

ENGLISH
Written Examination
Sample Paper

The scenario in Section C has been prepared for the sole purpose of providing sample material for the VCE English Examination. Names of individuals and the characters are fictional, with no comparison with, or comment on, any living individual intended. The views expressed in the scenario are not necessarily those of the writer or publisher.

Total writing time: 3 hours
TASK BOOK
Directions to Students

Section	Number of Questions	Number of questions to be answered	Marks
A – Text response (Reading and responding)	20	1	20
B – Writing in Context (Creating and presenting)	4	1	20
C – Analysis of language use (Using language to persuade)	1	1	20
			Total 60

Materials

Task book of 12 pages, including Assessment Criteria on page 12.

You may use an English and/or bilingual printed dictionary.

Instructions

This examination consists of three sections. You must complete all three sections.

All answers must be written in English.

You must **not** write on two film texts in the examination.

Section A – Text response (Reading and responding) – Write the name of your selected text at the top of your answer page.

Section B – Writing in Context (Creating and presenting) – Write your Context and the name of your selected text at the top of your answer page.

Section C – Analysis of language use (Using language to persuade) – Write your response at the top of your answer page.

Disclaimer: Exam instructions and the examination assessment criteria are taken from the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority 2009 English Exam. The VCAA does not endorse the content of this exam.

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SECTION A – Text response (Reading and responding)**Instructions for Section A**

Section A requires students to complete **one analytical/expository** piece of writing in response to **one** topic (either **i.** or **ii.**) on **one** selected text.

In your response you must develop a sustained discussion of **one** selected text from the Text list below.

Your response must be supported by close reference to and analysis of the selected text.

For collections of poetry or short stories, you may choose to write on several poems or short stories, or on one or two in very close detail, depending on what you think is appropriate.

Your response will be assessed according to the criteria set out on page 12 of this book.

Section A is worth one-third of the total assessment for the examination.

If you write on a film text in Section A, you must **not** write on a film text in Section B.

Text list

- | | |
|--|----------------------|
| 1. <i>A Farewell to Arms</i> | Ernest Hemingway |
| 2. <i>A Human Pattern</i> | Judith Wright |
| 3. <i>A Man for All Seasons</i> | Robert Bolt |
| 4. <i>Bypass: the story of a road</i> | Michael McGirr |
| 5. <i>Cosi</i> | Louis Nowra |
| 6. <i>Dear America – Letters Home from Vietnam</i> | Bernard Edelman |
| 7. <i>Great Short Works</i> | Edgar Allan Poe |
| 8. <i>Hard Times</i> | Charles Dickens |
| 9. <i>Home</i> | Larissa Behrendt |
| 10. <i>Interpreter of Maladies</i> | Jhumpa Lahiri |
| 11. <i>Into Thin Air</i> | Jon Krakauer |
| 12. <i>Life of Pi</i> | Yann Martel |
| 13. <i>Look Both Ways</i> | Director: Sarah Watt |
| 14. <i>Maestro</i> | Peter Goldsworthy |
| 15. <i>Nineteen Eighty-Four</i> | George Orwell |
| 16. <i>Of Love and Shadows</i> | Isabel Allende |
| 17. <i>On the Waterfront</i> | Director: Elia Kazan |
| 18. <i>Richard III</i> | William Shakespeare |
| 19. <i>Selected Poems</i> | Kenneth Slessor |
| 20. <i>Year of Wonders</i> | Geraldine Brooks |

SECTION A

1. *A Farewell to Arms*

i. 'Hemingway's female characters are less convincing than his male characters.'

Do you agree?

OR

ii. '*A Farewell to Arms* suggests that war and ethical behaviour are incompatible.'

Discuss.

2. *A Human Pattern*

i. 'Wright's poems express a typically Australian sense of connection to the land.'

How do they do this?

OR

ii. 'Judith Wright's poetry gives us an in-depth understanding of all the phases of a woman's life.'

Discuss.

3. *A Man for All Seasons*

i. 'I truly believe no man in England is safer than myself.'

Is More blind to the corruption around him?

OR

ii. '*A Man For All Seasons* shows that the political world has little impact on the average individual.'

Discuss.

4. *Bypass: the story of a road*

i. 'Michael McGirr discovers as much about himself as he does about the Hume on his bicycle journey.'

Discuss.

OR

ii. '*Bypass: the story of a road* shows us that interesting stories can be found everywhere if we look for them.'

Discuss.

5. *Cosi*

i. "Just marvellous, Lewis. Everyone thoroughly enjoyed it. Didn't think it was possible. Came right out of their shells. They blossomed, blossomed!"

'It is Lewis who truly blossoms in *Cosi*.'

Do you agree?

OR

ii. 'Despite the comedy in *Cosi*, there is an underlying sadness throughout the play.'

Discuss.

SECTION A – continued

TURN OVER

6. ***Dear America - Letters Home from Vietnam***

i. 'Dear America shows us that the act of letter writing is as important as the content.'

Do you agree?

OR

ii. 'Each letter, although written by a different voice, highlights the common experiences of all soldiers.'

Discuss.

7. ***Great Short Works***

i. 'There is an evil side in every living thing.'

Is this Poe's message?

OR

ii. 'In Poe's stories there is much left to the imagination.'

Discuss.

8. ***Hard Times***

i. 'Hard Times reminds us that love and forgiveness remain central to family relationships.'

Discuss.

OR

ii. 'Most of the characters in *Hard Times* bring their misery upon themselves.'

Do you agree?

9. ***Home***

i. 'The past impacts negatively on all of the characters in *Home*.'

Discuss.

OR

ii. 'Home shows that hope will always triumph over despair.'

Is this an accurate assessment of the novel?

10. ***Interpreter of Maladies***

i. 'In *Interpreter of Maladies* Lahiri explores the impact of acceptance and rejection on people.'

Discuss.

OR

ii. 'It is the small details that make Lahiri's stories so powerful.'

Do you agree?

11. ***Into Thin Air***

i. How does the structure of *Into Thin Air* contribute to the impact of the story?

OR

ii. 'Into Thin Air demonstrates that people will do anything to achieve their goals.'

Do you agree?

12. *Life of Pi*

i. '*Life of Pi* shows that it is not what happens to us, but the way we approach obstacles, that is the measure of a human being.'

Do you agree?

OR

ii. How important are Pi's religious convictions in his ultimate survival?

13. *Look Both Ways*

i. '*Look Both Ways* can be seen as a warning of the dangers inherent in life.'

Is this how you see the film?

OR

ii. '*Look Both Ways* suggests that men find it harder to deal with suffering and emotions than women.'

Do you agree?

14. *Maestro*

i. "Of course he sounded better: he had the better piano."

Does Paul ever come to terms with his limitations?

OR

ii. 'Looks can be deceptive.'

How does *Maestro* explore this concept?

15. *Nineteen Eighty-Four*

i. 'In the world of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* love is impossible.'

Do you agree?

OR

ii. 'In *Nineteen Eighty-Four* the worst terror is psychological rather than physical.'

How does Orwell suggest this?

16. *Of Love and Shadows*

i. 'The stories of the minor characters in *Of Love and Shadows* hold more interest for readers than does the story of Irene and Francisco.'

Do you agree?

OR

ii. '*Of Love and Shadows* shows that human beings have surprising stores of strength which can resist even the most powerful oppressive forces.'

Do you agree?

17. ***On the Waterfront***

i. 'Eddie asks, "Shouldn't everybody care about everybody else?">'

How does this film show that caring can be difficult?

OR

ii. 'The settings in *On the Waterfront* symbolise the struggle for fairness that the characters face.'

Discuss.

18. ***Richard III***

i. 'The character of Richard is shown to be so much more than that of a one-dimensional evil man.'

Discuss.

OR

ii. "I never was nor never will be false."

'*Richard III* demonstrates how difficult it is to determine who is true and who is false.'

Discuss.

19. ***Selected Poems***

i. 'Slessor's poems focus on the effect of time and ageing.'

Discuss.

OR

ii. 'Although grounded in Australia, Slessor's poems speak to a universal audience.'

Do you agree?

20. ***Year of Wonders***

i. 'It was "the conventions of this small and watchful town" that proved more deadly than the plague.'

Do you agree?

OR

ii. 'Anna's strength lies in her ability to rise above the cruel intentions of those around her.'

Discuss.

SECTION B – Writing in Context (Creating and presenting)**Instructions for Section B**

Section B requires students to complete an extended written response.

In your writing, you must draw on ideas suggested by **one** of the following **four** Contexts.

Your writing must draw directly from **at least one** selected text that you have studied for this Context, and be based on the ideas in the prompt.

Your response may be an expository, persuasive or imaginative piece of writing.

If you write on a selected film text in Section A, you must **not** write on a selected film text in Section B.

Section B is worth one-third of the total assessment for the examination.

Your response will be assessed according to the criteria set out on page 12 of this book.

Context 1 – The imaginative landscape

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. <i>Island</i> | Alistair MacLeod |
| 2. <i>Jindabyne</i> | Director: Ray Lawrence |
| 3. <i>The Poetry of Robert Frost</i> | Robert Frost |
| 4. <i>Tirra Lirra by the River</i> | Jessica Anderson |

Prompt

‘Our views and experiences are shaped by our physical surroundings.’

Task

Complete an extended written response in expository, imaginative or persuasive style. Your writing must draw directly from **at least one** selected text for this Context and explore the idea that our views and experiences are shaped by our physical surroundings.

OR

Context 2 – Whose reality?

- | | |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 5. <i>A Streetcar Named Desire</i> | Tennessee Williams |
| 6. <i>Enduring Love</i> | Ian McEwan |
| 7. <i>The Player</i> | Director: Robert Altman |
| 8. <i>The Shark Net</i> | Robert Drewe |

Prompt

‘We create reality through our experiences and imagination.’

Task

Complete an extended written response in expository, imaginative or persuasive style. Your writing must draw directly from **at least one** selected text for this Context and explore the idea that we create reality through our experiences and imagination.

OR

**SECTION B – continued
TURN OVER**

Context 3 – Encountering conflict

- | | |
|---|---------------------------------|
| 9. <i>Omagh</i> | Director: Pete Travis |
| 10. <i>The Crucible</i> | Arthur Miller |
| 11. <i>The Rugmaker of Mazar-e-Sharif</i> | Najaf Mazari and Robert Hillman |
| 12. <i>The Secret River</i> | Kate Grenville |

Prompt

‘Those who initiate conflict are often destroyed by their own actions.’

Task

Complete an extended written response in expository, imaginative or persuasive style. Your writing must draw directly from **at least one** selected text for this Context and explore the idea that those who initiate conflict are often destroyed by their own actions.

OR

Context 4 – Exploring issues of identity and belonging

- | | |
|--|----------------------|
| 13. <i>Growing up Asian in Australia</i> | Alice Pung |
| 14. <i>Sometimes Gladness</i> | Bruce Dawe |
| 15. <i>The Catcher in the Rye</i> | J.D. Salinger |
| 16. <i>Witness</i> | Director: Peter Weir |

Prompt

‘If we are not true to ourselves we can never feel completely content.’

Task

Complete an extended written response in expository, imaginative or persuasive style. Your writing must draw directly from **at least one** selected text for this Context and explore the idea that if we are not true to ourselves we can never feel completely content.

END OF SECTION B

SECTION C – Analysis of language use (Using language to persuade)**Instructions for Section C**

Section C requires students to analyse the ways in which language and visual features are used to present a point of view.

Section C is worth one-third of the total assessment for the examination.

Read the opinion piece *Young People Unite* and then complete the task below.

Write your analysis as a coherently structured piece of prose.

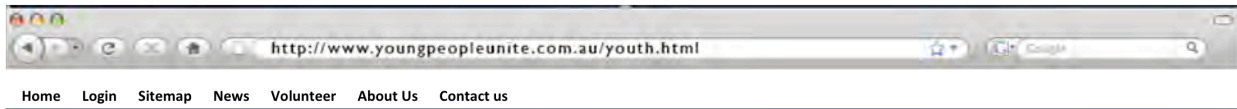
Your response will be assessed according to the criteria set out on page 12 of this book.

TASK

How is written and visual language used to attempt to persuade readers to share the point of view of the writer of *Young People Unite*?

Background information

The following opinion piece appeared on a website created as part of an Australian youth voting initiative known as *Young People Unite*. It was posted earlier this year in response to ongoing debate about whether or not the legal voting age in Australia should be lowered to 16.



May 05, 2010

Lower the voting age to 16... NOW!

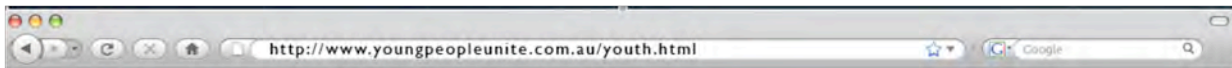
The year is 2050. A permanent haze hangs over the city of Melbourne, thanks to a dramatic increase in the numbers of cars on Victoria's roads. The price of fuel is exorbitant — up to \$25 per litre on peak days — meaning most parents have long since sacrificed their annual leave in order to work longer hours and hopefully hold on to the gas-guzzler for a little longer. But really, who wants a holiday in the 'great' outdoors anyway, when that requires a full-body sunsuit (most days it's a balmy 48°C in the shade) and, on really bad days, a facemask to filter the air before it's inhaled?

OK so maybe my doomsday scenario is a bit extreme, but don't tell me you're not even a little frustrated at the fact that in 2010, another election year, you will not be able to help Australia shape her future by means of a federal election vote? If you don't think that politics plays a significant role in your life, consider the fact that so far this year we've seen widespread debate on climate change and emissions reduction schemes; the impact of Australia's seemingly inevitable population boom and how this is likely to stretch our public transport systems; the impact of drought on our future water security; driving restrictions for L- and P-plate drivers, and whether or not the legal drinking age should be raised to ... Spot the pattern here? You guessed it — all of these issues stand to affect either the immediate or longer-term futures of every single young person in this country. Yet the irony is that despite being the very group that these issues will affect most dramatically, we are currently powerless to influence how the problems are handled by governments.

Why? Because we can't vote. Simple as that.

This is by no means a new debate. In 2004 the Victorian Electoral Commission (VEC) looked into the issue of whether or not sixteen- and seventeen-year-old Australians should be allowed to vote. They noted in their report that one of the criteria used in the years prior to the study to exclude certain groups from the voting process stemmed from the assumption that people in those groups were "incapable of understanding the nature and significance of enrolment and voting". The report went on to state that the case for seeing young people in this way has traditionally been made on four grounds: lack of maturity, lack of interest, not enough life experience, and ignorance ('Lowering the Voting Age', VEC, 2004). Well, tradition isn't really what I'm interested in — I'm more of a present and future kind of girl — and I'd like to explain exactly why these four reasons are just not an accurate description of twenty-first century teens.

Let's start with 'lack of maturity', shall we? Consider a survey conducted of 11–18 year olds by the U.K. Electoral Commission in 2004. It indicated that many of them did not "feel sufficiently informed and would rather not vote than vote in ignorance". Now if that's not maturity, I don't know what is. Such a statement reveals that despite not yet being technically classified as 'adults', many young people are aware enough of the responsibilities associated with voting — surely evidence of a degree of thoughtfulness and maturity.



May 05, 2010

Which leads quite nicely to reason number two: 'lack of interest'. The fact that this website alone gets 15,000 hits per week from passionate teenagers just like yourself (thanks, everybody!) should be evidence enough that young people are politically engaged. The truth is, young people only become disengaged from the political process because they understand that they are effectively powerless to enact change. Just like an underperforming student who has 'switched off' in the absence of attention from teachers, a young person who might otherwise be vigorously engaged will naturally turn his attention away from politicians who ignore him. The solution here is blindingly obvious: give that young person the vote, and watch apathy transform into action. Consider the fact that 37,432 young people voted in the Australian Youth Climate Coalition's 'Youth Decide' poll, which asked them to nominate a percentage of emissions reductions that we should be aiming for into our future. (Unsurprisingly, 91.5% of those young people voted in favour of the maximum reduction specified: 40%.) In addition, a concert in Federation Square during voting week, featuring The Cat Empire and many other awesome local artists, was attended by close to 5,000 teens. Apathy? I think not.

Reasons three and four we can consider collectively: 'inexperience and ignorance'. Of course young people have less life experience than their elders; that goes without saying. A 65-year-old retiree has less experience than an octogenarian, too, if we want to be pedantic about it. But thanks to the internet and a plethora of new media technologies such as Facebook, Twitter and the iPhone, we are part of the most tech-savvy and switched on generation the world has ever seen. And consider this: as a seventeen-year-old I can currently get married, drive on Australian highways, work a full-time job and pay taxes. I can also have a child and receive a several thousand-dollar baby bonus from the federal government for choosing to do so. Yet I cannot vote in an election which would determine and shape the direction of policies relating to any of those things. That is neither logical nor fair; how hypocritical it is for a government to collect taxes from me when I cannot vote for it! If I am deemed experienced enough to work, drive and start a family, I am experienced enough to vote.



Picture: Young people line up in Federation Square to cast their vote in the Australian Youth Climate Coalition (AYCC) poll on emissions reductions

So guys, if you share my frustration at being shut out of the process that shapes our future, please help to make the voice of youth heard by **clicking on the link below** and **signing the attached petition**, which will be forwarded to politicians on both sides of the political divide at the end of this month. Already over 5,000 young people have signed up – if you do the same, you will be helping to make everybody's 2050 a little brighter. Young people unite!

Melissa Young

Engaged 17-year-old and Youth Spokesperson for Young People Unite (an Australian youth voting initiative)

CLICK HERE TO SIGN THE YOUNG PEOPLE UNITE PETITION – GET THE VOTING AGE LOWERED TO 16!

Links: Liked this site? Check out:

<http://www.unya.org.au/>

(United Nations Youth Association of Australia)

<http://www.youthdecide.com.au/>

(Australian Youth Climate Coalition website)

Examination assessment criteria

The examination will address all the criteria. All student responses will be assessed against each criterion. The extent to which the response is characterised by:

Section A – Text response (Reading and responding)

- detailed knowledge and understanding of the selected text, demonstrated appropriately in response to the topic
- development in the writing of a coherent and effective discussion in response to the task
- controlled use of expressive and effective language appropriate to the task

Section B – Writing in Context (Creating and presenting)

- understanding and effective exploration of the ideas, and/or arguments relevant to the prompt
- effective use of detail and ideas drawn from the selected text as appropriate to the task
- development in the writing of a coherent and effective structure in response to the task, showing an understanding of the relationship between purpose, form, language and audience
- controlled use of language appropriate to the purpose, form and audience

Section C – Analysis of language use (Using language to persuade)

- understanding of the ideas and points of view presented
- analysis of ways in which language and visual features are used to present a point of view and to persuade readers
- controlled and effective use of language appropriate to the task

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END OF TASK BOOK

