis*'. This includes refining the skills of close textual analysis, along with broadening the scope of critical analysis of literary texts through wide reading and '*adopting a variety of reading strategies*'. Essentially, appreciating the multiplicity of readings possible of literary texts is emphasised. A key word in this unit is 'dynamic': understanding that expectations of, and responses to, literary texts, their genres and their ideologies vary considerably across contexts. Developing an aesthetic appreciation of literature also appears in this unit. As in all Literature units, skills of close textual analysis and composition of texts of various forms and genres is also included.

Adapted from Year 12 ATAR Literature, School Curriculum and Standards Authority, 2017

Managing the discourse of literary study: terminology and metalanguage

As with all fields of study, in Literature there are particular concepts to be mastered to help you interrogate texts. Notice that the key word is 'concepts', not terms. It is the *concepts*, the ideas, which are important. There are too many of these concepts to be explained in this guide. That said, there are two fundamental sets of literary concepts:

Technical discourse – linguistic and stylistic terminology

One set of concepts is drawn from traditional literary study and has to do with aspects of a text or how language is used in texts. This includes such things as the time and place where a text is situated – for which the word 'setting' is the technical term – and the use of a part of something to stand for the whole, for which the word 'metonymy' is the technical term. These are the terms required for the 'Language and literary analysis' strand of the course content.

It is sometimes easy to get the impression that using big words is the best way to get high marks in literary analysis. What is far more important is using correct technical terminology – or metalanguage – to convey precision and nuance in your writing. These may be seemingly simple terms and phrases, but using them will add clarity to your writing that long-winded and overly complex language can obscure. For example, why say 'praxis' when what you mean is 'practice'? Why say 'textual topography' when what you mean is 'setting'?

It is a good idea to create a thorough glossary of literary terms. Although it is important that you are familiar with the Literature syllabus glossary (as it is these definitions which will inform the writers of your examination), this is not a complete list of literary terms – you will need a more holistic guide. Accumulate a 'favourite terms' word bank as your year progresses. The balance you should look for is using literary terminology which accurately and appropriately illustrates your idea, while displaying economy and fluency of writing.

Theoretical discourse – critical terminology

The other key set of concepts is drawn from cultural studies and relates to the function of literary texts as cultural artefacts and conduits for ideologies. It is where we undertake the examination of representations, the study of concepts such as class, gender, race and ethnicity, as well as national and cultural identity, and the power relationships associated with these – in other words, much of the course content classified under the 'Texts in contexts' strand.

These terms should come up in the discussions you have in the classroom in addition to the critical readings and theoretical textbooks you have been assigned.

Understanding the ATAR Literature WACE exam

The WACE exam is a competition. There are a certain number of places available at universities, but the number of students wanting a place exceeds the number of places available, so there is a competition for those places. This has one important consequence that some students forget: the WACE exam is not based on a pass-fail system. Getting into the course you want is not about reaching a certain predetermined standard; it's about getting higher marks than the other people who want to study the same course. Cut-offs for courses vary between years – not always a lot, but vary they do. In addition, raw examination scores are statistically manipulated before a final WACE score is arrived at. This means that you can't aim to just fall over a predetermined halfway or pass line. You have to aim to do the very best you can.

There are several important things you should understand about the Literature examination.

Application of knowledge

As it so happens, the majority of Literature candidates know their texts well and the standard of expression, if not structure, is quite high in the Literature exam. This means that 'engagement with the question' is often the most important criterion of all. It is the major area where many students fall down in the ATAR examination.

The reason why focusing on the topic is so important is because the examination is testing your *application of knowledge*, not simple recall. The examination is not just a memory test. While you do have to be able to remember your texts, what the examination is testing is whether you can apply this knowledge to particular aspects of the course. The markers read many well-written essays which show an excellent knowledge of texts, but which have only the most fleeting relationship with the topic of the question.

The following comment from the 2015 Examination Report simply reiterates a comment made by many markers, year after year:

> *'Most [candidates] made at least some attempt to structure a response to their chosen questions.'*

While this statement is framed in the positive, there is a very thinly-veiled criticism here about the extent to which answers addressed the questions. Including 'made at least some attempt' here is not a glowing recommendation of candidates' performance in this aspect of the examination.

To be able to focus on the topic, you need to know your texts well and have a thorough understanding of the course concepts. Most importantly, you need to have practised approaching your texts from different reading positions or through different arguments. You should have considered and debated different interpretations of your texts. If you only know about certain aspects, or have only one interpretation of a text, then you are going to find it challenging to apply your understanding to an unfamiliar topic or respond effectively to many of the extended response questions.

Sampling

Another important point to understand about the examination is that while it is examining how well you have developed the skills and understandings required by the ATAR Literature course, it cannot possibly examine every aspect of the course in three hours. Like all examinations, the paper at the end of the year will only ask questions about some aspects of the course. It has to use a sampling process. An understanding of narrative structure in prose fiction is an important part of the course, so in some years there has been a question on this. There may or may not be such a question this year. The fact that there has been a question on the same topic for a number of years running does not mean that there is certain to be one again this year. Nor does it mean that there will not be one.

Unfortunately, you are not in a position to know what is going to come up in the 2019 exam. The only way to deal with this is to be as prepared as possible. Ensure that you have an understanding of all aspects of the course. Don't try to play the odds by omitting important parts of the course in the hope that only those you have worked on will come up. Also, don't prepare simply by completing last year's examination; this year's sampling process will be different and will take into consideration the concepts covered – and not covered – in last year's exam, as well as the markers' feedback.

A memory test?

The Literature examination isn't just a memory test, but there is a rote memorising aspect to it. In order to be able to demonstrate confidence with a text, a stronger candidate will consult their memory of quotations and understandings in order to be flexible and fluent in their response. This shouldn't be too difficult if you have worked hard over the course of the year.

But many students mistakenly assume that it is a different kind of memory test. They assume that the exam is a test of their ability to remember an essay they wrote during the year. The reality is that unless the essay produced during the year is relevant to the topics in the exam, you are unlikely to do well if you reproduce it and merely customise it around the question you choose.

You might happen to strike a question that is exactly related to an essay you have written. It happens. Obviously, the way to maximise this occurring is to have practised on a variety of essay topics throughout the course of the year and in the lead-up to the exam.

You should be developing your memory skills and recall ability of references to texts and key course concepts. Having certain things committed to memory can aid your examination performance. Begin committing information to memory as you learn it and revise or refresh your knowledge before the exam. This will allow you to retain more information than if you cram your memory in the days or hours before your examination.

The ATAR Literature WACE exam marking guides

The following guides are used by all WACE markers to assess each script. It is essential that you are familiar with these guides in order to appreciate the allocation of marks against each criterion, and the differentiation between marks within each criterion.

Section One: Response – Close Reading **25 marks (30%)**

Description	Marks
Reading/s of text The response presents:	
an insightful and coherent reading/s using appropriate reading strategies and/or reading practices.	7
an informed and coherent reading/s using appropriate reading strategies and/or practices.	6
a sound reading using mostly appropriate reading strategies and/or practices.	5
a general reading that makes some use of appropriate reading strategies and/or practices.	4
an inconsistent reading imposing reading strategies and/or practices inappropriately.	3
a vague reading with little use of reading strategies.	2
a limited reading showing little understanding of the text.	1
no evidence of this criterion.	0
Subtotal	**7**
Close textual analysis The response uses:	
detailed close textual analysis of language, text examples and/or generic conventions and reference to cultural contexts where appropriate throughout the response to develop and support the reading/s.	6
close textual analysis of language, text examples and/or generic conventions and reference to cultural contexts where appropriate throughout the response to support the reading/s.	5
close textual analysis of language, text examples, and/or generic conventions with some reference to cultural contexts where appropriate to largely develop the reading/s.	4
some textual analysis of relevant examples from the text that generally develop the reading/s.	3
little textual analysis of examples that do not always develop a reading.	2
limited evidence to support a reading.	1
no evidence of this criterion.	0
Subtotal	**6**
Linguistic, stylistic and critical terminology The response shows:	
a sophisticated and comprehensive use of linguistic, stylistic and critical terminology suited to the reading.	6
a comprehensive use of linguistic, stylistic and critical terminology appropriate to the reading.	5
a consistent use of linguistic, stylistic and critical terminology mostly related to the reading.	4
some use of linguistic, stylistic and critical terminology mostly related to the reading.	3
infrequent use of linguistic, stylistic and critical terminology not always appropriate to the reading.	2
limited and inaccurate use of linguistic, stylistic and critical terminology.	1
no evidence of this criterion.	0
Subtotal	**6**
Expression of ideas The response expresses ideas:	
in sophisticated language, style and structure.	6
in controlled language, style and structure.	5
in mostly controlled language, style and structure.	4
in a largely clear way, but not always coherently structured.	3
in a disjointed style, characterised by unclear language use and lack of structure.	2
that are difficult to follow because of unclear language use and lack of structure.	1
no evidence of this criterion.	0
Subtotal	**6**
Total	**25**

Section Two: Extended response 30 + 30 marks (70%)

Description	Marks
Engagement with the question The response demonstrates:	
a sophisticated and critical engagement with all parts of the question.	6
a comprehensive and detailed engagement with all parts of the question.	5
a purposeful engagement with all parts of the question.	4
a general engagement with most parts of the question.	3
a limited or simplistic engagement with the question.	2
little engagement with the question.	1
no evidence of this criterion.	0
Subtotal	**6**
Course concepts The response shows:	
a sophisticated understanding and application of the course concepts that are related to the question.	6
a well-informed understanding and application of the course concepts that are related to the question.	5
a sound understanding and application of the course concepts that are related to the question.	4
a general understanding and some application of the course concepts that are related to the question.	3
a vague understanding of the course concepts that are related to the question.	2
little or no understanding of the course concepts that are related to the question.	1
no evidence of this criterion.	0
Subtotal	**6**
Use of evidence The response uses:	
detailed textual analysis of text examples, language and/or generic conventions and reference to cultural contexts where appropriate throughout the response to develop and support the answer.	6
textual analysis of text examples, language and/or generic conventions and reference to cultural contexts where appropriate throughout the response to develop the answer.	5
textual analysis of text examples, language and/or generic conventions with some reference to cultural contexts where appropriate to largely develop the answer.	4
some textual analysis of relevant examples from the text that generally develop the answer.	3
some use of relevant examples in the answer.	2
limited evidence to support an answer.	1
no evidence of this criterion.	0
Subtotal	**6**
Linguistic, stylistic and critical terminology The response shows:	
a sophisticated and comprehensive use of linguistic, stylistic and critical terminology suited to the answer.	6
a comprehensive use of linguistic, stylistic and critical terminology appropriate to the answer.	5
a consistent use of linguistic, stylistic and critical terminology mostly related to the answer.	4
some use of linguistic, stylistic and critical terminology mostly related to the answer.	3
infrequent use of linguistic, stylistic and critical terminology not always appropriate to the answer.	2
limited and inaccurate use of linguistic, stylistic and critical terminology.	1
no evidence of this criterion.	0
Subtotal	**6**
Expression of ideas The response expresses ideas:	
in sophisticated language, style and structure.	6
in controlled language, style and structure.	5
in mostly controlled language, style and structure.	4
in a largely clear way, but not always coherently structured.	3
in a disjointed style, characterised by unclear language use and lack of structure.	2
that are difficult to follow because of unclear language use and lack of structure.	1
no evidence of this criterion.	0
Subtotal	**6**
Total	**30**

Understanding the marking guides

Firstly, let's examine the two criteria that the marking guides, essentially, have in common: use of literary, stylistic and critical terminology, and expression of ideas.

Linguistic, stylistic and critical terminology

Not surprisingly, you are assessed on the extent to which your response reflects a critical understanding of the concepts within the syllabus, and within the field of literary criticism generally. The texts and questions in the exam have been carefully selected and/or constructed to provide opportunities for these concepts to be discussed. You are also expected to be fluent in the discourse of this subject in order to respond effectively.

Within each of the Literature units, students are required to '*create analytical texts…using appropriate linguistic, stylistic and critical terminology to analyse and evaluate texts*'. Seeing the phrase within the context of this syllabus point reveals that such terminology should be integrated into the discussion as a way of explaining points of analysis or substantiating a comment.

There are no hard and fast divisions between these three categories of terminology.

- **Linguistic terminology** largely refers to language devices – terms used to describe elements of how language is used, such as metaphor and diction.
- **Stylistic terminology** relates to the terms used to describe structural and generic features such as narrative structure, motif and intertextuality, but can also relate to particular uses of language, like alliteration.
- **Critical terminology** describes language used to produce criticism – ways of describing observations or readings a text – as well as language relating to literary theory/ies and broader social and cultural concepts that literature engages with, such as identity and ideology.

In Section One, literary concepts and terms contributes 24%, almost a quarter of the available marks. In Section Two, it determines 20% of the available marks.

Expression of ideas

Your written expression is important. Yes, markers recognise that this is a first draft, but you are expected, after twelve or more years of education, to have a relatively sophisticated control of language. However, this criterion is about more than just spelling and grammar; it is also about the structure and cohesiveness of your response. This is why the processes of planning, proofreading and editing are so important.

In Section One, expression of ideas contributes almost a quarter of the available marks: 24%. In Section Two, it provides 20% of the available marks.

Section One specific criteria

Reading/s of text

This is, by a slight margin, the most significant criterion in Section One. To achieve full marks, you need to offer a *'creative, coherent and informed reading'* of the text. You also need to employ '*appropriate reading strategies and/or practices'*. It is this second aspect that often lets students down. They spend significant time offering their *interpretation* of the text, but not enough *analysis* showing how they derived that interpretation.

Furthermore, the aspect of this criterion of *'using appropriate reading strategies'* does not necessarily call for the application of a particular ideological reading practice, such as a feminist, Marxist or post-colonial lens. In the past, many students have believed that to do so would be offering a more complex reading and therefore gain them more marks. The problem was that this was often at the expense of their technical analysis of the text, which is a clear requirement in the marking guide. Offering a close reading based on an understanding of genre, theme, personal response, context and/or aesthetics is just as valid an approach as applying an eco-critical or psychoanalytic reading practice. In fact, you should only apply such a lens if it clearly enhances the sophistication of the reading you make. More often than not, such an approach is unwarranted or artificial with such a brief extract.

This criterion is worth 28% of the available marks.

Close textual analysis

The syllabus continually highlights the importance of close textual analysis to develop and support interpretations. To 'analyse', one must deconstruct and examine aspects of a text methodically and in detail. This might include rigorous explanation of evidence or the technical elements of a text, such as tone, connotative language, imagery, setting, or point of view. For example, one might analyse how nature imagery contributes to an eco-critical reading of a poem by identifying whether the imagery is created through description or figurative language, what type of sensory image is used and the effect of the image as it relates to the reading. Your analysis should be detailed, meaning you should devote at least two or three sentences to 'unpacking' each example. Avoid using too many quotations in each paragraph; do not let your evidence write the essay for you. It is better to use fewer examples that are well-explained – aim for quality over quantity. Candidates are also encouraged to make reference to context *where appropriate* to support readings. For example, one might consider how a passage engages with contemporary issues or how it might work to naturalise or challenge ideologies operating in the context of production, but only if it will benefit your reading to do so.

In Section One, close textual analysis contributes 24%, almost a quarter of the available marks.

Section Two specific criteria

Engagement with the question

This first criterion, arguably, is the most important. If you fail to adequately address the question or misunderstand the concepts at its core, then the knowledge you demonstrate of your text and the quotes you provide may be less clearly relevant. '*Engagement'* requires you to critically and thoughtfully consider the question and its key concepts before formulating a considered argument in response that synthesises its components.

This criterion is worth a fifth of your marks, as much as textual knowledge: 20%.

Course concepts

This criterion rewards your understanding and application of syllabus concepts as they relate to your chosen text/s. 'Understanding' refers to your knowledge of the course, and 'application' references your ability to use your understanding of the course to appropriately to support your answer to the question. This section examines a candidate's knowledge of the unit content dot points and key concepts, as defined by your syllabus, such as: ideology, representation, aesthetic considerations and intertextuality. Candidates who utilise literary discourse using such terms appropriately are likely to be rewarded. As all questions are drawn from syllabus content, stronger candidates will be able to identify the specific syllabus points that each question draws on, and use this language in their response.

This criterion is worth a fifth of your marks: 20%.

Use of evidence

It is important to note that this criterion emphasises *use* of evidence, not merely the provision of evidence. You will be assessed on your ability to effectively use your evidence to support or argument. The descriptor at the highest level calls for '*pertinent text references'*. *Pertinent* requires you to select the most strategic quotes, while also being closely analytical in your explanation of your quotes. Note, also, that the descriptors suggest evidence should not just be textual, but also *contextual*. That is, you should also be providing explanations from other sources: your contextual knowledge, critical readings and theoretical sources.

This criterion also contributes 20% of the available marks for this section.

Tackling the ATAR Literature WACE examination

Preparing for the examination

Preparing for the ATAR course examination is something you should do throughout the year, not leave until the last few weeks. There are a few other things you can do over the course of the year to help you be prepared for the exam:

- Go through past WACE exam papers and sample papers to get a feel for what they are like. **Practise deconstructing and answering questions** from these papers and ask your teacher for feedback.

- **Include timed writing in your study plan**. This might mean writing a timed essay, or part of an essay (plan, introduction, body paragraphs). Writing regularly under timed conditions can help increase proficiency and time management strategies.

- **Practise writing different introductory paragraphs** on the one topic as a way of exploring different approaches to individual questions.

- **Reread your texts**. This might provide you with new insights or remind you of things that you haven't thought of for some time. You might also find that at the completion of a unit, a text that you read at the beginning of the year has relevance or currency in the context of an entire body of work.

- Collate and **revise the advice given to you by your teacher on your assessments**. This will help you to assess whether there are mistakes that you're continually making. Fixing these problems will lead to greater success. Always remember to seek clarification if you are unsure of their criticism or advice.

- **Know the syllabus**. The syllabus is the document to which the examiners must refer when they write the examination. If you know and understand the syllabus content, there can't be any surprises in the examination questions.

- **Prepare a separate set of study notes** where you summarise your key learning on each text. These should be concise, but thorough. Use clear heading and subheadings to organise them. Ensure you include notes on each aspect of your study of the text, such as themes, context, cultural representations etc., but keep each section brief. It should just provide enough key details to remind you of the information in your long-term memory. Use the same format for each text summary to aid in your memory and recall.

- Some students choose to revise only two texts, determined that they will use those to answer the questions in Section Two. This is a dangerous strategy. While your study of each text should have provided you with the syllabus understandings to address a number of questions, banking on which unseen text in Section One you will write on, prior to seeing them, is a gamble. You should, at the very least, **go into the exam having thoroughly revised a minimum of one text from each genre: poetry, prose and drama**.

Some other tips

Exercise and socialise regularly. Having a break from study will encourage you to return to it refreshed. There is evidence that suggests studying a single subject for hours on end is less effective than frequent bursts of study of 45 minutes to an hour.

Eat properly, drink lots of water when studying and sleep well before an examination. Your physical well-being can impact on your memory recall, your writing speed and your cognitive processing.

Form a study group. You are surrounded by a peer group in your class who equally want to do well in the exam. Form a study group where you share resources and engage in discussions of your texts and the syllabus. Test each other, collaborate on notes, set each other questions and, above all, encourage each other. Sharing the workload, as well as the camaraderie, can make study a bearable and even, dare we say it, enjoyable exercise.

On exam days, **don't arrive at the venue and get involved in discussions with other students of what you have – or haven't – prepared**. Listen to some music, go for a walk around the venue and be confident with the choices you've made with your study. There is no sense in panicking over what you have studied in comparison to others. Furthermore, you will be engaging in informal or colloquial conversations, which will not set the tone of your analytical voice when entering the examination process.

After an exam, to avoid anxiety about what you might have done better, **leave 'revisiting' the questions and your responses**. Just because another student approached a question very differently to you does not mean that their response is more correct. There is no positive outcome to spending time ruminating on what you should or could have done.

Sitting the examination

When reading time begins, **read the instructions carefully**. Note the number of questions to be answered and the time distribution for each, checking that this matches your expectations. (This information is located on the inside of the examination paper cover and at the beginning of each section.)

Distribute your time appropriately. The Literature examination requires you to answer three questions in three hours, but they are not worth the same number of marks. Section One is worth 30%. Each Section Two essay is worth 35%. In Section Two, where you will be responding using texts studied in class, there is an expectation that you will write more detailed and considered answers and thus there are more marks allocated.

During reading time, skim the three texts in Section One carefully before making your selection for this section of the examination. Once working time starts, you can re-read your selected text with the ability to annotate it as you do so.

Also during reading time, select which of the Section Two questions you will answer and the order in which you will tackle them. Many people find that beginning with the question with which they feel most confident gets them off to a good start. This way, by the time your working time starts, you have a clear plan for using your three remaining hours.

Choose the right questions. Selecting the questions that you will respond to is an important skill. It requires you to read each of the questions and make a rapid judgement about which are more likely to give you the opportunity to demonstrate your knowledge and skills. Skim-read all of the questions, identifying what they are asking you to do and the syllabus concepts they address. Match this against what you confidently know about the texts you have studied. Not every question will suit every text, which is why there are so many to choose from. Select ones that work for you and your texts.

Another way of approaching question selection is to choose your unseen text first. Having studied your set texts for an extended period of time, you should be able to use any of them to answer the Section Two questions. However, not having seen the Section One texts previously, you may find that there are some which you are not confident about using. If you have already used two genres in Section Two, you might find yourself forced to write on a text you're uncomfortable with to satisfy the requirement to write on three different genres.

Number your answers carefully before you begin writing your response. Start each on a new page in the correct section of the exam booklet.

Allow enough time to proofread your answers. Read through for meaning and clarity first. If you have time, scan through the paper again, checking the words you know you have trouble spelling and making sure you have referenced texts and quotations correctly. If you need to insert additional information into your response, be very clear and make it simple for the marker to see where they should look to find your additions. Furthermore, your exam paper is literally cut up and scanned before it is marked. Any writing that is in the margins is likely to be cut off and therefore not seen by the markers.

Instructions to candidates

Know the 'rules' about selecting texts. At the front of the 2019 Literature exam paper, the following instructions are included. It is useful to familiarise yourself with the particular guidelines of this exam, particularly the penalties for writing on the 'wrong' text. Remember to pay close attention when the 2020 Literature examination cover is released later in the year. These instructions may be altered for the next examination.

1. The rules for the conduct of the Western Australian external examinations are detailed in the *Year 12 Information Handbook*. Sitting this examination implies that you agree to abide by these rules.
2. Write your answers in this Question/Answer booklet preferably using a 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.
7. Supplementary pages for planning/continuing your answers to questions are provided at the end of this Question/Answer booklet. If you use these pages to continue an answer, indicate at the original answer where the answer is continued, i.e. give the page number.
8. The Text booklet is not to be handed in with your Question/Answer booklet.

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 per cent of the total marks available for the examination.

Adapted from Year 12 ATAR Literature Examination, School Curriculum and Standards Authority, 2018

Approaching each question

Deconstructing the question

Before you start planning, there are three steps to deconstructing a question you should follow:

1. **Read the question carefully**, highlighting key words
2. **Think critically about, and preferably annotate, the key words** and the instructions they represent
3. **Choose your most appropriate text** which best exemplifies the concepts and skills demanded by the question.

There are typically four types of key words you should be looking for in each exam question: **command** words, **conceptual** words, **conditional** words and **critical** words.

Command words reveal the type of essay you are required to produce. SCSA publishes a list of these command words and their definitions on the website for each subject. For example, some command words that may appear in Literature exam are:

- **Discuss**: identify issues and provide points for and/or against
    - in Literature, this means you need to explore the different aspects which make up the topic of the question
- **Explain**: relate cause and effect; make the relationships between things evident; provide why and/or how
    - in Literature, this is a clear instruction to show how you arrived at your overall thesis – demonstrating the reflection and analysis that lead to your conclusion
- **Compare**: show how things are similar and different
    - in Literature, this is an instruction to evaluate the similarities and differences between, say, two texts
- **Consider**: reflect on and make a judgement/evaluation
    - in Literature, this instruction may follow a statement or quotation that you are asked to reflect on, or you may be asked to consider whether something is true of a particular text; either way, think carefully and offer an opinion
- **Argue**: make a case, based on appropriate evidence, for and/or against some given point of view
    - in Literature, this instruction requires a more persuasive response, where you make a case for your particular thesis, supplying evidence
- **Analyse**: identify components and the relationship between them; draw out and relate implications
    - in Literature, this is a clear instruction to offer close textual analysis
- **Evaluate**: to ascertain the value or amount of; appraise carefully
    - in Literature, this is an instruction to judge the quality of something, such as a text, or to evaluate the extent to which you agree with a statement
- **Respond**: provide an answer; reply
    - in Literature, this may follow a statement, such as a quote about the nature of poetry, to which you are asked to respond based on your own experience with Literature.

Conceptual words are words and phrases which connect with the syllabus concepts. Sometimes these will be obvious, such as an instruction to discuss the 'representation of people' in a text. Others may be less so, such as an instruction to show how 'literary texts can offer voices of resistance', which can be seen as a reflection of the cultural identity and ideology aspects of Unit 3. It is important to identify and then really consider such words and phrases in the question, linking them to the syllabus concepts that you are being expected to demonstrate.

Conditional words are words that set the parameters of your response. In Literature, this is typically to discuss the topic in regards to a text you have studied, which is pretty obvious! At other times, you may be asked to discuss a topic with reference to two texts, so pay attention.
There are, however, three questions in Section Two that offer very specific parameters: the genre-specific questions. You must meet this condition (to respond using a poetry, prose or drama text, as dictated by the question) in order to be considered to have answered the question accurately. Penalties apply for not meeting this condition.

In addition, there may be other words in the question that are important for you to consider. These may be thought of as **critical words**. For example, consider these two questions:

1. *Literary response is a dynamic process. Explain why interpretations of one specific text may alter over time.*

Here, you have to argue that literary response is not just a process that all readers go through, but a *dynamic* one. You need to consider all of the implications of a word like 'dynamic' and, in your thesis, directly address whether this is an appropriate description for the process of literary response.

2. *Discuss the value of representing controversial aspects of a nation's past in at least one literary text.*

Similarly, here you are asked to discuss not the just the representation of aspects of a nation's past, but specifically *controversial* aspects.

These critical words can be what separate the average student responses from the good ones. Less capable students will just casually drop these words into their conclusions – for example, along the lines of 'and therefore literary criticism is a dynamic process' – without really attending to these words in their argument. Stronger students will explicitly and successfully argue that literary criticism is not just a process, but a dynamic one, arguing its changeability or fluidity.

Remember, too, that these key words may not appear as a single word, but as a phrase that you need to consider in its entirety, such as 'aspects of a nation's past' in the above example.

Writing a successful response

Thinking

Many students feel that any time spent not writing in an exam is wasted time. This is untrue. It is imperative that you spend time considering the question, planning your response and reviewing your work in order to ensure you write the best response you can.

Time spent thinking is not wasted time. You are expected to think critically about the concepts you're presented with and how they apply to a text you have studied. That is what the markers are looking for. Do not automatically accept the premise of a question as true and then show why or how it is true. You may disagree with the statement totally, or just to a certain extent. Furthermore, if after thinking about the statement you decide it is true, that's okay, because you've done some critical thinking first. The answer you will be offering will be characterised by active agreement rather than passive acceptance.

As well as agreeing or disagreeing with a statement in a topic, you might **give qualified support**. Phrases such as 'not necessarily' or 'not entirely' are useful for building answers that show a critical approach to a topic by providing qualified support. Three other useful phrases for developing critical responses are 'yes, but', 'and also' and 'to an extent, both'. These can add value to an answer, showing that your response is well-considered. However, don't use this as an excuse to 'sit on the fence', avoiding taking a stand or hedging your bets because you don't quite know what to think. It is important to have conviction in your argument.

Furthermore, the first thing that pops into your head in a high-pressure situation like an exam is not necessarily going to be the best idea you have. Spending time thinking carefully before you write may lead to a burst of inspiration: an original approach, a better example, a more insightful quote or a more effective point of argument.

Planning

You should **spend at least five minutes planning** each response in the examination. There is no single 'right' way to plan an examination response. Some ways of planning that are popular and helpful are structured overviews, mind maps, and bullet points, while some students prefer to simply list key words and references in a logical progression. Whatever form you choose, remember that a plan is a working document that you can amend throughout the writing process as you are reminded of ideas.

The important thing to remember is that **a plan should provide you with ordered prompts about ideas and references that help you to address the question**. You might plan paragraphs and then reorder them as you write your response. You might plan for a quotation in one paragraph, but realise it is better swapped with another as you write.

Markers will not award or deduct marks for planning. However, a well-planned response is more likely to address the topic, remain focused and be tightly structured, and will therefore be rewarded more highly than a loose, poorly thought-out response. It's a good idea to write the word 'planning' at the top of the page, or draw a diagonal line through it afterwards.

Topic sentences

One of the best ways to improve your answers is to make sure your paragraphs have good topic sentences. A well-written topic sentence should tell the marker how this particular paragraph will address the question. It is a signpost that reveals the point of argument you are making. The marker should not be left guessing until several sentences later. **A good topic sentence does three things**:

- it introduces a clear point of argument in relation to your thesis
- it demonstrates the nature of the transition from the previous paragraph
- it relates clearly to the question.

Importantly, **topic sentences should be clear, succinct and precise**. The developing or elaborating sentences which follow the topic sentence are your opportunity to add further details. Markers are also under time pressure when they mark exams, so make your argument clear, logical and well-signposted.

Textual cohesion

One way to help the overall cohesiveness of your essay, ensuring each point of argument logically leads on from the previous, is to use transition phrases. **Transition phrases show the nature of the connection to the previous point**. Different phrases signal different types of transitions, as shown in the table below.

Transition type	Examples
Continuation	next, furthermore, additionally, also, not only…but also, first/firstly (secondly, thirdly etc.), in the same fashion, another way in which
Comparison	similarly, likewise, by the same token, comparatively, correspondingly, in comparison, equally, in like manner, identically
Contrast	on the contrary, in contrast, on the other hand, different from, conversely, however, in juxtaposition
Conditionality	therefore, thus, as a result, consequently, despite this, in spite of this, if…then, provided that, because of, seeing/being that, as long as, as a result, accordingly, in light of
Concession	however, although this may be true, even though, be that as it may, albeit, of course…but, yet
Confirmation	in other words, especially, to emphasise, to reiterate, certainly, surely, notably, indeed, significantly, compellingly
Chronology	next, later, firstly (secondly, thirdly etc.), in time, meanwhile, in the first place, formerly, suddenly, by the time, prior to, following, eventually, once, since, after, before, hence, furthermore
Conclusion	therefore, in conclusion, as has been noted/discussed/argued, all things considered, in essence, to summarise, overall, after all

Of course, **the overall determination of textual cohesion is how well your introduction and conclusion reiterate the same thesis** or line of argument. Your introduction sets out what you intend to argue, your conclusion – in part – summarises what you have just argued, so there should be a high degree of correlation!

Length

How much should you write? This is not really a valuable question. No marker will be counting words or pages and allocating you a mark for length. You must write coherently and succinctly, and with adequate explanation and supporting evidence for your ideas.

Past Examination Reports made a specific note that **many candidates wrote long, rambling responses, trying to display everything they knew rather than just what was relevant to the question**. An essay which answers the question explicitly and which displays understanding of relevant course concepts is what is actually required and will be rewarded the most highly. However, writing an essay that only discusses one or two points will not demonstrate your mastery of your texts or the course. There is really no need to ask how much you ought to write. Write what you need to in order to address the question to the best of your *ability.*

Spelling and grammar

Markers understand that your exam responses are essentially a first draft and, as such, minor spelling, punctuation and grammar errors are overlooked. However, as we have discussed earlier, **your written expression contributes significantly to your mark**, particularly in the extent to which it enhances or impedes your argument. It is essential that you spend time proofreading your work after you have written it. Often our brain moves faster than our hands and what you actually wrote down is not quite what was in your head! As you proofread, check that:

- each sentence makes sense
- each sentence logically builds on the previous one
- your spelling is generally correct – particularly syllabus terms, text details and question keywords
- your punctuation is generally correct
- you have stayed focused on the question
- you have included, and explained, sufficient textual evidence
- you have used the most appropriate terminology.

Using textual evidence

Summarising your text

While it can be useful to **provide a brief overview of your text** to contextualise your response, this should be no more than a sentence or two, at most. After all, you will get few marks for mere plot recall. This is something you can craft and memorise prior to the exam.

For example:

> The Handmaid's Tale is a dystopian novel in which a conservative, theocratic republic has been established in the former USA. In a society where fertility is commodified following mass sterility, the protagonist Offred has to adjust to her shocking new life as a reproductive slave for the elite.

Using quotes as evidence

Avoid lengthy descriptions from the text via long quotations or exhaustive paraphrasing of the plotline. References to, and quotations from, the text should only be used to support your analysis and not as extra padding to fill out an answer. Quotes should be succinct and highly selective; don't include entire lengths of textual evidence if you all need is a particular phrase.

For example, many students write passages such as:

> Atwood conveys that the abrupt and significant changes in Offred's world have created a crisis of identity. This is show in the following quote: "I know where I am, and who, and what day it is. These are the tests and I am sane. Sanity is a valuable possession; I hoard it the way people once hoarded money. I save it, so I will have enough, when the time comes."

This is unnecessary, as the following abbreviated version reveals:

> Atwood conveys that the abrupt and significant changes in Offred's world have created a crisis of identity, one where sanity has become "a valuable possession." Like "the way people once hoarded money," Offred saves hers so she "will have enough, when the time comes."

This conciseness then provides the time and space for students to develop the quality and depth of their response, digging deeper and providing more detail.

Too often, though, students include quotes as if they are self-evident of the point they are making. This is not acceptable. You know from your own study that there are many ways to interpret even a single sentence of a text. You must explain – using appropriate metalanguage – the **significance of the evidence in terms of your argument**. You should always reflect on whether you have fully explained the point or evidence presented. That is your job as a student. To leave the marker to assume why the quote you have provided is evidence of your

point will get you nowhere and potentially even hinder your response if the marker has a different interpretation.
For example, many students write sentences such as:

> This quote shows how women are marginalised within the novel.

Actually, it doesn't. It is your *explanation* of the quote that might show how women are marginalised in the text, but the quote alone will not.

As a general rule, **quotations should be brief**. Use them to support or explain an argument or point. Don't throw them in for the sake of it. Present detailed, specific evidence and fully explain the relevance of this evidence. Do not make the evidence too general or unclear, because you need to demonstrate your knowledge of the text.

A bad habit of many students is to just drop a quote into the middle of a sentence. Whenever you include a quote, your own **grammar needs to be preserved**. Your quote must be integrated in a fashion that results in a grammatically correct and fluent sentence. Sometimes this means you need to manipulate your sentence to integrate the quote correctly.

For example:

> Connie feels Mrs Bolton "was thrilled to a weird passion" regarding her education at the hands of Clifford, "a man of the upper classes." Taking the woman under his wing gave Clifford, a member of the gentry, "a sense of power." Observing this, Connie understands "all that made them upper class"; that is, the entitlement and authority, in addition to "the money."

Sometimes, and only if absolutely necessary, you can **use ellipses and square brackets** to manipulate your quotes. An ellipsis reveals that you have omitted some words, whereas square brackets are used to alter a word within a quote, such as to change its tense or substitute a proper noun for a pronoun. You should never change the meaning, however.

For example:

> Clifford's education of Connie "roused in her a passion... deeper than any love affair could have done."

> Clifford's education "roused in [Connie] a passion and response deeper than any love affair."

Leading in to your quotes: providing context

It is never acceptable to just casually drop in a quote. You need to lead into it, contextualising the situation for your marker. For example, you might want to showcase a quotation from *Jasper Jones* by Craig Silvey. Lead into the quotation with a short contextual orientation for your marker. Three different approaches are:

1. *When Charlie says to Jasper through his bedroom window, …*
2. *Notice how Charlie reveals his insecurity when he says to Jasper, …*
3. *Silvey demonstrates his underlying values when his protagonist says to Jasper…*

Where the quote comes from within the text, or the situation in which it arose, can have a significant impact on the way the reader will interpret it. Not providing this context can lead to markers being uncertain of the logic of your interpretation.

Leading out: analysis

After you have provided your evidence, lead out of it effectively. For example, **explain how this evidence proves this paragraph's point**. To say 'this clearly shows' is to reveal your lack of deconstruction skills. Quotations will never 'clearly show' anything; your job as a Literature student is to show exactly how the quote functions to support the point you are making. This is where your real analysis comes into play, where you showcase your ability to analyse textual evidence. This is a key component of any Literature essay, yet one that is often overlooked by students.

The effective leading-out of a quotation is also an excellent opportunity for you to demonstrate your technical terminology.

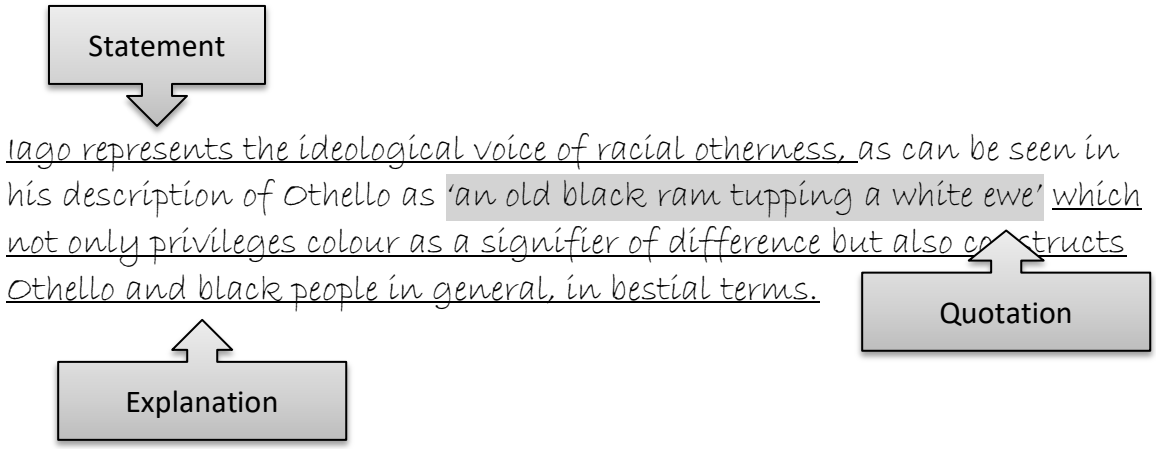
For example, instead of writing:

The dialogue here shows…

You might want to lead out with:

Notice the protagonist's cruel tone and accusative inflection when he says…

A useful technique for managing the use of quotations is S.Q.E., which stands for Statement (which is what you are trying to prove), Quotation, Explanation. You make a statement, use the quotation and then explain the relevance.



The structure of your response

Structuring an argument

Like learning to drive a car, structuring an effective essay requires skill and practise. The more you practise forming ideas around the requirements of assessment questions, the more confidence you will build in constructing good answers.

The introductory paragraph is the most important part of an essay. It is where you offer your **thesis or proposition statement**, which clearly responds to all parts of the question. Without a strong thesis statement, an essay lacks direction. The thesis statement should focus on the wording of the question and must establish your argument. It provides a framework for you to build ideas on throughout the entire essay. You need to show that you understand all parts of the question. This may involve defining key terms or clarifying parts of the question. The first paragraph should also identify the text/s you will refer to and their author/s.

Your thesis statement need not be limited to only one sentence. It is often more practical and effective to use several sentences, particularly with complex arguments. Another pitfall to avoid is writing 'shopping lists' of the ideas you will cover. Each point you outline in your introduction should be introduced in the order you will address them throughout your essay.

The body of the essay should include a detailed but focused analysis of the question and consistently link your ideas back to the wording of the question and your thesis statement. It is a good idea to use the key words of the question (or their synonyms) a few times throughout your argument in order to keep your writing on track. Lead with clear **topic sentences** or assertions that offer a single clear point that contributes towards the development of your thesis. Your marker will be paying particular attention to this opening statement and its development from the onset of each of your body paragraphs.

Develop the topic sentence with one or two elaborating sentences, to provide detail and specificity. After this, you should have one or two points to support the topic sentence, using textual evidence where appropriate. Make sure to analyse your evidence. The final sentence should clinch the point made in your topic sentence and link back to your thesis.

Your **conclusion** should **summarise the main contention of your argument and leave the reader convinced of your original proposal or thesis**. Avoid the inclusion of any new points or textual evidence at this stage and ensure that your conclusion does not contradict your original thesis statement. Think of a lawyer's final statement to a judge in a court of law. They would not dare to add extra or conflicting information in the final analysis of their case.

It should be more than a mere summary, however. A good conclusion leaves the marker with a strong sense that you have critical control of your content. You should make some kind of final comment that articulates the significance of your findings. Your conclusion should not be an afterthought; it should be considered and crafted as carefully as your introduction. Too often, students leave their conclusion until the final moments of the exam, assuming that it is not really important. This leaves markers disappointed and detracts from what may otherwise have been an excellent response.

An alternative structure: thesis, antithesis, synthesis

Another approach to structuring an argument is the **'thesis, antithesis, synthesis' model**. Essentially, this involves spending the bulk of your essay developing your own thesis, as one would normally. Afterwards, typically in your penultimate paragraph, the writer offers an antithesis: an opposing argument, which they then refute. This can be a way of strengthening your own thesis by showing how you have considered, and discarded, alternative viewpoints. The 'synthesis' section is the conclusion, where the various threads of argument are drawn together in concluding statements.

Comparative structures

Some questions may ask you to compare or contrast two texts. This requires a specific, comparative structure. There are three methods for doing so:

Block Method For this model, the approach is to write a few paragraphs that focus on your first text and then a few on your second text.	**Alternating Method** Start with a paragraph on the first text and then a paragraph on the second, repeating this process of alternating.	**Combined Method** Accomplished writers can combine their discussion of both texts in each paragraph; beware of the potential to write overly long paragraphs with this method.
Intro	Intro	Intro
Text A – point 1	Text A – point 1	Texts A & B – point 1
Text A – point 2	Text B – point 1	Texts A & B – point 2
Text B – point 1	Text A – point 2	Texts A & B – point 3
Text B – point 2	Text B – point 2	Texts A & B – point 4

The tone and style of your response

Many Literature students' responses are written in a formal and impersonal manner. However, **there is no requirement for students to write in a formal, objective manner**. Indeed, some of the most successful responses are those that are quite personal in their style, revealing a thoughtful and critical engagement with the text. This is not an excuse for avoiding the use of literary discourse however. Even highly personal and engaging responses must demonstrate their familiarity with course concepts and terminology.

Voice

Despite the tendency towards formality and impersonality in many literary essays, they can still be written with vigour and force; in other words, with voice. **Voice is the sense that there is a real person communicating through an answer** – a person with opinions, arguments and feelings.

Here are some examples from previous examination answers:

> Newland's attempts to come to terms with his new love for Ellen ... is the universal struggle between the need to be accepted by society and the desire to live freely.

> Sycorax is a caricature of everything women are punished for; she is old, ugly, and a single mother, but above all, she is powerful, and this makes her a threat to the bloated male ego.

You won't be able to write with vigour and force if you do not have feelings, opinions and arguments about the texts you have studied.

Formality

Formal language can be distinguished from colloquial language, which is the language of everyday speech. **Literary essays tend to use formal language because they are intended for an academic audience and context**. It adds an air of credibility to your writing and satisfies the technical nature of literary study.

Formal language is also more precise and succinct than colloquial language. Language can be incredibly nuanced and in the use of everyday language we often lose those shades of meaning that precise terminology can convey.

In everyday language we might say:

> Eva Luna is pushed around a lot and told what to do by members of the small group of people who have all the money and power.

Or:

> Shakespeare's love poems are structured using a heartbeat-like rhythm pattern.

We can also say this more formally:

> Eva Luna is oppressed by members of the oligarchy.

Or:

> Shakespeare's sonnets are structured using iambic pentameter.

The second lot of sentences take less time than the first, allowing you time and space to further develop the ideas, as well as being more precise. For example, the word 'oppressed' captures more of the psychological burden Eva feels and 'oligarchy' captures the entrenched position of those in power and the ongoing nature of their socio-political dominance. In a literary essay, you are trying to convey an argument as clearly and succinctly as possible. Formal language helps you to do this.

This does not mean that colloquial language should be totally banned from literary essays. In any case, the boundaries between formal and colloquial language are not hard and fast, they are always in a state of movement. Sometimes language that might be seen as bordering on the colloquial may be necessary because it captures your meaning more effectively and gives force to your argument.

We can see an example of this in the following extract by Susan Snyder[1], concerning Bianca:

> The woman with whom [Cassio] is involved is a strumpet – or is she? Bianco denies it and we have no evidence from the text that she sells her favours as Iago says. The 1623 Folio list of characters which labels her 'a courtesan' is most likely the work of someone in the printing house, the label being derived from the accusations. Perhaps we should separate Shakespeare's characterisation of Bianca from that of these characters. Perhaps what we ought to register is not that Bianca is a slut but that Cassio treats her like a slut.

The use of the term 'slut' here might come as a surprise and be seen by some readers as colloquial. However, Snyder clearly feels it is the most appropriate word to convey her meaning, possibly because it has the effect of conveying Cassio's contemptuous attitude to Bianca in a way which a word like 'promiscuous', which is more formal, would not. Furthermore, in resonating with the everyday language of the world of her readers, the Western world of the nineteen-nineties, it can be read as encouraging readers to think about the way the word 'slut' is used in their world and thus think about the way women are sometimes treated on an everyday basis.

If you are unsure whether an expression in your essays might be too colloquial, ask yourself:

- Is it the most appropriate expression?
- Does it help my argument?
- Can it be more succinctly or precisely expressed?
- How will my readers/markers react?

[1] Snyder, Susan, from 'Othello: A Modern Perspective' in Shakespeare, William, *Othello*, (New Folger Library Edition), Washington Square Press, 1993: 296.

As an aside, you would be surprised how many candidates use swear words or sexual quotations in their analysis as a way of being provocative. Do you think this is an effective way of showing literary voice or is it more an act of immaturity? Remember, you know nothing about your WACE markers and you don't want to risk alienating them through potentially offensive language choices.

Use of the first person

Some students think the first person point of view, using 'I' or 'me', is banned from literary essays. **It is not**. While researching your texts, you will find many essays that make use of the first person. The use of first person depends on a number of things.

First, in many literary essays, what you are trying to do is **put forward a convincing argument about a text and how it can be read**. An argument is less likely to be convincing if it appears to be based on personal responses or feelings, and the overuse of the first person can create this appearance. Your argument should be able to stand on its own feet without relying on personal feelings or circumstances.

Secondly, remember that **the use of the first person is often unnecessary**. This is a complex area, because all arguments are what the candidate thinks or feels. Consider a sentence like:

> Sycorax I think *Diving for Pearls* can be read as a critique of the impact of the forces of economic rationalism on individuals.

The words 'I think' are not needed because it is obvious that this is what the writer thinks – they just said it. In the interests of conciseness, it should be omitted. Similarly, writing in your introduction, *'I am going to discuss this topic in relation to…'* is superfluous. Don't tell your reader what you are going to do: get on and do it.

The third point about using the first person is that **it depends on the question**. There are likely to be some questions in the exam which directly invite personal responses and feelings and, therefore, it would seem logical for you to respond in the first person.

The fourth and final point to make about the use of the first person in literary essays is that **the first person plurals 'we' and 'us' are quite commonly used in literary essays**. Below are some examples, all taken from published essays or books:

- *Marlow prepares us for such a journey in his prologue.*
- *For example, in 'Portrait of a Lady' we are moved from the emotional speech of the lady to the commonplace, as she serves tea.*
- *In her book, it seems as though Mary Shelley has seen into the future and we can only be dismayed by her foresight.*
- *We can see the importance of Heaney's awareness of his Irish heritage in the poem 'Digging'.*

You might find it useful to make use of 'we' and 'us' to make your essays sound less stilted and to encourage reader involvement in your argument.

What if you get a memory block?

Don't dwell on the blocked information. Refer to your plan to help jog your memory. Also, noting down other ideas related to the blocked one may help you to re-establish mental links that help you to retrieve the 'lost' idea. Focusing on it will only block it further and may cause panic if it refuses to return to you. Leave a space and continue. If it really is in your memory, it's likely to return to you in time for you to complete it.

Some other tips

Leave the correction fluid or tape home. It wastes time in an examination. If you make a mistake, just cross it out neatly with one line – there's no need to 'scrub' it out. You won't be penalised and you'll probably pick up marks because of the time saved by not using correction fluid or tape. Too often, students forget to go back and insert words again and this leads to confusion.

If you get part of the way through an answer and think of something you should have said earlier, **put it on another page and indicate with an asterisk or number and a brief note about where it should go**. For example: * *see additional material on page 8.* However, as mentioned previously, be very clear about where the marker should look by numbering the additions in a corresponding fashion.

Remember: repetition doesn't earn marks. Rewriting the question above your essay or repeating the text title or author's name over and over again is a waste of your time. Similarly, repeating overly similar phrases in your topic and concluding sentences adds little value. Every sentence should contribute something to your argument.

Above all, enjoy yourself! Literature is a fascinating field of study and one which invites passion and 'outside the box' thinking. Every skill you learn in Literature will assist you in responding to the myriad of texts that will bombard your adult life. Every text you engage with in your world will help you evolve into the person you want to be.

Section One: Close Reading

General points

The first section of the Literature examination tests your skills of textual analysis. Being able to analyse examples of poetry, prose and drama is critical to the successful completion of this course, so it is important to consider the close reading skills you will need in this section.

A mistake that many students make when completing this section is that they select the text that best fits with their plans for Section Two of the exam. That often means, for example, that they really want to write on their studied novel and play, so the result is that they will indiscriminately select the poetry text in Section One. This is not a successful approach. You should be equally prepared to write about all of the texts you have studied; while you may have a preference for particular texts, you should enter the exam and make the best choices for the paper in front of you.

Another error that students often make is beginning the close reading section with a plan to create a particular 'alternative' reading of the text, such as a gender or Marxist reading. This is problematic, as the text may not lend itself to this particular type of reading and, in trying to force one, you may be missing an opportunity for a successful close reading. Close reading itself is a reading practice – to use this reading strategy well is a complex task. To apply two reading practices in the time allocated for this section is incredibly challenging.

Approaching the text

Below is a series of points that should help you to prepare for a close reading of any text that may appear in an examination paper. Read through all of the texts in the paper and make your choice based on the following considerations:

- What do I think are the main ideas of each text?
- How does each text represent people, places and events?
- What are the main generic and language conventions of each text?
- Can I make any observations about context in these texts?
- Does my context play an important role in my response to any of these texts?
- Can I make any useful or significant connections to other texts?
- Am I resistant to the dominant reading of any of these texts?
- Would it make an interesting or enriching case if I applied a specific reading strategy?

When you have completed this process, consider which text offers the best possibilities for a thoughtful and well-evidenced reading. Then, annotate your chosen text, plan what you now wish to say about the text logically and select useful examples. Remember, use of textual evidence accounts for almost a quarter of your marks here. Use evidence extensively. There's no excuse not to; the text is right there in front of you!

Planning and writing

You must think through how you will organise and write your response. Some students find writing a dot-point plan helpful, others prefer to brainstorm or create a diagram. Some only need to do the thinking and jot down a few reminder words. You must find a method that helps you to organise your points in the best order. Experiment over the year and become familiar with your preferred process – what works best for you. Dedicate about five minutes to planning your response to Section One.

Remember, your reading should have a logical order and this should be indicated through your introduction. This doesn't mean you need to include a sentence that begins: 'In my reading I will discuss…'.

Don't try to include everything you understand or can identify. Focus on creating a well-developed discussion of a few ideas rather than a 'shopping list' of everything you can find. Focus on what makes sense to you in the text. In other words, write about what you understand and don't worry about the things that are not clear or that you don't understand.

What is a reading?

Students often find the instruction to 'present a reading' difficult. This might be because students think it is such a broad instruction – it could be so many different things. This is true; it is extremely broad, but you should try to see this as helpful rather than intimidating.

A 'reading' of a text is simply an explanation of what you understand about a text. Sometimes it is defined as the 'meaning made by the reader'.

A reading might be:

- an explanation of the main themes and ideas that you feel the text communicates and a discussion of the factors that led you to that understanding
- an explanation of the dominant reading of the text – the view that the construction of the text encourages
- a discussion of a resistance that you have to the text's ideas or construction (though be sure to establish the dominant reading as a point of comparison here)
- an experiment with a particular reading practice – that is, a lens that you apply to the text (this is a specific way of looking at the text that focuses on a particular concept or ideological perspective)
- an analysis of the representations within the text; how people, places, events or ideas are constructed within it
- an explanation of the function of the text as a particular example of its genre; how it manipulates the conventions of that genre for particular purposes or effects
- a discussion of how the text operates as a cultural artefact; the ideological functions it holds or what it reveals about the culture in which it was created or received
- an aesthetic reading which evaluates the artistic qualities of the text
- a personal response whereby you critically examine your emotional or intellectual reactions to the text and what informed such response.

What is a *close* reading?

The Literature Examination Brief specifies that in this section of the examination, candidates must perform a **close reading**; we have seen this reflected in the way Question 1 has been phrased since 2016: *Present a close reading one of the three texts*. With such an instruction, you can expect markers to reward the close attention that candidates pay to the text and the analysis of that text based on generic conventions and language use pertaining to the genres of prose, drama and/or poetry.

Close refers to our proximity to the text in terms of analysis, i.e. a close analysis of the text. This detailed and specific reading of the text requires consideration of language or linguistic features and stylistic devices related to form and intertextuality. It may also consider cultural references within the text that provide context to the reading, or the meaning the reader makes.

Close reading is a reading practice that was popular with the critical movement named New Criticism, a movement with origins in America in the 1940s. It called for readers to look to 'the text itself' or 'the words on the page', rather than explanations provided by critics or other reading methods that relied on information from outside the text. Some prominent figures in defining this method were I.A. Richards, John Crowe Ransom and T.S. Eliot, a poet studied by many ATAR Literature students.

A close reading does not prohibit you from discussing critical approaches to the text, but does require you to connect your reading to text. You should provide evidence of how an ideological position is represented by the text, or how reading with a specific lens provides an insight into specific elements of the text.

A close reading could take one of the approaches outlined above, or be a combination of a number of them. Just always remember, it must relate to 'the text itself'.

Some general points to consider

An important aspect of presenting a reading is explaining the approach that you are taking. It is a description of a *process*, not a description of the text.

If you are a strong writer, you may be able to spend the bulk of your response articulating one particular reading and then, in your penultimate paragraph, offer an alternative view of the same points. For example, you might critique the power dynamics evident in the text as a function of class structures, but then comment on how, within its historical context, such power dynamics may have been seen as natural. However, such alternate readings are most successful if they relate to your own reading, otherwise your overall response may seem disjointed.

Reserve time to read over your answer and specifically check that your introduction matches where you eventually end up with your reading. Sometimes the focus can shift during the writing process and tweaking the introduction helps to create a cohesive response.

A reading is not:

- a description of what happens in the text
- a discussion of audience engagement or enjoyment
- looking for 'what the author intended'
- a checklist of things you notice as you read through the text.

What if I don't 'get' the text?

Your skills of analysis should be sufficiently developed so that you can interpret almost any literary text with which you are faced. Remember, you don't have to discuss the most significant themes – which is a subjective notion anyway – you just need to articulate one possible reading.

However, if you feel that you are unable to start unpacking the text, it can be worthwhile to consider some common themes of literature:

- representations of particular groups, such as gender, race, ethnicity, age etc.
- social commentary
- interpersonal relationships
- human experiences, emotions or traits
- power relationships
- endeavour or struggle.

Another strategy can be to consider who, what, when, where, why and how:

- **Who** are the people in the text and who might they represent in the real world?
- **What** events are taking place in the text and what might they represent in the real world?
- **Where** and **when** is the text set and what context might this represent in the real world?
- **Why** has the writer represented these aspects in this way and what purpose might this serve in the real world?
- **How** has the writer used language and generic conventions to aid this understanding?

What are markers looking for?

The table below includes some tips for achieving highly in Section One of the exam. Try to incorporate at least some of these suggestions into your study routine.

Criterion and available marks	Helpful tips
Reading/s of text (7 marks available)	• Know how to connect your understanding of ideas to construction and/or context. • Clearly state what you understand to be the main ideas of the text. • Be consistent with your reading. Don't be hesitant or undermine the points you have made. • Ensure you are explicit about the reading practices you are using. Only use a particular lens if the text calls for it. • Be analytical, not descriptive.
Close textual analysis (6 marks available)	• Make sure you choose relevant and significant examples from the text to analyse. • Select and explain language or generic examples and discuss how they function, as well as the meaning you make from them. • Also consider examples from the text that provide cultural context or contextual connections that add to the meaning you make. • Know how to incorporate quotations into your writing. • Avoid lengthy chunks of quotation. • Always explain quotations – state their significance to your argument. • Understand how to quote both directly and indirectly and offer appropriate technical analysis of your quotes.
Linguistic, stylistic and critical terminology (6 marks available)	• Study the terminology of this subject. • Know how to use the metalanguage of the course, the terms used to identify certain linguistic patterns, stylistic choices or critical practices. • Be familiar with syllabus concepts and how they apply to making a reading. • Avoid using jargon and buzz-words. • Spend time studying the generic features, stylistic choices and forms that differentiate prose, poetry and drama from each other.
Expression of ideas (6 marks available)	• Know how to present a 'reading'. • Plan your response. • Ensure your response is focused. • Don't become distracted or stray from your main points. • Reread your work to avoid errors or confusing expression. • Practise writing 'readings' throughout the year. • Don't overcomplicate your writing. Be concise and efficient.

Close reading response framework

Below is one example of what the framework for a response to this section might look like.

Introduction

1. Present an overarching reading of your text in a few sentences.
    a. What is the text about literally?
    b. What is your deeper reading (inferential, thematic, ideological, aesthetic, responsive) of the text?
2. Next, present the aspects of this overarching reading that you will address in the body of your response.
3. Refer to the major elements of construction – the generic and language conventions used to communicate the ideas you are focusing on.
4. Don't simply list your ideas, expand them over a few sentences.
5. Consider any background information that you might need to supply the reader with. For example, if you are offering an intertextual or personal context reading.

Body paragraphs

A close reading will usually consist of at least 3–4 body paragraphs, each containing a separate idea. Each paragraph might structurally look something like this:

1. Identify a specific idea or aspect of your overarching reading.
2. Develop this idea over a couple of sentences.
3. Go to the text and find example/s. Use this evidence to support your point.
4. Technically deconstruct your evidence as a way of proving your ability to read closely.
5. Embellish your point by adding greater justification and subsequent depth of analysis.
6. Conclude by linking your idea within your overarching reading.

There are different schools of thought as to the order of paragraphs. Some believe that you should lead with your strongest point to set the tone of your response; others maintain that you should end with your strongest point to leave a powerful impression. Some believe your weakest point should be 'buried' in the middle, whilst others feel it should be last, in case you don't quite finish it. However, there is more at play here than just the psychology of the marker: you should structure your paragraphs in order of *significance*. What is the most important aspect of the text that has a bearing on your reading?

Conclusion

A conclusion assists in the structure of your reading. It reiterates the main elements of your interpretation of the text. In order to avoid being merely a repetition of points you have already made, your conclusion should acknowledge the significance of your reading. For example, you might conclude with a comment to show how the text's representations compare to those of your own context, or you may explain the ongoing significance of the ideas you discussed from a historical text to contemporary audiences, or offer a personal or aesthetic response.

Considering Question 1

Present a close reading of one of the three texts.

Interpreting the question

You can always expect Literature questions to mirror central course skills and concepts. Question 1 invites you to discuss your understanding of such concepts as:

- how texts represent themes, ideas, people, places and events
- the ideological function/s of texts
- the processes of meaning-making, including but not limited to, ideological reading practices
- the use and function of language and generic conventions
- the role of context in shaping meaning – both your own and that of the text.

These are broad and complex categories and to perform detailed analyses of each would be impossible in an exam setting. Given the nature of this kind of assessment, students cannot realistically be expected to give equal emphasis to all of the categories listed above.

It is useful to consult the Year 11 Literature syllabus to prepare for a close reading. Many of the course concepts identified in the Year 11 Units 1 and 2 detail the terminology and concepts required to perform the task. You will have learned these in Year 11 as foundational skills for the course, but it is helpful to remind yourself.

A sensible approach is to respond to the specifics of each text. A guiding principle for your response is to remember that, above all, Section One is about reading closely. This process is about your ability to explain the relationship between formal aspects of literary texts' construction (the 'how') and their meaning (the 'what'). For this reason, language and generic conventions are a good way to ground and focus your reading. After all, it is the way that language is shaped and presented that communicates ideas. If you can explain the way that language works in the text, you will always be able to support your key points.

Advice from teachers

- Avoid writing a series of disconnected paragraphs that merely point out various observations. Your response should offer a cohesive reading of the whole text.
- Too many students fail to address genre in their reading. You have to select a particular genre of text for a reason. If it's a poem – discuss the nature of this poem! Your discussion of the text's ideas should make explicit reference to how they are constructed within this particular genre. We expect to see appropriate metalanguage to help explain the function of form and the use of devices.
- Too many students are writing simply about broad elements such as characterisation, plot and language. This is passable; however, marks would be higher if students dug into the specific techniques within these broad elements, such characters' movements on stage in a drama text, recurring motifs or line structures in a poem, or the interplay of dialogue and narration in a prose text.

Text A – Drama

Jill Shearer – *The Family*

Possible readings

The extract offers an exploration of the dynamics of family in a time of crisis. The roles of parents and siblings and their complex interactions contribute to the drive and conflict of this drama text. What the audience/reader expects of a family from their own experience is an additional component of interpretation that may shape their reading.

One reading might focus on the two sisters, Emma and Sarah, who are constructed as opposites. The fact they are sisters gives them shared background, relationship and family history. The friction of their interaction could be read as sibling rivalry. The text examines how the two siblings react to their father's position now he has been suspended from duty as a policeman. The elder sister, Sarah, enters the scene from outside. This is symbolic of her no longer living in the family home, as opposed to Emma, the younger sister, who is still living there. Sarah is a Police Inspector, involved in the workplace outside the domestic sphere. Emma is a musician – unemployed, involved in the arts and still living at home. Her music is her escape. Their differences are a source of conflict around responsibility towards their father.

Another reading might examine the consequences of Frank's suspension, such as how false accusations can destroy careers, lives and families. The dynamics of family have been upset by the inquiry into police corruption and the impact this has had on their father. Emma has seen this more closely because she lives at home and has witnessed her father withdraw into a world of gangster movies, which generates conflict with her sister, whom she believes should be more understanding and involved in supporting their father. Frank himself has become lost in an imaginary world, represented by the films he watches. Frank has lost his self-respect in the process and also his traditional position as the head of his family. His apathy and depression are evident. He is suspended on stage, as well as being suspended from his job.

The scene can be read as a comment on corruption in society. In the 21st century, investigations into the big banks, politicians, sporting bodies, private and public companies and even Google and Facebook are part of our world. As Sarah says, *'An inquiry like that, some innocent people were bound to be hurt.'* Sarah's role within the police force places her in a particularly conflicted position, as there is the risk that her father's possible corruption could be reflected badly on her. The text sets up future conflict by exploring the concepts of corruption and guilt by association.

The importance of creativity and the arts is a theme suggested by Emma's cello playing and the stage directions. There is a contrast established between creative careers and the public service, and candidates may base a reading on the value of the arts within an Australian context, particularly alongside careers that may be characterised as essential services.

A gendered reading is another avenue of exploration. The roles of males and females is first considered through family, but also through the occupational choices of the characters. As it is the nineties, Sarah's position as a Police Inspector is a positive. She is superior to her father in the workplace hierarchy as he is only a sergeant. The police force has long been viewed as a tough and masculine environment. The text suggests Sarah might have lost something because of this. Her compassion and nurturing side are seen as supressed or absent by Emma and perhaps the audience too. Alternatively, the text could be read as reflecting shifting attitudes towards women in the workforce, with Frank seen as a 'dinosaur' and Sarah as the future. By contrast, Emma is full of emotion and expresses her feelings openly in her behaviour and through her music. Readers could interpret this as typically female. The value of each role in our culture is open to discussion.

Textual analysis

This part of the play is from the opening scene or exposition. In it, the audience is exposed to the setting, introduced to the characters and suggested conflict, as well as the introduction of narrative and ideas for possible exploration. Sometimes there is 'backstory' or important information relating to characters and their situation. Candidates should consider this text in light of how it functions as an exposition. The title is also a feature worth considering in this light.

We learn about the possible 'corruption' charges made against the father and see its impact made physical by his isolation on stage. Frank *'sits facing the audience, remote control in hand, watching a video.'* While on the stage, he is isolated from the family and not a part of the immediate action. By facing the audience, he looks out through the fourth wall of the dramatic space and is both silent and detached. His isolation within the family circle is important. Think about what fathers are expected to do and how they are expected to behave. Sitting and watching old videos and remaining mute challenges the stereotypical role of the father and breadwinner.

The symbolism of Frank watching old gangster movies is also pertinent. It could be interpreted in several ways, such as representing Frank's desire to be a 'hero' and highlighting his fall from grace. Alternatively, it suggests he holds on to a nostalgic vision of policing that may be out of touch with modern standards of ethics and accountability. It could also be interpreted as representing a fantasy world, in which there are clear cut divisions between heroes and villains. Other interpretations are also possible.

This text contains explicit details of set, costumes, sound and lighting that contribute to audience impressions and support the dialogue. In particular, the use of the '*neon-lit blue circle*' creates a focus for the action. It is both inclusive and exclusive and is reminiscent of the flashing blue lights of a police car. The neon would create light and shadows over faces and objects, making the scene almost surreal. The use of music is also a major influence. The *'old movie music'* works as a backdrop of sound, while Emma's cello on which she practises Bach is foregrounded. The direction, *'Music is used throughout the play to underscore the action'* is important. Music can create mood, highlight emotion, link scenes, connect to a specific character and develop tension.

The costumes and properties associated with these characters are another important part of their construction. Emma is connected to the cello. When she is upset, she *'arranges her music'* or *'fiddles with the bow'.* Sarah, on the other hand, wears her police uniform even within the domestic setting. Their identity is closely linked to their employment and the costumes and props indicate the differences between the two sisters. The fact that Frank is sitting in his uniform, despite his suspension, yet with no tie, tells us of his lethargy and state of dispiritedness. He can't let go of his role as a Police Officer, which is intrinsic to his identity and self-respect. When Barbara enters, she is carrying a laden shopping bag, indicating her position as the home-maker of the family.

The dialogue between the sisters is telling. Emma is full of resentment and attacks her sister immediately, calling her *Officer* in a derogatory manner. There are silences between the sisters which suggest tension. There is also a lot left unsaid, which creates tension between the two and prepares the audience for the development of possible conflict later in the play. What is known as *subtext* informs their dialogue. Even when Sarah compliments Emma's playing, or explains the situation, Emma remains hostile. Her anger is focused on events concerning her father and Sarah's perceived lack of support for the family during this time: 'EMMA: *It's Dad we're talking about! God, you even talk like a book*.' Sarah's response – 'SARAH: *I talk like a Police Officer*' – sums up their different approach to the situation. Sarah's objectivity makes her appear unfeeling.

Contextual considerations

The contextual information supplied is minimal, as has been the trend of the exam for the past few years. What is here tells us the author is female, a contemporary author and Australian. There is a time reference of 1994 and a place of performance – Brisbane. The stage directions create two possibilities for the performance – either a naturalistic set or the chosen multi-purpose set encircled by a blue neon light. The details of memorabilia confirm that this play is set in a non-digital age, as evidenced by the reference to old newspapers, documents, books and a box of old photographs.

The nineties in Australia, while seen as contemporary, is nonetheless a time before you were likely to be born. Paul Keating was Prime Minister and in Queensland, Joh Bjelke-Peterson was Premier. It pre-dates September 11, terrorism as we know it and the influx of social media and instant communication. The Fitzgerald Inquiry into police corruption in Queensland was resonating through Australian politics and policies. Probably you are not aware of these details, however, the context of *'now'* and current police corruption, judgement by media and family dynamics today are all relevant. Your context could therefore be a valid part of your reading.

The intimacy of a family home as the setting creates a microcosm for the exploration of wider issues. Miller's play appears to be a realist play, set in the nineties, even though the production has chosen to include powerful lighting as part of the set. The dialogue is natural between the sisters. Their sentences are direct and credible. Sisters do argue, have opposing views and feel resentment about family situations. As an audience, we can recognise family environs and circumstances and understand the sadness of Frank's position.

The memorabilia on the set contributes to the context of the play. It contains the past, the idea of police investigations and how they were conducted – it surrounds the seat of the action. These bits and pieces are a record of events. Today they would be filed on a computer or collated in a more orderly fashion. Ringed by the focus of the circle of light, they offer a visual comment on the fact that we are entrapped by the past and can never escape it.

Activity: Preparing for drama – know the discourse

A dramatic text is written so that it can be performed on-stage to a live listening and viewing audience. Therefore, as readers, we must consider how the text will appear in performance.

Convention	Technical terms related to drama conventions
Costumes	period contemporary minimal realist
Props	symbolic realistic objects set design
Stage directions	on set off set front of stage upstage/downstage stage left/right
Lighting	blackout fade spotlight colour wash high/low key
Sound	music sound effects (SFX) soundscape silence/lack of sound
Style (presentational or representational) and form	minimalistic symbolic naturalistic realistic abstract
Movement	energy gait expressions posture proxemics
Dialogue	monologue soliloquy accent inflection diction
Vocal technique	articulation tone accent projection pace

Activity: Preparing for drama – imagine the performance

Now, using the drama extract from the exam, assume how a director might actualise each dramatic convention for this scene. Use the technical terms above to support your analysis.

Convention	Evidence	Translation on stage
Costumes		
Props		
Stage directions		
Lighting		
Setting		
Sound		

Apply to your own text

The only way you can prepare yourself for the unseen dramatic text in Section One is to compare written drama texts with their performances. YouTube is a great resource for watching theatrical performances if you cannot get to the theatre to see a live show.

Create a table like the one above or another graphic organiser that suits you and closely examine your own choice extract. Mine the auditory and visual elements that make extra meaning in the dramatic text you choose.

This might seem like a laborious task. However, it will guarantee that you are ready to look for the aspects of drama that include performance. By practising, you will start to recognise what is valuable in the dramatic form. Not enough Literature students are demonstrating this skill in the exam and yours will shine out among the rest.

Activity: Creating the set

Select the exposition from a play you have studied this year. Read through the stage directions, regarding details of the set and important properties. Draw your own version of the set including all the exits, furniture, visual properties and where possible, lighting.

As you place each part of the set, think about your audience. Where are they sitting? What can they see? What kind of stage is being used? When the set is complete, consider whether there is room for your characters to move on and off stage.

What you have created is a physical representation of a set, which should clearly demonstrate the practicalities of performance. Does it answer what the author wanted to be included and how it would work to create background, build understanding and set a distinct mood or feeling about the play's beginning?

Activity: Weaving in evidence from the text

The inclusion of supporting material from the text is fundamental to a convincing literary response. It provides the underlying proof or evidence of your understanding. Selecting the right example is therefore paramount. When you give a reading of an unseen text, you have the material in front of you. As you read, start looking for the information that will be the basis of your reading. In a drama text, this information includes stage directions, details about the set, action, costume and properties and, of course, dialogue. Incorporate examples from the entire text, not only dialogue.

- Selected text should not be in large chunks that fill up space on the page.
- The practice of making a statement then stating '*For example'* can be clumsy.
- It is preferable to incorporate small phrases seamlessly into your discussion.

Work through an extract from the play you are studying. Select examples that offer some insight for you, regarding events or concepts and practise inserting these into a meaningful sentence. The more you practise looking for and weaving in evidence, the more your choices will have impact.

Chosen example	Practice sentence
View from the Bridge Opening scene: 'This is Red Hook, not Sicily. This is the slum that faces the bay on the seaward side of Brooklyn Bridge.' –Alfieri	As a narrator, Alfieri is able to inform the audience of exact setting details. 'This is Red Hook, not Sicily' reveals to the audience that the play is set in America, where old ideas regarding justice do not apply.

Text B – Poetry

Meg Mooney – 'My Town'

Possible readings

Many interpretations are possible of this poem, but all must be justified through close textual analysis. It is also important to consider that no one response is expected to cover all of the points outlined here.

This poem explores the internal thoughts of the persona as they walk through their town and are obliged to interact with members of the wider community. These interactions appear to be a strain and the persona's engagement with the community is impeded by feelings of loss and the experience of grief. We make some assumptions early in the poem that the persona is a woman whose son has been killed or forever changed. As a result, she finds the close and familiar relationships of the town difficult and restrictive, but ultimately realises that the community are in fact supportive and this support is empowering.

The opening of the poem provides details that lead us to assume that the persona is a mother, for example, the mention of a 'son' indicates the persona is a parent, and the act of having had 'leg's waxed' – which is conventionally a feminine practice – confers motherhood. While we could read this information differently, the persona's maternal recognition seems triggered when 'a child calls [her] name' and she is no longer able to dismiss the social connections that are part of the main street of the town. The ambiguity of the persona's gender helps to demonstrate a universality of the experience of grief, particularly that of a grieving parent. It is also possible to interpret the persona as being a member of, or being connected to, the local Indigenous community. Again, this uncertain aspect of the poem speaks to the universality of the situation, and that loss is experienced by all.

The town appears to have complex social and cultural structures. The poem draws attention to the cultural assumptions that are often formed by racial difference and how this causes tension within the community. This problematic Australian representation is not unknown to us as readers and the poem subtly raises the history of conflict and exploitation that is part of Australia's colonial history, as well as the racial tensions that continue in contemporary Australian life. A post-colonial reading might be offered of this text, highlighting these aspects of the poem and how they are portrayed within the work.

A gendered reading is also a possible reading of this text. Exploring the expectations of how men or women are expected to deal with complex emotional experiences, and the role of the community in supporting those suffering, could lead to a rich and detailed reading of the text. Alternatively, you might consider the poem a work of psychological realism since the poem uses the persona as a character within a narrative, which serves to explores the inner person, their motivations and internal thoughts to assist readers' engagement with the uniquely personal and internal experience of grief.

Textual analysis

The poem is structured into multiple stanzas, but works as an example of free verse where the stanzas form fragments, thoughts or minute episodes within the wider experience of the whole 'story' of the persona's public journey. Each stanza acts not only as fragment of information, advising us of the persona's context and the main street moment, but is also a sentence and, as such, a fully formed statement. The lack of punctuation and the use of enjambment constricts these thoughts, signalling the discomfort and distress of the persona as they communicate with both the reader and the townsfolk. No periods are used in the poem at all. En-dashes and commas serve as pauses in the story being told, but without any full-stops we understand that resolution or closure eludes the persona as well as the reader. This is particularly powerful in the final line of the poem because it highlights the persona's only figurative expression – 'because inside I was falling'. Leaving 'falling' without a full-stop indicates that this sensation will continue beyond the moment of the poem and while we feel somewhat comforted that the community will be there to 'catch' them, the persona's suffering is not relieved or resolved.

The poem is conversational in style and the language is prosaic, lacking in embellishment. Aside from 'cheap' and 'very', there are no adjectives or adverbs used and the poem is void of figurative language features until the final line, constructing a voice that is without sensation or modulation of emotion or sentiment. As we expect such language use in poems, its absence is arresting and works to highlight the grief and pain of the persona, as well as emphasising a quiet-ness which we know to be artificial in this location. This creates a sense of interiority and exclusion, as if the persona is behind glass, not fully participating in the community that surrounds her.

This conversational style also works to define the location of this persona's experience, constructing a sense of place. Not only do specific words such as 'Aboriginal' and the name 'Tjakamarra' provide a contextual framework of Australia, but the sparse and laconic language is in keeping with the vernacular of the Australian outback and the verb-heavy recount of the persona's actions adhere to the functionality of the traditional, masculine, Australian stereotype. In addition to this, the blending of formal English with colloquial terms such as 'bloke' and Aboriginal English words like 'whitefellas' form not only a naturalised Australian voice, but symbolise the blended nature of the national voice and post-colonial perspective of the text.

Contextual readings

The contextual information provided is limited, but you can draw on contemporary Australian concerns such as the racial divisions within Australia, particularly in central and northern Australia. This could be supported with intertextual connections to works from other Australian writers, or texts that represent similar cultural or racial divisions.

Candidates might also explore the issue of rural mental health concerns and mortality rates.

Personal context may also inform the readings of some candidates, particularly in relation to their conceptualisations of their own town of origin or residence.

Activity: Preparing for poetry

Locate a copy of last year's exam text booklet (available on the SCSA website: https://senior-secondary.scsa.wa.edu.au/syllabus-and-support-materials/english/literature), or source the poem from another location.

How prepared are you for an unseen poetry reading?

- Name four structural forms of poetry (i.e. a sonnet has its own structural form, now find another four).
- Identify the most common language devices in this poem by Mooney. Can you find a simile, metaphor, alliteration and enjambment? Circle and name them on the poem in the exam booklet.
- Find the following devices in the poem: visual, auditory and tactile imagery.
- Can you detect rhythm? How would you describe the rhythm of this poem? Firstly, detect the poetic metre, or number of feet, in each line. Is there a common sequence of syllables and stresses? Then, detect any anomalies. For example, are there any lines which stand out due to length or rhythm in this poem?
- Does the tense of this poem give you a clue as to its rhythm and discordance?
- Consider the organisation of the poem into stanzas. Are they regular or formulaic? Does each focus on a different idea, mood, image etc?

Revise your devices

Many students come to the unseen poetry text with a basic and limited toolbox for deconstructing it. Full marks cannot be given if candidates do not demonstrate a sound understanding of poetic conventions and techniques.

Here is a revision exercise. Fill in the blanks of this table and answer the questions:

Broad Convention	Language	Structure	Rhythm	Narrative	Structure	Form
Elements of the convention	Figurative Language	Sentences	Meter	Narrative structure	Poetic lines	Lyric
	Alliteration	Fragments	Iambic	Plotline	Couplet	Elegy
Technical analysis of those elements	Can you name three types of alliteration? 1. 2. 3.	Can you describe the effect of not using punctuation?	Do you know why Shakespeare chose to use this metre in his sonnets and plays?	Can you identify the impact of the order of events on the reader?	How do rhyme pairs create meaning by linking concepts?	Can you identify some famous examples? 1. 2. 3.

Deconstructing evidence

Using the table below, insert examples of evidence from the poem and then explore this evidence effectively by completing the answers across each row.

Evidence	Poetic technique/s in this evidence	How does the technique used in this evidence create meaning?

Apply to your own text

Now use the table below for a poem you are currently studying. Place the evidence you have identified in the left-hand column and attempt to deconstruct it across each row. If you cannot make the link between your evidence and the way it was created to communicate an idea, you are not yet prepared for the examination.

Evidence	Poetic technique/s in this evidence	How does the technique used in this evidence create meaning?

Activity: Working with imagery

We often learn that imagery is language that creates pictures in our mind. This is certainly true, but we can explore this in more depth and understand that these 'pictures' can be complex and are more than just visual imaginings. Imagery can evoke sensations from all of our senses, and can be descriptive, figurative or thematic in their construction.

If we consider imagery as relating to the senses of seeing, hearing, tasting, smelling and touching, some ways to describe imagery are:

- visual imagery
- auditory imagery
- gustatory imagery
- olfactory imagery
- tactile imagery.

Imagery can also create more complex sensations, such as movement and experiences. This can be described as kinaesthetic imagery and organic or subject imagery. One of the reasons that imagery is such an effective device is that we all (mostly) experience these same sensations. They are universal experiences and help connect the reader to locations, subject matter, experiences or concepts that might be unfamiliar.

The Romantic poets were masters of imagery and below you will find the first stanza from Keats' 'To Autumn' that relies heavily on imagery to create sensation and effect, as well as to communicate sentiments and ideas to the reader. Within the poem below, locate at least three examples of imagery and explain how the examples relate a sensation and connect an idea by completing the table overleaf. Often when providing analysis, we miss out the middle columns.

To Autumn
by John Keats

Where are the songs of spring? Ay, where are they?
Think not of them, thou hast thy music too,—
While barred clouds bloom the soft-dying day,
And touch the stubble-plains with rosy hue;
Then in a wailful choir the small gnats mourn
Among the river sallows, borne aloft
Or sinking as the light wind lives or dies;
And full-grown lambs loud bleat from hilly bourn;
Hedge-crickets sing; and now with treble soft
The red-breast whistles from a garden-croft;
And gathering swallows twitter in the skies.

Example	Type of imagery created	Language used (descriptive, figurative, metaphorical, combination)	Sensation evoked	Experience or idea communicated

Activity: Clarifying the difference between style, diction, tone and voice

Style, diction, tone and voice – these are all terms that often get used interchangeably by Literature students. There are important distinctions that should be observed, however, as well as critical relationship between them. Unfortunately, the ATAR Literature glossary doesn't provide definitions for some of these terms, but they are all part of literary construction and you need to be able understand – and confidently discuss – them, as students of the course.

Diction: the specific word choices of a writer or speaker. This involves register (formal, informal, colloquial, archaic, etc.), denotation and connotation.

Style: the structures and patterns of language use, including word choice and syntax. We can observe stylistic features (favoured patterns) of certain writers, or indeed schools, genres or periods of writing. (See the Literature glossary for more on style.)

Tone: the feeling or attitude presented towards ideas or individuals. This is different to atmosphere and mood, but not as ideologically framed as perspective. Tone is evident to the audience through the use of diction and style, informing how readers are positioned to respond to the text.

Voice: this is a creation within the text and describes the specific way we are told a story or experience. This might be through a narrator or persona and it describes the individual characteristics and features of the perspective presented. Like tone, this is created through the use of diction and style.

Authorial Voice: this is a contested term that was traditionally considered to be the singular and authoritative voice of the text's creator. While this still has currency in non-fiction texts, we might feel uncomfortable using this term in relation to fictional texts since we acknowledge these are a constructed reality. (See the Literature glossary for more on voice.)

Look closely at the following stanza from 'My Town' by Meg Mooney and complete the gaps in the table below to demonstrate the differences between these concepts.

I've just had my legs waxed
walk out on the main street
turn down towards my car
when someone calls out, an Aboriginal bloke –
only whitefellas like quiet streets –
it sounds like my name, which is short –
shouts often confuse me like this

Example	Device	Effect	Explanation
'bloke', 'whitefella'	Diction – Australian vernacular establishing context and familiarity		
'I've just had my legs waxed / walk out on the main street'	Style (created through word choice and enjambment)		
'I've just had my legs waxed / walk out on the main street / turn down towards my car'	Tone – the word choice, enjambment and repetitive metre communicate a lethargic tone.	This tone helps us to recognise the gravitas of the theme of grief	
	Voice – caesuras and en dashes (features of style)	A distracted and disjointed persona who appears to be unnerved in the setting	

Each example, and device, has its own specific effect, but contributes to a broader reading, or explanation of understanding. So, while diction, style, tone and voice all work together to inform a reading, you must acknowledge their subtle differences in your analysis.

Hint: Know your technical terminology

A strong understanding of language techniques and devices is essential for both Section One and Section Two, but particularly in this Close Reading section, as you are required to deconstruct unseen texts. These features are easy to learn and memorise through study techniques such as flashcards.

Once you have built up your knowledge of a variety of techniques, you can practise identifying and analysing these in close reading texts.

Text C – Prose

A.M. Homes – *This Book Will Save Your Life*

Possible readings

The extract from can be read with a focus on ideas related to technology, control, love and loneliness. The unnamed protagonist is a creature of habit who surrounds himself with a 'vacuum of silence' created by a reliance on his headset and device. Though his morning routine appears to give him 'comfort' and a sense of control, an atmosphere of claustrophobia pervades the setting and his loneliness is obvious. In this way, the passage operates to critique our reliance on technology, focalising its function as a crutch to remove us from meaningful human connections. The man's attraction to the female swimmer amplifies this idea and introduces the theme of unrequited love – in this extract he merely observes his surroundings, seemingly unable to engage with them in a meaningful way. Astute candidates will identify that the man is no longer happy with his 'usual routine' and there is a sense that the man's life is about to change. Therefore, the passage appears to privilege the importance of human connection.

The excerpt can also be read generically, with a focus on its function as an exposition and as a possible work of science fiction. Candidates might note the contextual information, which states that the extract is the opening of a novel. As such, it establishes characters, settings, conflicts and themes. The unnamed protagonist functions as an 'everyman', highlighting our overreliance on technology for comfort and the isolation of contemporary society. The setting of Los Angeles is depicted with a focus on wealth: houses on the hill, putting greens, home gyms; yet this is all presented as superficial. There is an incongruence between the man's desires and his reality – he is presented as economically successful, yet is unhappy. There are also markers of the science fiction genre in the passage: the 'mechanical sounds' taking on a life of their own, the 'electronic wave' and the juxtaposition between the man-made and the natural world. Candidates might identify the passage as belonging to the dystopian genre with its familiar notions of control and order, the mastery of nature and dissatisfaction.

An ecocritical reading of the excerpt is also possible. Within the setting there is a privileging of the built environment over the natural world: the lawn that would 'otherwise be nothing' and the houses that 'climb the canyon wall'. There exists a desire to master nature, to exist spatially at the top of hill, which economically equates to wealth and power. Yet the man-made world is presented as artificial and hollow – the man's glass house on the hill has connotations of a prison and the woman swims in 'a pool of unnatural blue'. There is a sense that humans have tainted the natural world in references to 'smoke signals' and pollution.

Candidates may also note the passage's negative commentary of the trappings of wealth. The desire for the accumulation of material possessions, mansions and geographical superiority are presented as fleeting; the excerpt challenges our expectations of wealth – it seems to create a sense of insecurity rather than stability. A Marxist reader might note that the excerpt criticises capitalist and consumerist ideologies associated with the accumulation of wealth, exposing them as repressive.

Textual analysis

There are significant structural features in this passage. The entire exposition details the man's perspective whilst looking out from his 'glass house', cementing his role as a detached observer, rather than active participant in his own life. Oppositions feature, such as the man-made and the natural and the contrast between the male and female characters, which centralises notions of disconnection and fragmentation. It ends with a rhetorical question, denoting the ambiguity of the landscape while suggesting the man's life may change.

The third person limited narrative approach creates a sense of intimacy and emotional closeness with the unnamed protagonist and his situation. The narrative voice is direct and tinged with irony; it satirises the affluence of the protagonist and the setting in which he lives.

The physical setting of the man's house is described in terms of the artificial and mechanical, creating an unsettling atmosphere for the protagonist, who is 'caught off guard' by the sounds of the apparatuses and the 'shudders'. The house functions symbolically as a prison. This is juxtaposed to the representation of nature as alluring, mysterious and evocative. This may be used to support a gender reading: the relationship between the natural and the feminine and masculinity as a prison that has resulted in men's detachment and disconnection despite the appearance of supremacy. The suburban, affluent setting suggests a cultural climate where power is associated with the accumulation of wealth. Geographically, a house at the 'top of the hill' signifies supremacy, yet the narrative voice exposes this as a fallacy: *'There is no way to win.'*

The writing style of the passage is precise and economical, imbued with vivid, realistic descriptions and wry humour. The repetition of the words 'usually he' throughout the passage is used in interesting ways such as anadiplosis: repetition in the first part of a clause or sentence of a prominent word from the latter part of the preceding clause or sentence. Syntactic choices such as this reinforce the disruption of the man's usual routine, signalling a change in his outlook. The diction used to describe the male and female characters is significant and dichotomous: she is a 'confidante', 'muse' and 'mermaid' whilst he is anticlimactically likened to a 'captain' and, ultimately, a 'prisoner of his own making' which may be used to support readings centring on his confinement and lack of freedom. Numerous pronouns such as 'above' and 'below' highlight spatial relationships and power dynamics.

Contextual considerations

This passage operates within a contemporary Western capitalist context. Although it is set in America, candidates may notice resonances with their own culture. Candidates may comment on the reference to betting and how this allows us to access ideas about the addictive and harmful nature of gambling and its prevalence in society. The passage is a commentary on the overreliance on technology and students might discuss the rise of social media and the ironic disconnection between people that this can create. Candidates may discuss the setting of Los Angeles, how this iconic city is associated with celebrities and opulence, and how the passage challenges the idyllic portrayal of this lifestyle. The ending of the passage references fire and candidates might make connections to the deadly fires that ravaged California in 2018 to support an ecocritical reading and the futility of attempts to master nature.

Activity: Preparing for prose – know the discourse

When candidates present a close reading of a prose piece, there is often a tendency to retell the plot rather than analyse specific prose elements. A strong reading will focus on both ideas and techniques in every paragraph. It is imperative that you understand how prose passages are constructed, so that your reading contains competent analysis. To achieve this, you need to be familiar with a variety of prose concepts and terminology.

Prose Terminology	Features	Possible Effects
Narrative approach	First person Second person Third person limited Third person omniscient Third person objective Multiples narrators Character viewpoints	• Position readers to support or reject certain beliefs, attitudes and values. • Give a voice to particular discourses. • Produce irony. • Put readers 'at a distance' from characters and events, or establish emotional closeness. • Seem objective and authoritative.
Structural elements	Chapter titles The beginning and end of a passage Organisation of time Shifts of setting Oppositions or binaries Archetypes	• Support particular values and attitudes. • Establish conflicts between opposing belief systems or ideologies. • Influence the meaning produced. • Invite a reader response.
Characters	Naming Interior monologue Choice of verbs for speech Connotative words Descriptions of appearance Actions Selection of detail	• Construct an imaginary identity. • Embody stereotypes. • Evoke particular responses. • Undermine or empower particular characters and what they represent. • Invite sympathy or disdain. • Construct oppositions.
Setting	Geographical Physical Temporal Social Cultural Economic Political	• Establish time. • Function symbolically. • Centralise particular ideas. • Build atmosphere. • Establish a cultural climate. • Contribute to ideas.
Stylistic elements	Diction Syntax Sentence organisation Figurative language Rhetorical devices Tone	• Create irony or ambiguity. • Represent particular social groups. • Emphasise emotion (or lack thereof). • Influence readings. • Create imagery. • Construct character and shape responses to them.

Activity: Preparing for prose – analysing a prose extract

Locate a copy of last year's text booklet (available on the SCSA website: https://senior-secondary.scsa.wa.edu.au/syllabus-and-support-materials/english/literature), or source the prose extract from another location.

Re-read the novel extract and pull out any evidence of prose elements at play. Using the table below, analyse the effect of the devices you find. (You can also recreate this table and practise identifying techniques with other prose passages throughout the year.)

Prose Terminology	Feature/s	Evidence	Analysis
Narrative Approach	Third person limited	'After years of making sure that he is left alone, he is suddenly afraid to be alone, afraid not to hear, not to feel, not to notice.'	The third person limited narration allows readers access to the protagonist's feelings: a desire for connection and emotion. He is characterised as discontent and ill-at-ease with his circumstances. The repetition of 'afraid…not to' creates a sense of urgency and supports the idea that human interactions are necessary for a meaningful existence.
Structural elements			
Characters			
Setting			
Stylistic elements			

Activity: Phrasing a close reading

What is a reading?

A 'reading' is an explanation of your understanding of a text. A simple way to construct a reading is to discuss the ideas embedded in a text and the techniques that reveal these ideas. Less effective approaches include summarising the plot or searching for author intent.

Phrasing your thesis

You may find it helpful to accumulate a bank of 'sentence starters' for phrasing your reading of a text. Some suggestions are provided. Add your own to the list.

- A reader from the context of production who considers…may….
- Readers who foreground…may interpret the text as…
- _____ readers may construe the passage as a comment on…

Hint: Make a good first impression

A clear and concise introduction can create a strong impression for a marker and ultimately set your argument up for success. With a close reading, half a page is an ideal length. Ensure you signpost your reading strategy. It is also a good idea to introduce the language features and/or generic conventions you will analyse.

Section Two: Extended Response

General points

There are two main areas in which you need to demonstrate proficiency in this section of the examination. You must show a thorough understanding of the course concepts through discussions of texts you have studied and you must write a controlled response that effectively engages with the question. Of course, you need to demonstrate your ability to use evidence, syllabus terminology and effective written expression too. Essentially, this section is your opportunity to 'show off' all that you have learned in Literature Units 1–4. The key to doing this is being properly prepared – **know your texts** (their construction, their context, the discourses they engage with and, most importantly, their connections to syllabus concepts) and **practise your essay writing**.

One important aspect to performing well in this section of the examination is choosing the right questions for you. Here are a few tips to selecting what you will write about:

Select your questions after considering every question on the paper. This means you shouldn't have decided before seeing the exam that you will answer, for example, the question on context and the one on reading practices. There is no guarantee such questions will even appear.

Do not discount texts during your study period. You should be prepared to write on any question and with any text you have studied from the prescribed reading list. Studying only part of the course restricts your question choice and ultimately your performance. It is also false logic – you wouldn't go into a Maths exam with the attitude that you simply won't answer questions on probability, or a Human Biology exam having not studied the digestive system.

Consider the key words and concepts of the question carefully and make sure you understand them. There is nothing worse in an exam than getting halfway through a response and realising you've been on the wrong path, or worse, getting to the end of the answer only to realise you didn't really answer the question. Engaging with these concepts should be fundamental to your response, as it is to the marking of this section, so be familiar with the course concepts and emphasise your understanding throughout your argument.

Try to **avoid simply looking for questions similar to ones you have answered before**, or close to questions for which you've memorised an answer. If you do this, chances are you won't fully address the question on the paper, but the one you prepared instead. This is not to say you can't memorise or prepare ideas or comments about a text, just try to avoid reproducing a whole answer or thesis. These need to be closely connected to the question on the paper if you want to score well. Additionally, markers can very readily tell when an answer is 'rehearsed'. Don't be that student!

As we've previously stated, the ability to **write a clear and well-structured response** is critical to your success in this section of the examination. This is something that you should be working to improve throughout the year. Obviously, the feedback you receive on classwork is going to be crucial to this improvement, as is practising writing regularly as part of your study plan. You should be writing as often as possible using a Literature style of response. This is different to writing for History or Politics and Law, or any other course style. What they do have in common, however, is the need to present a thesis and to develop it clearly. Planning, thesis construction and signposting through topic sentences are all going to help your marker, or any other reader, to follow your argument. You could have the most insightful ideas but without clarity, they can be lost and will not be rewarded.

Activity: Getting prepared

Match the exam question to the syllabus concept

If you closely read the syllabus document, there should not be anything in the examination that you are unfamiliar with. A valuable exercise is to place last year's examination (available from the SCSA website: https://senior-secondary.scsa.wa.edu.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0016/540403/2018_LIT_Written_Examination.PDF) alongside the syllabus document and trace where the questions came from. You will be able to see close connections and this will help you to prepare for this year's paper.

Organising study notes

Remember that the reason you study texts in Literature, aside from the enjoyment of reading and opportunity to engage with ideas, is to address the key concepts of this course. When preparing your study program and assessment schedule, your teachers have thought about the best way to help you understand these key concepts. Therefore, when you study for the examination, you don't want to simply revise the plot, the main themes or ideas, or the importance of character; you want to do this in relation to **key syllabus concepts**.

Here is a suggested guide to organising study notes for the Literature course based around these concepts:

- **contexts** – of the text's production and the writer
- **main ideas** – themes and other ideas explored in the text
- **cultural identities** – consider how the text works to represent, reflect, critique or otherwise comment on its own and other nation's cultures
- **representations** – note the major people, places, events and ideas represented and the nature of these representations
- **ideological functions** – the values, attitudes and beliefs operating within the text, and how these work to support or challenge dominant ideologies
- **generic features** – know how every text functions as an example of its form and genre, borrows from other genres, and also consider how genre works to position readers
- **language and literary devices** – you need to go beyond simply identifying the use of language; note the way it shapes our response, or how it fits within a particular style
- **reading practices/strategies** – document the methods of reading each text; make sure you can establish the dominant reading before applying a resistant or alternative reading

- **critical readings** – record some significant details from your critical reading around the text, including bibliographic details
- **intertextuality** – record the connections that you find interesting and meaningful in your interpretation of the text
- **quotations/references** – you should record references within all of the notes above, as markers will expect you to be able to use quotes to effectively support your ideas
- **personal responses** – record your own emotional and intellectual responses to texts, as well as your aesthetic appreciation; consider how you have been positioned by the text.

Develop flexibility

Rather than identifying individual quotes from a text, you should focus on learning key moments when ideas are revealed. They don't have to be long. Then, learn three to four quotes from that part of the text. Choose moments that are rich in meaning and can be used for a variety of purposes.

For example, a key scene from Tim Winton's novel *Cloudstreet* is when Rose gives birth to Wax Harry in the room of Cloudstreet (the house) that has been a haunted site since the beginning of the novel. The moment, which features all of the Lamb and Pickles family members, unites not only the current inhabitants of the house, but also the tortured figures of the past. The moment unifies the divided house which we understand to be symbolic of the Australian nation. This climactic moment has an important role within the narrative structure of the family saga and represents an act of resolution to the haunted history of the house and, ultimately, the nation. This scene explores fascinating concepts about identity, context and narrative structure and also engages with post-colonial theory and embodies nationalism as an ideology. There is space to read from alternative positions within this scene, or to explore aesthetic and generic elements of Winton's work. All texts have these rich and multilayered scenes and they are useful reference points for supporting key observations.

Select a key scene from a poem, play and prose text you have studied and, in the table below, identify three separate purposes for which you could use it as evidence.

Text	Scene	Purpose 1	Purpose 2	Purpose 3
Poetry				
Prose				
Drama				

Revise your school-based assessments

Generally speaking, your teachers will have given you specific feedback on your work throughout the year. You should have been reflecting on this advice, noting your strengths and weaknesses and focusing your study accordingly. If not, now is the time to do so! Ask your teacher for clarification of their advice if necessary.

What are markers looking for?

The following table provides some suggestions for achieving high marks in Section Two. Incorporating these tips into your study regime may assist your performance in the Literature examination.

You should note that the marking of this section changed in 2018, emphasising the course concepts instead of knowledge about the text in isolation.

Criterion and available marks	Helpful tips
Engagement with the question (6 marks available)	• Deconstruct the question and know what you are being asked to do. • Highlight key words and consider the limits of what you will need to discuss. • Practise deconstructing questions. • Practise planning in a way that you find effective. • Practise writing answers and seek feedback about the way you have engaged with the question. • Remember that a great discussion of a text will not score highly if it doesn't address the question. • Try to avoid simplistic responses. Markers look for sophistication of ideas.
Course concepts (6 marks available)	• Know the course concepts. The syllabus document clearly says 'this is the examinable content' and lists concepts in the dot points for each Unit. • Be aware of the concepts from Units 1–4. The Literature examination can draw from all 4 units, and the Year 11 units target many important elements of literary study. • Know your texts. You should have read them a number of times by the examination. • You need to demonstrate your understanding in relation to the course concepts. Don't simply summarise everything you know about a text – use your knowledge appropriately. • Keep study notes about each text in relation to the concepts. See above for a guide to this. • Read *about* your texts – locate critical discussions about the text and its reception and understand the significance of the text in both its own and your context.

Hint: Review your work

Look over some of your previous essay assessments or practice essays you have completed as part of your revision. Use the above hints to identify where your strengths lie and how improvements can be made to pick up additional marks.

Use of evidence (6 marks available)	• Know how to incorporate knowledge about your texts into your writing and practise doing so. This is a critical aspect of supporting your argument. • Evidence might support statements about generic construction, contextual importance or more general discussions of themes and ideas. • Always explain a quote – simply including it doesn't contribute to your discussion. • Understand how to quote both directly and indirectly. • Make sure your references are pertinent to the point you are making. • There is no magic number of quotes to memorise. You should know your texts extremely well and if you can't remember a quote, always summarise the reference in the text that you think will support your point. • Be able to draw on the understanding of your texts' cultural contexts. If you reference a genre, school of thought or movement, ensure you have the knowledge to be able to explain its significance to your argument.
Linguistic, stylistic and critical terminology (6 marks available)	• Study the terminology of this subject and know how to use language specific to Literature. • Be familiar with the syllabus concepts and know how to use central terms in context. • Don't be tempted to overuse buzz-words and jargon. This does not demonstrate a better understanding of the key concepts or literary terms. Use language you understand. • This criterion doesn't just relate to generic and language conventions – you should be able to discuss the context of your texts with appropriate terminology as well. Know the main ideological concepts, spell the names of important figures and places correctly, etc. • Use the key words of the question to guide your discussion. • See the explanation of 'Linguistic, stylistic and critical terminology' earlier in this guide and use the appropriate terminology to support or clarify your discussion.
Expression of ideas (6 marks available)	• Again, planning will help to express your ideas effectively. • Practise writing essays. This should be a part of your study plan over the course of the year. • Read academic articles and discussions to help improve your vocabulary and style. • Look at sample answers and compare them to your writing. • Ask your teacher if you are unsure about what might be wrong with your writing. • Don't over complicate your expression. Clarity is always best. Jargon does not replace good writing. • Allow time to re-read your response and edit.

Considering Question 2

Discuss how the manipulation of language in at least one text allows experience to be represented in intense and compressed ways.

Interpreting the question

This question asks candidates to demonstrate a detailed understanding of the way language is employed, shaped or experimented with. Often when presenting literary analysis, the discussion focuses on themes and ideas and how these are represented through language. This question focuses specifically on language use itself, particularly its ability to convey complex, nuanced or layered meanings.

To explore language, candidates should provide analysis of specific examples of discourse, figurative language, language patterns, diction, connotation and denotation, or imagery. Other examples of language use might include syntax and sentence structure, sound devices or dramatic language.

The question asks for a discussion of the '*manipulation*' of language, so this could involve experimental or unexpected uses of language, or discussion of the crafting or stylistic use of language. Candidates should explain these choices as having specific purposes or effects.

In addition to this discussion of language, it is necessary to consider how these choices represent '*experience'*. Experience might be personal or individual, it can be experienced by a collective or be figurative of an imaginary identity. These experiences might be social, cultural or emotional. They might also be physical, intellectual or imaginary. The important thing is that the experience is identified and explained.

The terms '*intense'* and '*compressed'* are provided as qualifying criteria to the experience/s discussed. They are ways of describing and analysing a text's way of representing an experience. Intense may be considered as capturing a heightened emotional experience or personal and emotional conflict. A compressed representation may refer to strategies such as foregrounding experience and allowing a particular experience to be explored within a short timeframe and in a complex way.

Advice from teachers

- Be careful not to rely on discussions of form or genre when considering how experience can represented in intense and compressed ways. In attempting to discuss language, it can be easy to end up discussing the structures of poetry or the bildungsroman form. This is an understandable misdirection, but it is important to stay focused on language.
- Candidates should ensure they justify why the representation of experience can be considered compressed or intense.

Activity: Breathless beginnings

Below is the opening paragraph of the American classic, *Moby Dick*. The novel, written by Herman Melville in 1851, is a story about a significant experience. While the novel itself can't be described as compressed, this short opening passage begins to communicate the intensity of the Ishmael's experience, as well as the character himself. Read the passage and identify any uses of language that help construct a sense of haste and urgency and an atmosphere of adventure within a compressed extract. Use the examples you find to complete the table below.

Call me Ishmael. Some years ago—never mind how long precisely—having little or no money in my purse, and nothing particular to interest me on shore, I thought I would sail about a little and see the watery part of the world. It is a way I have of driving off the spleen, and regulating the circulation. Whenever I find myself growing grim about the mouth; whenever it is a damp, drizzly November in my soul; whenever I find myself involuntarily pausing before coffin warehouses, and bringing up the rear of every funeral I meet; and especially whenever my hypos get such an upper hand of me, that it requires a strong moral principle to prevent me from deliberately stepping into the street, and methodically knocking people's hats off—then, I account it high time to get to sea as soon as I can.

Language	How is a sense of haste/urgency constructed?

Activity: Coming to grips with the discourse

If you consult the Literature glossary from the syllabus, you will find that discourse *refers to the language or terminology used in the discussion of a subject or field of study*. Successful responses employ the discourses of literary study, which includes your metalanguage. In addition, many draw on the discourses of various theoretical approaches, such as those relevant to discussions of gender, race, class, etc. This is very helpful in establishing a concise and direct discussion as you are able to use one term for a concept that might take a number of sentences to explain. Re-read your own essays and consider which words and phrases could be improved. Think particularly of language linked to ideological perspectives.

Word, phrase or literary term	Definition	How I could use it on my own writing
subjugation	To bring under domination or control	I could use this term in a feminist, Marxist or post-colonial reading. In my last essay, instead of writing 'he used his power over her…' I could have said 'he took the opportunity to subjugate her'.
patriarchal		
hegemony		
subaltern		
naturalised		

Considering Question 3

How has the work of an Australian writer shaped your understanding of Australian national identity?

Interpreting the question

Candidates need to refer to an Australian author when answering this question. The question invites ***more*** than just one studied text of a particular author; the phrase 'the work' implies a range of texts. It could include essays, poems, short stories, interviews, or other texts from the same genre. Nonetheless, the studied text should remain the main focus. For example, David Malouf's novels are key texts of the syllabus; however, he also writes poetry, plays and essays. These could provide rich source material in responding to this type of question.

Candidates need to ensure they address the 'how' component of the question. In this case, the 'how' is not really referring to language and generic conventions. It is linking to ***your*** response and how this has been shaped. This would suggest a requirement to explore the interaction, empathy and impact on you as the reader.

Candidates need to fully engage with the concept of 'Australian national identity'. The question requires a focus on your understanding of three concepts: identity, national and Australian. What contributes to the construction of identity of a country or nation? History, contributing cultures, the present day, official doctrine, cultural texts, what is celebrated, what is concealed and so forth are all important factors.

Candidates should be aware of the elements of identity and how it is constructed within and across texts. Specific sources such as traditions, Aboriginal culture and colonial history, multiculturalism, history, the importance of the bush compared to the city, the ANZAC legend, the rebel and the importance of mateship are all useful. Find some of these elements in your texts and make consider how they shape your understanding of identity.

Candidate awareness and understanding of Australian national identity should evince some kind of change in their private understanding due to the author's work. How did your understanding change? Were you enlightened? Were you shocked? Were you confronted and challenged by what you read?

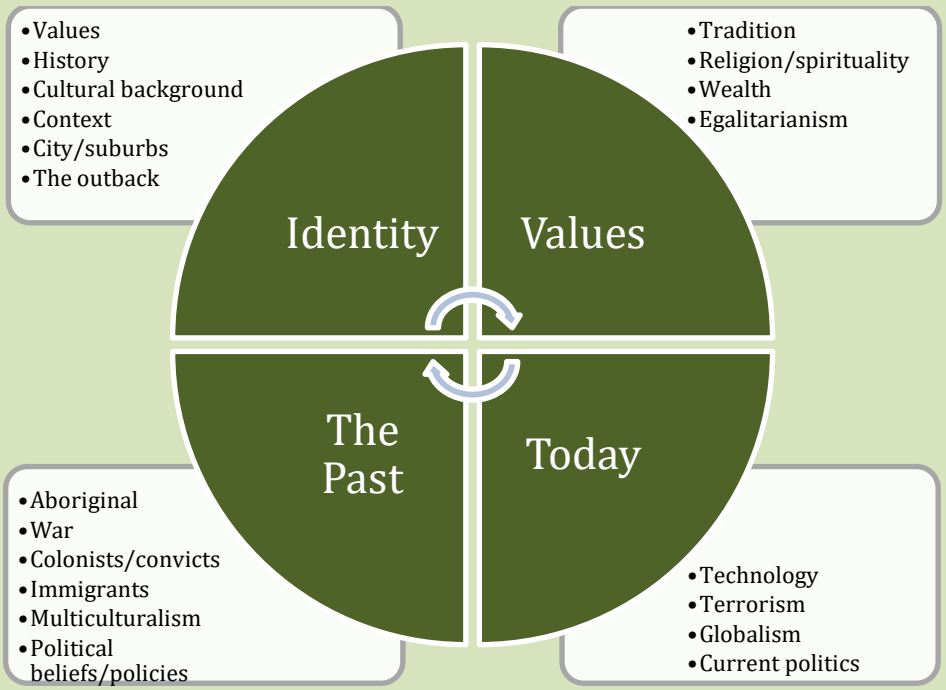
Advice from teachers:

- Candidates should take time to think about supportive textual material and choose it carefully. It all contributes to the strength of the response.
- Candidates need to weave the different texts together to make a structured argument.
- Candidates need to clearly outline their understanding of Australian identity.

Activity: Exploring Australian national identity

Think about what contributes to Australian identity. Where does it come from? What could cause change?

Look at the following diagram and map both your chosen text and supportive text to it. What parts of Australian identity do they explore? How does this connect to your understanding?



Hint: Learn your writers' styles

As you prepare your texts throughout the year, enrich your knowledge of an author by seeking out other material they have written. Look for differences and similarities in the concerns and style found in your major text of study.

Activity: The Australian text

The study of at least one Australian text is mandated in the syllabus as compulsory. Preparing such a text for an exam choice makes good sense. There is likely to be a question that asks you to specifically discuss an Australian text. Other questions are also accessible through this text choice. When preparing your material, you should be looking for representations of Australia that are recognisable. These representations include subject matter, methodology and ideology. Build a reference source that recognises these and can be used in your preparation for assessments and the final examination.

The headings below are listed as possible ways into your text. You may add more. Clarify your understanding of the terminology and find examples from your Australian text which validate these ideas and concepts contained therein. Not every text will explore every heading.

Australian identity	Texts and evidence
Colonial ideologies	
Current ideologies	
The importance of landscape	
Cultural identity	
Aboriginal acknowledgement	
The rebel	
Mateship	
The position of women	
The ANZAC legend	
Multiculturalism	
The larrikin	

Activity: The author's context

Understanding the background and context of an author can supply you with a potent frame of reference. Investigating an author's life and times is an important ingredient in discovering how they saw the world and appreciating their choices of genre and style in representing their ideas. An author from the past might reveal to you a new way of looking at something that seems ordinary in the present. The gender or ethnicity of an author might be a contributing factor in their creative output. Their work might marginalise or naturalise treatment of different groups of people.

Your task is to do some research and to use it in a positive way. Besides discovering factual details about a chosen author, look at the times or context in which they wrote or write. What was happening? Could these events have influenced their work? Finally, try to read some other source material actually written by your author. See if there are letters, essays or even blogs (for today's authors) available for you to examine. Their writing, or speaking, in a different genre or medium might reveal new ideas, as well as confirm or enhance what you have discovered while studying the chosen syllabus text. Such exploration will also give you some more intertextual resources upon which to draw, if need be.

Hint: Australia? Or Australias?

When writing about the Australian context, many students generalise the nation as if there is a single Australian experience. While your discussion might require you to focus on one aspect of Australian culture, keep in mind the rich diversity of Australian identities: urban, rural, coastal or outback localities; people of settler, Indigenous, migrant or convict origins; historical versus contemporary events that have shaped the nation. Major turning points such as Federation, WWI, the 1967 referendum on Aboriginal rights, the Wik High Court decision (aka the Mabo decision) and so on irrevocably altered the Australian context. Even within a single group – such as the women of Australia – there is a vast range of identities and experiences. Beware of homogenising all of Australia in supporting an argument; your marker may see it as simplistic or naïve.

Activity: Background viewing

The Literature course is focused on written literary texts and it is from these that you must draw your answers. Nonetheless, there are rich sources of background information available in Australian film texts. These too tap into Australian ideologies and reinforce cultural stereotypes and attitudes. Watching these films in an active way may reveal to you insights about your texts and will certainly offer you enrichment regarding historical context and the concerns of Australian culture.

Some suggested texts:

Picnic at Hanging Rock, *We of the Never Never,* *Mad Max* (the series),
Breaker Morant, *Gallipolli,* *Priscilla Queen of the Desert,*
The Light House Girl, *Strictly Ballroom,* *Australia,* *Jasper Jones,* *The Dressmaker,*
Red Dog, *The Rabbit Proof Fence,* *The Proposition,* *The Tracker.*

Considering Question 4

Reflect upon the ways your connection to a text has been influenced by aspects of your own identity.

Interpreting the question

The focus here is the way an individual, in this case you as the candidate, makes connections to a text. Think carefully about the word 'connections'. For example, candidates might note that a description of a setting might be moving because of its beautiful language and because they have travelled to that place before, they might be angered at the treatment of women because it challenges their beliefs in equality or they might feel empathy with a character making a difficult decision because they have experienced such a dilemma. Such connections should be clearly explained in your response.

'Your own identity' should be clearly defined. This question requires a deeply personal response. Consider your own identity thoughtfully, drawing on your life experience, cultural identity, place in society, age, gender, ethnicity and so on as a base from which to consider your connections to texts that you have studied.

'Aspects' is an important part of the wording of the question. Candidates may choose one or more contributing factors that make up their identity. Candidates who generalise about their identity as a whole will not be rewarded as highly as those who identify specific elements of that identity. The idea that identity is mutable or constantly changing could also be explored to enrich their answer.

Candidates might address the question demonstrating either a positive or negative connection to a text. Candidates should select a text towards which they have had *strong* personal reactions and be able to explain these.

Candidates should support their discussion with clear knowledge of the text. Direct examples that made an impact or caused a strong reaction should be incorporated into their response, clearly linking such connections with their identity. Incorporation of detailed discussion of the text should substantiate the connection between self and personal response.

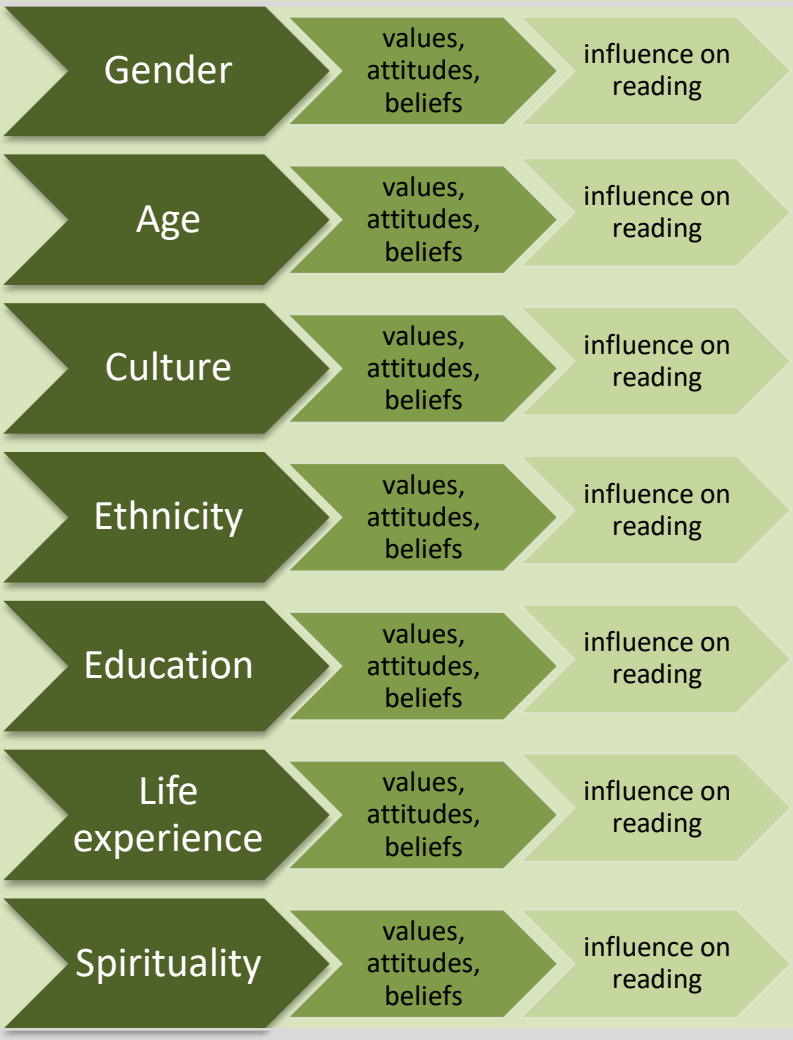
A clear individual voice from the candidate is important. The question invites a definite first person response that demonstrates personal reader engagement with the text.

Advice from teachers:

- Candidates should be able to demonstrate clearly the ways of connecting to a text.
- Explicit examples from the text should illustrate those connections.
- Candidates should understand that a first person response is asked for; they are expected to articulate aspects of their own personal identity.
- Candidates should be careful about relating too much personal, private information.

Activity: Considering your context

The syllabus emphasises the strong connection between readings and responses to texts, and the contexts of particular readers (or groups of readers). You should take the time to reflect on your personal context and the way various aspects of that context impact upon your experiences with texts. At this stage, you should be able to consider the influence of basic elements such as age and gender. Identify how aspects such as cultural background, socioeconomic context, family dynamics, spiritual or religious beliefs and so forth impact upon the beliefs, values and attitudes that contribute to your responses to texts.



Hint: Different responses to different texts

Different texts will highlight different connections to these aspects of context. Sometimes, particular aspects will have little influence on how you respond, while with other texts, your cultural heritage or your gender may have a large impact. Similarly, your context will generate a variety of responses. You may be charmed, shocked, delighted or appalled. You may feel empathy for a character, intrigued by the narrative or moved by the beauty of language and what it is trying to communicate. Whichever text you study, never overlook or discount the influence of your own context. Who you are will contribute to how you respond, unlock meaning and thus create understanding.

Hint: Understanding contextual shifts

Investigate your texts with an awareness of the values and attitudes of different contexts. These can be referencing time, place, class, gender, culture, education, spirituality, wealth or a combination of some of these. Sometimes the values are clear cut, other times they are deceptive. Seek out the ways a text may appear to be reinforcing ideologies, while subtly critiquing them. Shakespeare's play *The Tempest*, for example, which ultimately reinforces the power structure of nobility over the lower classes, nevertheless features a constant reference to rebellion in the songs the lower classes sing. These songs challenge the accepted hierarchy and suggest Shakespeare's awareness of this cultural shift – even if his work doesn't fully support it.

Activity: Your identity – your values

Identity is one of the basic concepts referenced in the syllabus. You are expected to be aware of elements that go into forming the identity of nations, cultures and individuals. This last identity includes the actual candidate – that is YOU! The three responses chosen as examples for Question 4 all elected to cite feminism as the key to their identity. While there is nothing wrong with this approach, there are other equally valid and rich contributors to personal identity. Consider these as you define who you are.

Once you have investigated the components that make up your identity, chart the values and attitudes that march alongside. For instance, if a personal identity is based on gender, how does that contribute to the way that individual sees and interacts with the world? What values are intrinsic to that perspective? How could they support or challenge dominant ideology? How do they connect to your understanding of your literary texts?

My elements	Dominant values
masculinity	strength, physical dominance, patriarchal society, expectations of behaviour, rewards, punishments, power, violence, virility
middle class	education, wealth, material possessions, upward mobility, ownership, travel, comfortable living, cleanliness, security
Italian ethnicity	honour, family, religion, loyalty, community, diligence, physical warmth and closeness, temperament

Activity: Adding to your glossary

Presumably, you already have a glossary of literary terminology set up as part of your exam preparation. Use every opportunity to add to it. Words associated with ideas and concepts are useful additions. Once you have a word set down, play with it. Include it in your conversations, write down its definition and make it a part of your writing practice. A word should be utilised at least three times to establish it as a natural part of your vocabulary. Sometimes a simple word can tap into the literary meaning and offer fresh insight.

Words related to identity	Sentence
individuality	A number of distinct behaviours and values that contribute to the individuality of a person.
character traits	
personality	
perspective	
voice	
uniqueness	
distinctiveness	

Activity: Sharing your knowledge

When you unpack a text or a syllabus concept, sharing your information with others is a useful method of clarifying understanding. Simple paired discussion can be a tool to solidify definitions, open new areas of thought and practise justification of an interpretation. Small groups can work the same way.

Sharing responsibilities makes the weight of expectations regarding the Literature course lighter. Tasks such as tracking a character through a text, discovering contextual information, establishing a narrative sequence, choosing the best quotations and unpacking questions are able to be shared for mutual benefit. Simply talking about your text to a peer can be most productive. By working together, the standard of understanding can be both raised and consolidated. Take the initiative and find a 'buddy' or partner who can reciprocate your input and so benefit you both.

Hint: Embrace the Cloud!

There are many online applications that will allow you to easily collaborate with others. Padlet, Office 365, Google Docs and so on are all cloud-based services that will allow you to share resources, create shared dossiers of notes, and comment on each other's work.

Considering Question 5

Explore how the writing of a text can be interpreted as an act of rebellion and/or empowerment.

Interpreting the question

This question asks candidates to reflect on how their texts engage with and comment on context. The most obvious approach would be to focus on the context of production – for example, how *Heart of Darkness* can be read as a rebellion against the imperialist presence in Africa. Candidates may also choose to write about texts whose temporal setting differs from the production context, such as how *No Sugar* functions as a revisionist text in order to empower the Indigenous community.

'The writing of a text' is a key component of this question. This requires explicit discussion of the construction of the chosen work – its generic, structural, stylistic or language features.

Candidates might choose to focus on texts that were controversial at the time of production. Texts by authors who challenge the status quo, such as Charlotte Perkins Gilman in her short story *The Yellow Wallpaper*, or post-colonial texts by authors such as the poet Samuel Wagan Watson would also suit the parameters of this question.

The phrase 'can be interpreted' connotes ambiguity and a valid approach would be to formulate a response that draws on reading practices. For instance, candidates may reference the syllabus notion that *interpretations of texts vary over time,* and may discuss how the notion of rebellion or empowerment varies based on the values of the audience. Ideological perspectives such as feminism and Marxism would also be suited to this question.

'Rebellion' and 'empowerment' are key terms here. This question draws on the syllabus point of *how literary texts may be used to 'naturalise' particular ways of thinking, to serve the purposes of powerful groups while marginalising the views of others.* Candidates who read their work as an 'act of rebellion' should clearly outline the powerful group/s and the associated ways of thinking that the text challenges. Discussions of empowerment should centre on specific marginalised individuals/groups whose ways of thinking are focalised.

Advice from teachers

- Candidates should avoid falling into the trap of simply writing about how their text/s challenge or support particular ideologies. Therefore, an understanding and discussion of form and genre is pertinent in formulating a nuanced response.
- This question requires a sound understanding of the techniques and conventions that authors use in their writing. Candidates that show a strong understanding of their text's genre are likely to be rewarded.
- For this question, candidates should use contextual references to support their arguments regarding the text's function as rebellious and/or empowering.

Activity: Reflecting on the function of your texts

An important aspect of any text study is to evaluate how your texts engages with context, whether this be its context of production, or whether a literary work seeks to engage with issues of the past. Your syllabus asks you to *evaluate and reflect on how representations of culture and identity vary* among texts. Therefore, you should consider how your text/s paint a particular nation or culture, and how this would be received by various audiences.

The syllabus also notes: *genres may have social, ideological and aesthetic functions. Writers may blend and borrow conventions from other genres to appeal to particular audiences.* This question draws on several aspects of this point.

Firstly, 'the writing of a text' asks you to reflect on the function of its aesthetic features; the second half of the question asks you consider whether your text/s comment on social issues or challenge/support particular ways of thinking. The form your author chooses can either appeal to or alienate particular audiences.

Choose one of your texts and complete a version of the following table. The following sample answer discusses the functions of Aravind Adiga's novel, *The White Tiger*.

Notes on the possible functions of *The White Tiger*		
Aesthetic	**Social**	**Ideological**
Genre: Epistolary Adiga utilises a traditionally feminine writing form to structure the novel as a series of letters between the low caste Indian protagonist and the Chinese premier. The genre is fitting for the subject matter, as the two countries, like women, have traditionally been marginalised by Western discourse – seen as part of the 'orient' and 'inferior' to Western culture. Adiga also blends and borrows elements from the satirical and picaresque genres to create humour that disarms the audience, creating interest and encouraging them to engage on a deeper intellectual level.	The text provides a scathing critique of a number of social issues pervading contemporary Indian society, such as: • Caste discrimination • Corruption • Pollution • Sexism It rebels against the 'status quo' by drawing attention to the inequities that pervade the way of life in India.	The text can be read as supporting and/or challenging various ideologies, depending on the reading practice employed. The text engages with the following ideologies: • Hinduism • Classism • Capitalism • Colonial • Socialism The text can be interpreted as empowering the lower caste of India by providing a voice to the marginalised – it draws attention to dominant ideologies which are repressive and advocates for ways of thinking that provide greater equality.

Activity: The relationship between writer, reader, text and context

In Sample Response One, the candidate constructs a reading that focalises the beliefs and assumptions of the intended audience, in order to assert that Conrad's text rebels against the ways of thinking in his production context.

Your syllabus highlights *the dynamic relationship between authors, texts, audiences and contexts, including:*

- *the ways in which the expectations and values of audiences shape readings of texts and perceptions of their significance; and how the social, cultural and historical spaces in which texts are produced and read mediate readings*
- *how interpretations of texts vary over time.*

For each of your texts, make notes on the way the writer engages with audience and context. You might like to use the following table as a guide. Use the points from Sample Response One as a guide to get you started.

Text:		
Context of production	**Intended audience**	**Textual examples**
Text:		
Context of production	**Intended audience**	**Textual examples**

Hint: Postcolonialism and Australia

As a formerly colonial society, postcolonialism is a significant preoccupation in Australian writing. It is well-worth being informed on the ways the Australian colonial experience is a unique one, and the way Australian literature has responded to issues of colonialism since the days of European settlement.

Considering Question 6

Discuss how the aesthetic qualities of at least one text have been used to support and/or challenge ideologies.

Interpreting the question

This question draws on the interrelationship between the aesthetic and the intellectual, which is a prominent feature of the syllabus. The glossary notes that *many would argue that the aesthetic and the intellectual are inseparable.* The question not only invites candidates to discuss the aesthetic appeal of a literary text, but also how the text functions on an intellectual level through its engagement with ideologies.

The syllabus defines the aesthetic as *a sense of beauty or an appreciation of artistic expression*. In discussing 'aesthetic qualities', candidates should reference the aesthetic appeal of generic features. These could include experimental staging in drama, the use of an unreliable narrator in a prose text or sensory imagery in a poem. It is also a valid approach to comment on the author's use of language for effect.

The key word 'how' invites candidates to discuss the *effect* of aesthetic qualities. To address this aspect of the question, candidates might discuss the emotional impact of particular textual elements or their appreciation of an author's experimentation with generic features, or even how well an author is able to replicate or represent particular facets of the human experience.

Candidates need to show an understanding of the syllabus definition of ideology: *a system of attitudes, values, beliefs and assumptions*. An ideology is more than just an idea – it is a set of ideas belonging to powerful individuals or groups.

The question invites candidates to engage with nuances of meaning. Stronger candidates might recognise that the 'and/or' feature of the question draws on the notion that texts can be complex, even contradictory, in their treatment of ideologies.

Advice from teachers

- Candidates need to ensure they explicit outline the ideologies they are discussing. Valid approaches might include discussing political persuasion, such as Labour or Liberal, or particular religions such as Christianity or Islam, or even philosophies such as existentialism.
- It is imperative to analyse specific textual features and connect these to their role in either supporting or challenging particular ideologies.
- Stronger responses will demonstrate consideration of both language and generic features. This might mean commenting on imagery and figurative language in poetry, as well as metre and rhyme.

Activity: Understanding ideologies

To develop a sophisticated response to this question, candidates need to apply the syllabus definition of ideology to their text/s. Like any literary concept, a nuanced understanding of this theory will lead to a more detailed answer.

To know how your texts engage with ideologies, you must first understand the elements that comprise them. Too often, candidates discuss simplistic ideas rather than complex value systems. Use the table below to deepen your understanding of how your texts engage with ideologies. Some aspects of the ideology of environmentalism have been deconstructed for you as an example.

Ideology: Environmentalism			
Attitudes	**Values**	**Beliefs**	**Assumptions**
• proactive •	• conservation •	• the inherent right of nature •	• human activity has a substantial impact on the natural world •
Ideology:			
Attitudes	**Values**	**Beliefs**	**Assumptions**

Activity: Describing the aesthetic

Grappling with the notion of 'aesthetic' is tricky for students and teachers alike. A simple way to approach the concept is to think of each text as a piece of art. How does it make you feel? How well (or poorly) does it represent real life? Is it constructed in an interesting or unusual way?

Aesthetic features are the techniques or conventions that authors employ. In your essays, you must go beyond simply listing features; you need to describe their effects. This is not always easy and requires practice. A helpful strategy is to make a list of ways to describe aesthetic features, and then apply them to your texts, where appropriate.

The following list was taken from a candidate's essay and can provide some sample ways of describing the effect of aesthetic features. You can use it as inspiration for creating your own list. Try to add a few of your own phrases below.

Sample ways to describe the effect of aesthetic features		
lyrical, hymn like	grim	visceral
pleasant...beautiful	chaos and disregard	emotive, affective
immersive experience		

Hint: Undertaking an aesthetic reading

An aesthetic reading focuses on the artistic qualities of a text. It is an exploration of what the reader finds most beautiful, artistic, striking or well-crafted within its construction. This makes for a highly subjective reading. However, this does not mean you can write about just any old thing and claim it as your 'aesthetic appreciation'. To truly appreciate a text from an aesthetic perspective, you must be able to recognise and comment on its crafting at a high level, in terms of its use of language and generic conventions, as well as its representation of ideas. In this way, you will be able to communicate *why* you think the text is beautiful or has artistic merit.

It is virtually impossible to undertake an informed aesthetic reading unless you have read widely, and are able to appreciate how the text is crafted in relation to others of its kind.

Activity: Metalanguage – higher order verbs

In your essays, you will spend a lot of time explaining textual evidence and justifying your interpretation of the question. Therefore, you need to approach each analytical assessment 'armed' with an arsenal of varying ways to discuss your texts.

A helpful strategy is to memorise a variety of higher order verbs that you can draw on to explain your ideas. These verbs are 'higher order' in the sense that they move beyond simplistic explanatory words such as 'is' and 'shows'. Of course, not all verbs mean the same thing and you will need to ensure you use the correct word in the correct context.

The following page contains a list of explanatory words used by the candidate in Sample Response Two, as well as some other verbs and corresponding definitions. Add your own to the list and use them where appropriate to enhance your writing.

Higher order verbs used in Sample Response Two	
"evidenced" "pioneered" "depicts" "aims" "supports" "represents" "establishes" "associates" "suggests" "reinforces" "highlights" "encourages" "emphasises" "comments" "indicates"	
Verb	**Definition**
accentuate	To make more noticeable or prominent.
affirm	To declare one's support for; uphold; defend.
assert	To state a fact or belief confidently and forcefully.
centralise	To bring to the forefront.
characterise	To describe the distinctive features or nature of.
compound	To add to.
construe	To interpret in a particular way.

Hint: Creating complex topic sentences

The semi-colon is an under-appreciated punctuation mark. It can be used to add a dependent clause to your topic sentence, adding additional, specific detail in a way that is still clear and easy for the reader to follow. Here are two examples:

Shelley's sonnet 'Ozymandias' can be read as an ironic commentary on the folly of hubris; a powerful statement about the insignificance of humans in the grand scheme of time.

Shelley's sonnet 'Ozymandias' can be read as an ironic commentary on the folly of hubris; a theme most powerfully evident in the central conceit of a crumbling statue of a once-great king.

Considering Question 7

How does reading intertextually allow readers to appreciate particular representations of human imperfection?

Interpreting the question

Reading intertextually does not immediately, or only, refer to the allusions made in a text. This question requires candidates to embrace one of the underlying concepts of the Literature course: the interconnectedness of texts and reading experiences. They should be able to recognise and differentiate between various styles, methodology and the choices made therein, and also note similarities. Furthermore, every text you experience contributes to a body of knowledge, expectations and understandings that you then bring to each new text you read. Intertextuality encompasses these subtle connections between texts as well.

The phrase 'reading intertextually' offers candidates a chance to demonstrate their wider reading practice outside studied texts, explaining how a variety of reading experiences have deepened their understanding of representations within those set texts.

Through the word 'appreciate', candidates are invited to present their personal viewpoint. They may also present an objective perspective through comparison and analytical discussion. 'Appreciate' may be understood as recognition, understanding, empathy, aesthetic appreciation and so on. Students could be critical or supportive of the representations of human imperfection, but there should be clarity about the nature of their appreciation.

Candidates should take some time to really think about 'human imperfection' and how this are represented within a text. The phrase suggests faults or weakness, or what is absent. In literary texts, imperfections or flaws in human characters can often be the driving force of the narrative. Their representation can be seen as supporting or normalising a particular doctrine, or as critical of it. A character construct may embody attractive qualities, while flawed by a particular imperfection. The human condition is subject to change through circumstance and experience. It embraces emotions, which include lust, pride, fear, loneliness, jealousy, anger and vulnerability. Many imperfections are controversial and invite considered thought.

Candidates have an opportunity to demonstrate connections between texts through generic elements that have been included or merged within the style of a text. Similarities of discourse, use of symbolism and archetypal characters could be part of candidate discussion. Candidates should remember to retain the chosen primary text as the focus of their response.

Advice from teachers

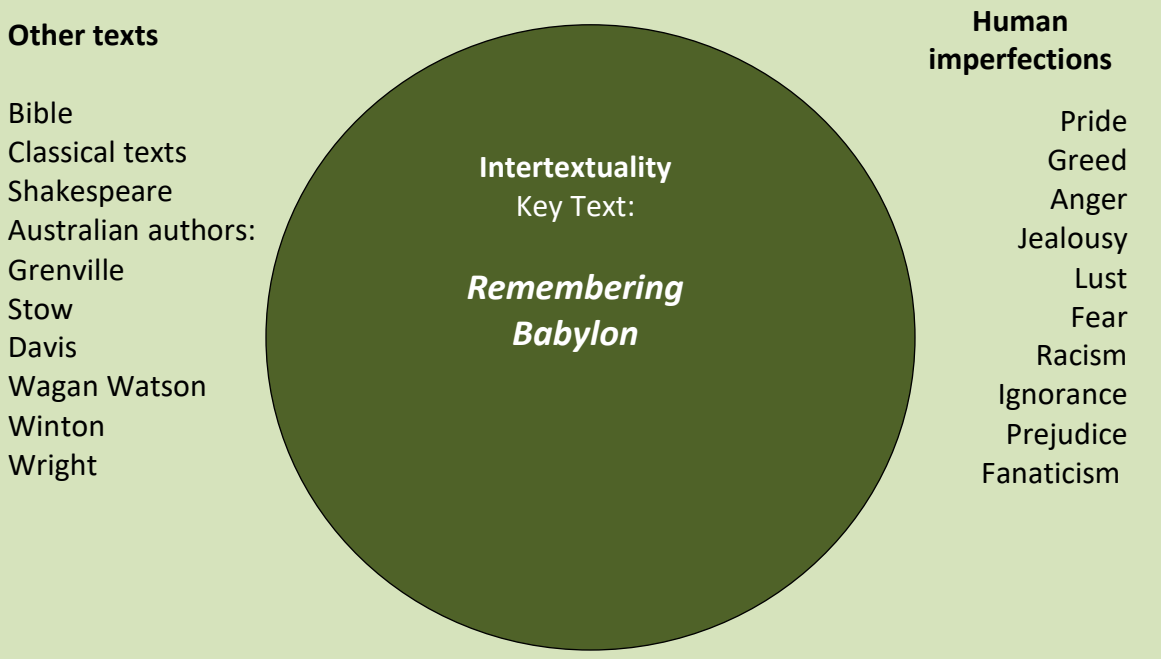
- Candidates should be explicit in their choice of examples across texts; they should explain each representation and how each one endorses or challenges ideas about human imperfections presented in the main text.
- Intertextual links are not confined to other literary texts listed in the course; rich examples of intertextuality can arise from a wide range of source material.

Activity: What defines intertextuality?

Intertextuality refers to the interdependent ways in which texts stand in relation to one another (as well as to the culture at large) to produce meaning. Your wider reading can influence your appreciation through recognition of tropes, phrasing, reference, development of ideas, contrasting of key notes of discourse and familiarity of ideologies.

Use the graphic below to build connections between texts you have read. How do they inform the key text under study? The key element connecting the texts in the graphic is the fact that they are all Australian texts. Each one contributes to Australian ideology. Each one represents a different style of exploring a theme. Each one uses language differently. The selection of human imperfections explored in *Remembering Babylon* will be present in the other texts and their representation will either support or challenge Malouf's version, allowing you to recognise and appreciate it in greater depth.

Recreate the graphic below to explore your own text choice. Match the human imperfections from that text to others you have read. This is a simple way to start linking ideas, methodology and understanding on your own behalf.



Hint: Dig out your Year 11 notes!

You studied a range of literary texts in your Year 11 course. Although it is unlikely you studied them with quite the same depth as your Year 12 texts, they can provide useful intertextual links. After all, they were your introduction to the skills and concepts of the Literature course, and thus influenced the way you have read texts since. Go over your notes from last year or re-read those texts with fresh eyes.

Activity: Over-writing your response

Candidates may approach the exam by setting down everything they know about their text in an attempt to demonstrate their knowledge. The exam situation is fraught with tension, time constraints and high expectations. It is worthwhile for a candidate to set aside five minutes to think about their question choice, unpack the question and select the right text to marry with the question they choose. Thinking things through can save loss of focus and logic in a written response.

You do need to:

- know your text well
- understand the terminology of the question
- select the right material from your text as support
- express yourself fluently and in a well-structured essay.

Make a graphic organiser which suits your learning style. Use it to record some of the concepts of the course and match these with text choices and textual references. Remember that some textual references will match more than one concept. These are valuable, so look for them.

Concept	Text choice	Textual evidence
Context and gender	*The Tempest*	Miranda objectified: • 'I ratify this my rich gift.' • 'By immortal providence she's mine:' • But you, O you, So perfect and so peerless, are created Of every creature's best!'

Hint: Allusions – going to the original source

When identifying allusions in your text, it is important to go to the source and check the reference. Sometimes the original will have deeper contextual connections than might be immediately apparent. These can extend the connotations arising from your text's inclusion of the allusion. If you can cite the original text, you can add to the depth of your answer and thus increase its value.

Genre-specific questions – Questions 8, 9 and 10

The Literature Examination Design Brief makes it very clear to teachers and students that there must be three questions in Section Two of the examination that are specific to the genres of poetry, prose fiction and drama. In the examinations for the course so far, these questions have been the last three of the section; in 2018 they were Questions 8, 9 and 10. However, this might not always be the case, so always read questions carefully so that you understand the constraints of any question you choose to answer.

These genre-specific questions very directly target the elements of the genre that are unique to that specific form. This means two things: firstly, you need to make sure that answers to these questions refer very closely to the devices and elements of that genre and, secondly, that you employ appropriate terminology to demonstrate proficiency in that genre.

It may seem obvious, but this is a good point at which to remind you that, across your three responses in the examination, you must address all three genres: poetry, prose and drama. If you fail to do so, you will attract a penalty. Similarly, with these genre-specific questions, you must write on the required genre or you will again attract a penalty. In the pressure of an exam it can be easy to overlook this requirement, particularly if you think a specific studied text is perfect for a particular question you find. Always double check before you start writing your response.

To find examinable content in the syllabus that relates specifically to the genres, it is helpful to return to Units 1 and 2 – the Year 11 course. The material in these units is considered assumed knowledge in Year 12 Literature and may be drawn upon by examiners in the construction of questions. In these units we see terms like archetypal figures, narrative devices, sound and visual devices, narration and dramatic devices. You should be prepared for terms such as these to appear in the examination.

Hint: the 'So what?' test

The key to a good conclusion is not just to summarise your argument, but to consider its significance. As you write your conclusion, ask yourself 'so what?' Why is what you are arguing important? Why should your marker care about what you have written? It may be that your text makes you reflect on the world and its people in a different way or reveals an insight into human nature. You may see parallels within your own context, or your text may have an important artistic contribution to make. Whatever the reason, care about what you have written and share that engagement with your marker.

Activity: Genre-specific concepts

What might be asked of you in these questions? It is reasonable to expect that they will be focused on concepts that set each genre aside from the other. Consider the following ways that the genres differ from each other. With each heading, create a list for poetry, prose fiction and drama and try to note down as many things as possible that set the genres apart.

Unique devices

Poetry, prose fiction and drama texts use some elements that are similar, but there are very clear differences to how each genre is constructed that would be ideal concepts to assess. For example, poetic forms are unique to poetry, stage devices are unique to dramas, and narrative point of view is foundational to any prose fiction text and while it may be employed in a poem or play, it is essential to a novel or short story.

Experience

Consider how the audience experiences each of the forms. The way we experience a poem is very different from the way we experience a stage play. Alternatively, the way we follow the narrative of a play is very different from the way we engage with the long and complex reading of a novel. A novel is an extended exploration; the reader has to follow the journey of the characters for hours at a time while inhabiting the world of the story. This means that the experience of this literary form is very different from poetry or drama.

Language devices

Language is common to all genres: it has to be or the texts wouldn't exist. But there are certain types of language or language uses that we can clearly attribute to certain genres. For example, the sound devices used in poetry are created through particular language structures, and dramatic dialogue is informed by specific indictors which only exist in scripts.

Archetypes

Archetypes are recurring patterns that appear in storytelling. They can be structural repetitions, ways of ordering and telling a story or even recurring character types. As students of Literature, you should be familiar with various archetypal narratives and specifically, archetypal figures. While archetypes appear in poetry and drama at various times, they are particularly important to prose fiction texts.

Blending genres

In your study of Literature, you will encounter times when texts borrow from different genres or genres have become blended at different moments of literary construction. We can, however, acknowledge the blended aspect of a text, and attribute certain devices to particular genres, even when we see them appear elsewhere. An example of this would be dramatic irony. We understand that this is a dramatic device, but we can also recognise that it occurs in written narratives at times through the way narration works.

Considering Question 8

Consider the way at least one poem has employed poetic conventions to explore an issue of significant cultural change or difference.

Interpreting the question

As this is a genre-specific question, candidates should show an understanding of poetic structure, language and form. The poetic features discussed should directly relate to the exploration of an issue.

The verb 'explore' suggests a degree of ambiguity in the relationship between the text and the issue identified. Candidates might discuss texts that serve as social commentaries, such as protest poems. It would also be appropriate to draw on your context to reflect on how the poet challenges your assumptions or values.

The question asks candidates to explore 'an issue', which indicates that *one* issue should be discussed. Stronger responses might focus on a broad issue, such as women's rights, and then deconstruct this in greater detail.

The term 'significant' is open to interpretation and candidates should clearly outline the significance of the issue in their introductions. For example, an issue might be considered significant if it impacts a particular social group or if it is a point of contention in a particular society.

This question draws on a specific syllabus dot point: *how literature represents and/or reflects cultural change and difference.* Responses to the descriptor 'change' might highlight moments of cultural upheaval or paradigm shifts. Text choices might include works from the 1960s Civil Rights era, or war poetry. 'Cultural difference' might be defined in terms of clashes between Indigenous and Western culture, or texts that highlight ways of life that differ from the dominant culture.

Advice from teachers

- When discussing poetic conventions, it is advantageous to extend your commentary beyond language features; more sophisticated responses will deconstruct a broader range of features unique to poetry, such as lineation, metre and sound devices.
- It is important to clearly outline the issue you are discussing and to signpost this throughout your response. An issue might be defined as a problem that affects numerous individuals across a particular society. Therefore, it should also be clear which society you are discussing. Social issues might include things like climate change, gender discrimination or poverty.
- Where possible, candidates should write on more than one poem. This will enable their response to be more detailed and they will be able to demonstrate a stronger understanding of poetic conventions.

Activity: Tracking issues of cultural change and difference

To deepen your understanding of how key syllabus concepts apply to your texts, try making notes on issues of cultural change and difference that have been reflected and/or represented in one or more of your studied works. A sample answer, which comments on the poem 'Tecumseh' by Mary Oliver, has been provided to help you organise your thoughts.

Text: 'Tecumseh' by Mary Oliver	
Issues of cultural change	**Issues of cultural difference**
• Environmental degradation • Assimilation • Hegemony	• Environmental justice • Discrimination • Sacred landscapes
Text:	
Issues of cultural change	**Issues of cultural difference**
Text:	
Issues of cultural change	**Issues of cultural difference**
Text:	
Issues of cultural change	**Issues of cultural difference**

Activity: Analysing imagery

Imagery is a common feature of poetry, and one that students frequently analyse in their examination. It is not a device by itself, however. Instead, it is constructed by either descriptive or figurative language. Imagery also appeals to the senses and thus it can be helpful to identify a specific sense in your analysis. Finally, you should state clearly what image is being constructed.

The following steps for analysing imagery may be helpful:

1. What image is created?
e.g. natural, Biblical, apocalyptic

2. What type of sensory imagery is it?
e.g. visual, olfactory, aural, tactile, gustatory

3. Is it created by description of figurative language?

These steps can be used with any quotation that is a valid example of imagery. Below, this formula is applied to an example from the candidate's essay. You can try applying these steps to an example from your poetry texts to gain a stronger understanding of how imagery works.

Textual example	Image	Sensory appeal	Created by
The most significant employment of poetic conventions is Heaney's recurring dehumanisation of the infant child …as a "small one" that was "netted."	• Catching a fish	• Visual	• Figurative language (metaphor)

Considering Question 9

Discuss how narrative techniques have created a sense of place in at least one prose fiction text.

Interpreting the question

This is a question that every student of the Literature course should be able to answer effectively. Understanding narrative techniques is a fundamental aspect of not only this course, but of literary studies generally. We begin understanding narratives as a very young child and begin analysing their construction early in our education. This question relies on that understanding, along with a more nuanced, but not unfamiliar concept: place.

Narrative techniques are the foundation of any story; they are the elements that we need to tell the tale. They include the narrative point of view employed, as well as characters, plot structures, metonyms, motifs, setting (both temporal and physical) and genre, as well as voice, tone, language and discourse.

The question asks '***how*** *narrative techniques have* ***created*** *a sense of place*' which should guide candidates to provide an analytical discussion featuring detailed references from the text to show the effect of the techniques on the reader's understanding of, and response to, place. Close attention needs to be paid to the specific functions and operations of the identified narrative techniques, and the meanings and effects they generate in regards to place.

'*Sense of place'* is a phrase that is used very regularly, but rarely explained in detail. It incorporates the image and feeling conjured by a location for both characters and/or readers. The place can be a built or natural environment, and it can also incorporate a spiritual component, as the spirit of place is often described as *genius loci*.

Advice from teachers

- Candidates must do more than simply describe the construction of setting within their text, although this is a good place to start. A 'sense' of place should encompass the affective – that is, the emotional connections, moods and feelings connoted by the construction of setting.
- Candidates should explore how multiple narrative techniques work in conjunction with each other to construct the sense of place.
- Places can be quite specific, but a successful response could address place in a broader sense, such as 'Australia'.
- Stronger candidates may differentiate between the sense of a place held by the characters and that held by the reader.

Activity: *Genius loci*

Genius loci is a Latin term meaning the spirit of a place. Within literature, this is a concept that gained strong popularity in the writing of the Romantic period and also within the Gothic traditions that emerged at that time. Literary constructions, particularly of nature, attempted to capture the sublime characteristics of the natural world, as well as the unlocatable aspects of the human consciousness. This tradition continues in literature today and we can track its appearances in works by local writers such as Kim Scott and Tim Winton that is sometimes described as eco-spiritualism. In the passage below, taken from Mary Shelley's 1818 novel, *Frankenstein*, we read of Frankenstein's journey through the Alps as he attempts to make sense of his emotional state following a traumatic experience.

I performed the first part of my journey on horseback. I afterwards hired a mule, as the more sure-footed and least liable to receive injury on these rugged roads. The weather was fine: it was about the middle of the month of August, nearly two months after the death of Justine; that miserable epoch from which I dated all my woe. The weight upon my spirit was sensibly lightened as I plunged yet deeper in the ravine of Arve. The immense mountains and precipices that overhung me on every side – the sound of the river raging among the rocks, and the dashing of the waterfalls around, spoke of a power mighty as Omnipotence – and I ceased to fear, or to bend before any being less almighty than that which had created and ruled the elements, here displayed in their most terrific guise. Still, as I ascended higher, the valley assumed a more magnificent and astonishing character. Ruined castles hanging on the precipices of piny mountains; the impetuous Arve, and cottages every here and there peeping forth from among the trees, formed a scene of singular beauty. But it was augmented and rendered sublime by the mighty Alps, whose white and shining pyramids and domes towered above all, as belonging to another earth, the habitations of another race of beings.

I passed the bridge of Pelissier, where the ravine, which the river forms, opened before me, and I began to ascend the mountain that overhangs it. Soon after, I entered the valley of Chamounix. This valley is more wonderful and sublime, but not so beautiful and picturesque as that of Servox, through which I had just passed. The high and snowy mountains were its immediate boundaries; but I saw no more ruined castles and fertile fields. Immense glaciers approached the road; I heard the rumbling thunder of the falling avalanche, and marked the smoke of its passage. Mont Blanc, the supreme and magnificent Mont Blanc, raised itself from the surrounding aiguilles*, and its tremendous* dôme *overlooked the valley.*

A tingling long-lost sense of pleasure often came across me during this journey. Some turn in the road, some new object suddenly perceived and recognized, reminded me of days gone by, and were associated with the light-hearted gaiety of boyhood. The very winds whispered in soothing accents, and maternal nature bade me weep no more. Then again the kindly influence ceased to act – I found myself fettered again to grief, and indulging in all the misery of reflection. Then I spurred on my animal, striving so to forget the world, my fears, and, more than all, myself – or, in a more desperate fashion, I alighted and threw myself on the grass, weighed down by horror and despair.

At length I arrived at the village of Chamounix. Exhaustion succeeded to the extreme fatigue both of body and of mind which I had endured. For a short space of time I remained at the

window, watching the pallid lightnings that played above Mont Blanc, and listening to the rushing of the Arve, which pursued its noisy way beneath. The same lulling sounds acted as a lullaby to my too keen sensations: when I placed my head upon my pillow, sleep crept over me; I felt it as it came and blest the giver of oblivion.

This passage is from Vol 2, Ch 1 (or Chapter 9 in some editions) and is a small part of much larger passage that demonstrates this concept. Consider how the environment is not only described in term of the sublime, but is inextricably linked to the characters thoughts, emotions and consciousness. After reading and annotating the passage above, complete the following table.

Technique	How is it employed?	Reference	Detailed analysis of technique	How is the technique creating a sense of place?	What themes or ideas does this sense communicate?
Setting					
Character development					
Plot points (what preceded this, where does it attempt to go, why?)					

Finally, construct three paragraphs describing the way that techniques have created a sense of place in this passage.

Activity: 'People grow out of where they are born and live'

The British crime writer, Ann Cleaves, recently said of contemporary writing that '[p}eople make a mistake when they separate setting from plot and character…people grow out of where they are born and live'. Not only does this quote explain how we understand place as readers and writers, but it shows that narrative techniques are connected; they rely on each other for the story to work. The response above provides a solid explanation of this concept, describing the sinister, bodily world of Gilead and the internal space of liberty.

Read the following passage from Emily Bronte's 1847 novel, *Wuthering Heights*. The passage establishes a sense of place through the development of setting, character, narrative point of view, tone and discourse. Highlight the use of these five techniques in different colours and then write a paragraph explaining the sense of place – the feeling about this environment – which is communicated by the passage.

Wuthering Heights *is the name of Mr. Heathcliff's dwelling. 'Wuthering' being a significant provincial adjective, descriptive of the atmospheric tumult to which its station is exposed in stormy weather. Pure, bracing ventilation they must have up there at all times, indeed: one may guess the power of the north wind blowing over the edge, by the excessive slant of a few stunted firs at the end of the house; and by a range of gaunt thorns all stretching their limbs one way, as if craving alms of the sun. Happily, the architect had foresight to build it strong: the narrow windows are deeply set in the wall, the corners defended with large jutting stones.*

Before passing the threshold, I paused to admire a quantity of grotesque carving lavished over the front, and especially about the principal door; above which, among a wilderness of crumbling griffins and shameless little boys, I detected the date '1500', and the name 'Hareton Earnshaw'. I would have made a few comments, and requested a short history of the place from the surly owner; but his attitude at the door appeared to demand my speedy entrance, or complete departure, and I had no desire to aggravate his impatience previous to inspecting the penetralium.

One step brought us into the family sitting-room, without any introductory lobby or passage: they call it here 'the house' pre-eminently. It includes kitchen and parlour, generally; but I believe at Wuthering Heights the kitchen is forced to retreat altogether into another quarter: at least I distinguished a chatter of tongues, and a clatter of culinary utensils, deep within; and I observed no signs of roasting, boiling, or baking, about the huge fireplace; nor any glitter of copper saucepans and tin cullenders on the walls. One end, indeed, reflected splendidly both light and heat from ranks of immense pewter dishes, interspersed with silver jugs and tankards, towering row after row, on a vast oak dresser, to the very roof. The latter had never been under-drawn: its entire anatomy lay bare to an inquiring eye, except where a frame of wood laden with oatcakes and clusters of legs of beef, mutton, and ham, concealed it. Above the chimney were sundry villainous old guns, and a couple of horse-pistols: and, by way of ornament, three gaudily-painted canisters disposed along its ledge. The floor was of smooth, white stone; the chairs, high-backed, primitive structures, painted green: one or two heavy black ones lurking in the shade. In an arch under the dresser reposed a huge, liver-coloured bitch pointer, surrounded by a swarm of squealing puppies; and other dogs haunted other recesses.

Considering Question 10

Show how the interaction of a small group of characters in at least one drama text can be used to draw attention to significant social issues.

Interpreting the question

This question requires an exploration of a very common aspect of a number of styles of theatre: characters as representational figures. Often in literature, we understand characters to be emblematic of certain social, cultural or political groups. But in drama texts we are restricted in the scale of the plot and number of characters by the parameters of a theatrical performance. Therefore, characters on stage are often employed as representations of a wider group. This use of representation can be very obvious, with clear historical contextual connections to make pointed statements about political regimes and historical events, or it can be a subtle construction where the text draws an interpretation of reality and timeless social circumstances.

Candidates are required to show how the interactions between such characters then become emblematic of interactions between wider social groups, reflecting the issues, conflicts or tensions that occupy the social realm.

Explaining the interactions between these characters is therefore a critical component of this question. The interactions could be considered in terms of physical engagements on stage as well as dialogue between characters, or non-verbal interactions through gesture, expression and eye contact. Interactions could also be constructed through the use of dramatic devices such as lighting, sound effects and musical references, costume motifs and colour palettes. Interaction might even be considered in terms of staging, entrances and exits, and how people appear within certain locations/sets.

To address this question fully requires careful consideration of the phrasing *'significant social issues'*. This implies that the discussion should indicate why a social issue is significant, which might be understood as having a wide-scale impact, as causing disruption or important changes, or being recognised as affecting a group in society.

The phrase *'draw attention'* is significant. This asks the candidate to consider what the text or performance is privileging in terms of the audience response. This requires an interrogation of the dominant reading of the text or performance, rather than the readings we might construct or impose upon a text.

Advice from teachers

- Candidates are directed to focus on just a few characters; they should choose which characters operate as the best representatives of social groups.
- A close analysis of one or more key scenes would work well as textual evidence for this question.

Activity: Recognising character interactions

Consider the famous scene where Romeo and Juliet meet for the first time. This takes place in Act 1, Scene 5, just as the narrative complication will arise. The interactions between these characters at a masquerade not only establish intimacies, but political and social divisions too. Read the scene closely and observe the different ways in which Romeo, Juliet, Tybalt, Capulet, the Nurse and Benvolio interact and interpret the significant social issues that the scene draws our attention to. Even in a script where very little direction is documented, we can still read complex interactions which signal significant social issues.

You can find a copy of the scene online quite easily.

Character	List the interactions with others through stage movement/position, dialogue, etc.	What do these interactions indicate about the character? Do they represent a group?	What social issues are made evident?
Capulet	Tybalt: Romeo: Juliet:		
Tybalt			
Romeo			
Juliet			
Nurse			

Activity: Using a specific performance as an example of the play

It is crucial that we consider drama texts as not only printed scripts, but as performances on stage. While it is not always possible to see a performance of a play you are studying live, you might be lucky enough for a production to be staged in Perth or to find a filmed stage performance. The response above makes reference to a broadcast of a filmed stage performance. This is becoming a popular form of theatre engagement and many companies such as the Royal Shakespeare Company, the National Theatre and The Globe now offer live broadcasts or an online archive of filmed theatrical performances.

If you chose to include references to a performance, make sure you include these references for a specific reason. It might be to demonstrate how a direction within the text is carried out, how staging, costuming or lighting is employed by the director, how acting choices influence our understanding of the play and so on. The response above includes the National Theatre performance in relation to staging and some acting choices, but the importance of these points to the discussion is unclear. This is due to a lack of contextual explanation of the performance and the examples chosen by the candidate.

Here is a list of important details to reference:

- Company: *National Theatre*
- Director: *David Leveaux*
- Date: *2015*
- Relevant performances: *Rosencrantz played by Daniel Radcliffe, Gildernstern played by Joshua McGuire*
- Set design: *Anna Fleischle*

These details should not be a large focus of the discussion, but they will help locate the references for a reader. For example, instead of writing *'[i]n the 2015 National Theatre Live production, The Guardian noted that 'with its cloud-capped canvases, the setting adds a touch of magritte to the night'',* write *'[i]n the 2015 National Theatre Live production,* ***directed by David Leveaux, a review in the*** *The Guardian noted that 'with its cloud-capped canvases, the setting adds a touch of magritte to the night'.*

Another example is, instead of writing *'[f]urthermore, Ros's inability to articulate himself and his memories may be reminiscent of social issues such as shell-shock, or post-traumatic stress after war when as performed by Radcliffe, stutters to Guildenstern – That's it — pale sky before dawn — you remember this — this man woke us up',* write *'[f]urthermore,* ***if we take Leveaux's rendering of the play as an example,*** *Ros's inability to articulate himself and his memories may be reminiscent of social issues such as shell-shock, or post-traumatic stress after war* ***Daniel*** *Radcliffe, as Rosencrantz, stutters to Guildenstern – That's it — pale sky before dawn — you remember this — this man woke us up'.*

These small additions about the performance assist the reader to understand the points being made about the play.

Practise including live stage or filmed stage version of the plays you have studied by firstly ensuring you have the necessary details of the performance and then preparing statements about the elements of the production.

Company	
Director	
Date	
Relevant performances	
Set design	

After completing the table above, write statements about:

- the director's version of the play and the themes highlighted
- a specific performance aspect included by one of the actors and how it informs your understanding of an idea
- the staging (set design, lighting, costuming) and how it influenced your response to the play.

Hint: Go to the theatre online

You don't have to physically attend a theatre in order to appreciate a stage performance. You can view extracts from performances, and sometimes even whole plays, online. Watching different versions can give you an increased appreciation of the impact of performance on an audience's interpretation and experience of a play.

A final word

The activities, hints and sample responses in this book should have provided you with a solid starting point for your own revision. The rest is up to you. There is no substitute for hard work. Like any skill, literary analysis and the construction of thoughtful and well-written responses are skills that you can improve with practise.

Good luck in your Literature studies, and in the WACE examinations come November!