



**2013 English as an Additional Language (EAL) GA 3: Examination**

**GENERAL COMMENTS**

The 2013 English as an Additional Language (EAL) examination paper consisted of three sections: Section A required a response to one text, Section B required a response to a prompt related to a selected Context and Section C required completion of two tasks in response to unseen material.

Assessment was holistic, using the published assessment criteria. Assessors relate student performance directly to these criteria. Their judgments are assisted by the use of a set of descriptors. Teachers and students should be aware of the assessment criteria, the descriptors and the sample examination paper, which are published on the VCAA website.

**SPECIFIC INFORMATION**

**Note: Student responses reproduced in this report have not been corrected for grammar, spelling or factual information.**

The statistics in this report may be subject to rounding errors resulting in a total less than 100%.

**Section A – Text response**

<b>Marks</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>Average</b>
<b>%</b>	1	1	2	7	13	19	24	18	10	4	1	<b>5.7</b>

Students were required to produce one piece of analytical or expository writing in response to one text. There were two topics for each of the prescribed texts. The descriptors used for assessment related to knowledge of the text, the structure and relevance of the response, and writing skills (the control of the mechanics of written English). Knowledge of the text includes consideration of its concepts and construction. Reference to structural features was more evident with films and plays.

The most popular texts and their mean scores are shown in the table below.

<b>Text</b>	<b>% of students</b>	<b>Average score</b>
<i>Twelve Angry Men</i>	34	5.8
<i>On the Waterfront</i>	18	5.9
<i>Interpreter of Maladies</i>	11	5.6
<i>A Christmas Carol</i>	10	5.5
<i>Così</i>	7	5.0

The most successful responses demonstrated an in-depth understanding of the topics and texts through an ability to craft meaningful, analytical and relevant discussion in direct response to the chosen question. Successful responses were able to skilfully weave knowledge of the text into the fabric of the analysis. Student writing generally reflected awareness of the construction and interpretation of texts, but the less sophisticated responses focused on the plot. Almost all responses displayed at least some knowledge of the text and an adequate knowledge of essay structure.

Stronger responses were characterised by a sharp focus on the key words in the topics, selective and considered use of the text, and ideas expressed with strong language skills. Weaker responses tended to be more descriptive and formulaic. Students generally showed a good understanding and knowledge of the texts and were familiar with the main ideas raised in the questions. There were few very short or incomprehensible responses. In planning, students need to brainstorm all the key words, paying particular attention to modifying words and comparatives within the question. A well-planned response is less likely to slip into retelling the story or adapting a previously written response to fit the question. Students need to be able to explore how texts are constructed and the effects of the writer’s choices in developing a narrative.

As in past years the majority of responses were to a small number of texts. In 2013, following five texts attracted the most responses: *Twelve Angry Men*, *On the Waterfront*, *Interpreter of Maladies*, *A Christmas Carol* and *Così*.

Both topics on *Twelve Angry Men* were generally understood by students, and they were able to produce relevant responses. Some included extended introductions covering a lot of background information that was not relevant to the



topics. This resulted in lengthy but not well-crafted responses. The second topic enabled multiple entry points and led students to write about the people rather than the case or jury system in abstract. Many responses focused on the ‘bad guys’, but better answers explored how and why the jurors changed their minds. The use of ‘only’ helped students to structure a response based on comparing jurors. There were standard and predictable answers, as well as those that were thoughtful and impressive in their individuality of interpretation and response. Average responses tended to gloss over the significance of the word ‘reconsider’ in the topic.

The topics for *On the Waterfront* allowed students to respond successfully on a range of levels. In response to the first topic, students produced both simple and complex interpretation and discussion, including discussion of film techniques. The second topic invited discussion about who was responsible for change in a way that allowed students of different levels and competencies to engage in relevant discussion. Better responses discussed Edie as a catalyst for change in other characters and the impact of these changes. The topic allowed for discussion of an individual character and a broader discussion and analysis of the film. Weaker responses to both topics included aspects of the film techniques that were not relevant to this year’s topics.

Both topics on *Interpreter of Maladies* provided scope for detail and depth in responses. The first topic invited a close analysis of the writer’s choices and construction of the stories in the discussion of ideas. Students produced some very competent essays exploring how Lahiri used symbols to add meaning and richness to her stories. Average responses simply listed the symbols in each story. The second topic produced responses that linked different stories in the discussion. It allowed for a simple discussion of stories or a more complex interpretation of emotion. Many students were able successfully to weave together ideas from different stories. Weaker responses were characterised by a misunderstanding of the question and resulted in a discussion of the sadness of the characters. The question required close knowledge of the stories, and students who took note of the ‘reader’ in the question responded in both depth and breadth across the collection.

Both topics on *A Christmas Carol* allowed for a range of responses. In topic i, the key words provided a useful framework for responses, and a number of students worked methodically through each ghost with reference to love and grief. The topic enabled students to refer to different sections of the text, sometimes chronologically, giving them a logical structure for their writing, and using relevant examples to support their ideas. Most students seemed to have a grasp of the concepts of love and grief. A few managed to show insight into the fact that grief may have helped to create Scrooge. The words ‘before he can change’ brought in another concept that needed to be explored and integrated with ‘love and grief’, and stronger responses demonstrated this. The second topic allowed students to show their understanding not only of the topic but also the society of 19th century London and Dickens’s purpose in writing the novella. Some were tempted away from Dickens’s day to the present.

Many responses to the *Così* topics seemed to be adapting an essay from a topic on a previous exam. Students seemed to have difficulty using knowledge about the concepts of ‘reality’ and ‘illusion’ in the play in order to respond appropriately to the wording of the first topic. They had difficulty writing clearly about the women or men being (or not being) ‘realistic about themselves’. Responses tended to focus on the characters’ views about love. Many responses to the second topic ignored the significance of the ‘Vietnam’ aspect and discussion of conflict was limited to superficial conflicts between the characters. Some responses defined ‘conflict’ very broadly, resulting in a lack of relevance in the response; for example, some students used mental health problems as an example of a conflict, when mental health problems are not, in themselves, conflicts.

During their preparation, students need to consider how construction, language and other authors’/directors’ choices add meaning to the text, rather than merely discussing the plot, the themes and the characters. The importance of integrating text construction and authorial choices into responses needs to be emphasised, as well as discussing characters or themes. Language is the key. Students need to write analytically, not descriptively, and need to develop writing skills that will enable them to incorporate knowledge of the text into their analysis or exposition. Students should be encouraged to explore questions fully by unpacking topics to allow their own ideas to emerge. Thoughtful planning is needed to craft a response that directly addresses the set topic. With collections of stories, students should be encouraged to look for the links and connections between the stories.



**Student response – Example 1**

The following upper-range response to *On the Waterfront* begins with a focused introduction that indicates the approach the response will take. This clear focus on the topic is developed in a structured and relevant response that shows understanding of the implications of the topic. It uses the text well to explore Edie's role. There are some flaws in expression, but it uses a wide range of vocabulary in a sustained and fluent way.

**'It is Edie Doyle, with her sense of right and wrong, who is responsible for the changes that take place in *On the Waterfront*.' Do you agree?**

*"On the Waterfront", directed by Elia Kazan, depicts the harsh environment of the Hoboken Waterfront in the 1950s. Set in a time where women are typically expected to be "stay-at-home" housewife characters, Kazan introduces the character of Edie Doyle, whose determination to "find out who is guilty for Joey" brings about a significant change to the waterfront community. There are other characters that contribute to the changes that take place in the community too, such as Father Barry and Terry Malloy. However their contributions are also inter-related to Edie's as it is Edie's headstrong attitude that partly influences the two men to make a difference. Therefore, it could be said that Edie is highly responsible for most of the changes that occurred in the waterfront.*

*Edie, being the only dominant female character in the film stands out from the male characters. She is also introduced as a pure and innocent young lady with not only her appearance, having blonde hair and white gloves, but also with her positive outlook in life, contrasting to those of the men on the waterfront. In a community where the local community has a "D and D" code to abide to, Edie who is not familiar with this, is always seen out and about, actively trying to find out the "truth" behind her brother's death. Her bravery can also be seen when she throws herself into the brawl of the longshoremen, desperate to get a tab for working. Perhaps it was initially because she was unaware of Johnny Friendly's and the mob's ruthlessness but also she stands amongst the longshoremen in the shape-up scene, she is filmed with a low angle shot, showing that she has some sort of power. As she is always valiantly present in the unruly environment, her contrasting appearance and determination would have inflicted change upon some of the characters.*

*Kazan's characterisation of Edie as a strong Christian believer can be seen as influential especially towards Father Barry. Father Barry initially had a passive approach to all the happenings on the waterfront, suggesting that "time and faith" is the answer to all questions. Edie on the other hand, audaciously said to him, "Did you ever hear of a saint hiding in a church?" Her words deeply affected Father Barry as we later see him much more involved with the waterfront community, even recognising the docks as his "parish". Edie's one sentence inspired Father Barry to go "down the line" and encourage the longshoremen to "tell the truth". He further inspires other characters such as Kayo Dugan and Terry to testify against the mob. Appealing to the men's Christian faith and religious values, he reminds them that they "have got some other brothers" and that keeping silent about a crime they know off is a "crucifixion". The men, especially Kayo and Terry, coming from a religious background, allowed him to speak into their lives and started to take the initiative to "allow honest men to work the docks". Despite Father Barry being the one who encouraged and supported these men, if Edie did not shake him up from his passiveness, he would not have made all the effort to do so. Thus, Edie's words clearly influenced Father Barry who further brought about change in the lives and attitudes of the longshoremen.*

*Father Barry's words may have influenced Terry, but it is the relationship Terry builds with Edie that left the biggest impact on him. From the very beginning, Terry was intrigued by Edie's consideration for those around her. She upholds values such as "patience and kindness", attributes hardly seen in the waterfront community where "down here, it's every man for himself." Edie, who believes that "everybody is a part of everybody else" brings a breath of fresh air to Terry's life and he even sees her as "the first nice thing that has ever happened to me." Wanting to be someone that could help her, Terry musters up the courage to go with his conscience and testify against Friendly. Edie's actions and words that touches Terry's heart brought out the "gift of standing up" within him. It is also because of her strong sense of justice and slight recklessness that further made Terry stand up for her, himself and the whole Hoboken waterfront community. She is always "worrying about the truth" therefore Terry feels the need to step up and protect her from the violent "hawks". This again stirs up change within Terry and he later brings this change to a wider context, fighting for his and the other longshoremen's rights. Hence, Edie plays a significant part in causing the change within Terry which then creates a huge impact in the whole community.*

*In conclusion, Edie is responsible for a lot of changes that took place in "On the Waterfront". She could not have done this all by herself therefore by influencing other characters, their joint effort has left a significant impact on the waterfront community, leaving the men with an opportunity to work with "job security" and a "peace of mind".*



**Student response – Example 2**

This mid-range response to *Così* attempts to address the whole topic. It demonstrates adequate control of language, despite a number of errors that frequently occur in EAL student writing. It discusses a number of characters. There is some organisation of ideas and some repetition.

**‘The women in *Così* are realistic about themselves and their world: the men are not.’ Discuss.**

*In the play *Così* by Louis Nowra, is a young director Lewis Railey directs a play with a group of mental patients which is ‘Così Fan Tutte’ by Mozart. In *Così*, the women are more realistic about themselves and their world than the men but some of the male characters like Lewis and Zac show that they are realistic too.*

*Cherry is a very aggressive person which like to constantly feed Lewis with sandwiches. She is very realistic and has a clear goal - to impress Lewis and makes him fall in love with her. In Act 2, when Lewis and Juile kiss each other, Cherry says ‘kiss him again, and I will ... break your arm’ to Juile which demonstrates her determination to take out whatever is in her way with her and Lewis. Ruth is a patient that is hard to deal with illusion, she demand reality as it is more comfortable. When acting ‘Così Fan Tutte’, she always asks for direction and how many steps to take. Because of the needs of constantly in reality, she gets the job for counting with [word missing] is the most sucessful out of the patients. Juile is a drug addict which overdose and lead to her death but she is very realistic when come to what she wants which is stablness which can be achieve through taking drugs or doing ‘Così Fan Tutte’. She says to Lewis ‘you know the music calms me down’ and “Unlike Zac, I take drugs to stay calm’. Later on in the play she says “I need something to stable, I need my girlfriend’ which again prove that she knows what she needs and ways to meet the need which is realistic.*

*In *Così*, some of the men are unrealistic but some are like Lewis and Zac. Lewis is the director of the play and later become one of the cast member of the play. He starts off as a inconfident young man who rather to let other people take charge like Roy. But he eventually become more confident and able to take charge so he become realistic because he wants to complete the play to show that the patients are just ‘normal people who done extraordinary things’ and love and fidelity is as important as food and shelter. Zac is a patient that is usually heavily drugged because of his behaviour but he is realistic toward his music role in ‘Così Fan Tutte’ and his dislike of Mozart’s soppie music compare to his Wagner. When he got out of the insitution, he becomes a musician in a band which shows his goal is realistic and achievable.*

*In *Così*, Roy is the most unrealistic person. His saying of ‘I aim for the star’ and ‘the power of music’ to Lewis only demonstrates his illusion of his ‘mother’. ‘But he was always an ophan’ by Cherry reveals that Roy is lying all along. Although the play was a sucess, Roy didn’t have a important role in Act 2 which he all Lewis’s leadership skill got them through so Roy is unrealistic.*

*In *Così*, the women are realistic about themselves and the world but some of the men are realistic too. Cherry’s determination for Lewis, Ruth’s obsession with reality and Juile’s wants and ways to get it made them realistic.*

**Section B – Writing in Context**

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Average
%	1	1	4	10	17	23	21	14	7	2	1	5.4

Students were required to complete an extended written response that was an expository, persuasive or imaginative piece of writing. They were required to base the writing on the ideas in the prompt and draw directly from the selected text studied in the Context. The more successful responses were characterised by original ideas in response to the prompt and an ability to link these ideas to a broad range of texts. Many strong responses were in an expository style, with an opening designed to catch the reader’s interest. In some responses the ideas were explored through thought-provoking and insightful personal stories, often beginning with an interesting anecdote. Some students attempted to include a ‘point of difference’ in their responses. There was a broad range of writing, including reflective and personal pieces as well as creative pieces. In general, stronger students drew clearly on key words from the prompts, supported by relevant details from the selected text and their own lives. Weaker students’ responses tended to be characterised by a misinterpretation of the key words, or little reference to them. Some pieces resembled a text response (a response that began with the selected text and relied too much on that text, making little or no reference to other ideas). These responses began with a short introduction then gave a long analysis of the text and a brief reference to the prompt. Some were written directly to the text without first presenting the ideas that the text illuminated. Students with adequate, but in no way sophisticated, language skills were able to write relevant responses that drew on the chosen text, personal experience and other material. Weaker responses began with a standard definition of the Context without grappling with the prompt or indicating how the task would be approached. Strong responses showed that students used the nominated text quite well as a source of ideas and examples to support their own line of argument or ideas.



In general, students showed a good understanding of the Contexts. Even those who struggled to write successfully were able to relate to some of the context issues from their own experiences on quite a deep and meaningful level. While some showed a thorough understanding of the implications of the prompts, others did not address the key concepts of the prompts.

The most popular Context, Exploring issues of identity and belonging, was chosen by 61.4 per cent of students.

The writing revealed a range of understandings of the prompt. Many students explored the effect of change on individuals but did not effectively explore or consider the idea of growing through change. Few challenged the ideas in the prompt or discussed what ‘to accept change’ meant. Better responses took account of ‘sometimes’ and were able to include discussion of when and why change is not necessary. Some students interpreted ‘in order to grow’ as to grow up. Most focused on change; some focused on growth. Growth was frequently associated with belonging, but the better answers also acknowledged that sometimes not belonging and not changing was growth. The most common misunderstanding was a focus on accepting who you are (difference) rather than change. Encountering conflict was chosen by 33 per cent of students. Many responses explored the idea of conflict, and conflict between people, but did not effectively explore the idea of conscience. Some students did not appear to grasp the meaning of ‘conscience’, leading to a lack of depth in responses. Those who had a clear understanding of this term were able to use relevant examples from the texts. Students who had a limited understanding of ‘conscience’ tended to use superficial examples from their own experiences. Many missed the comparative dimension of the prompt. Better responses addressed this, including some strong insights; for example, that some people find inner conflicts more difficult than external conflicts because acting in accordance with their conscience is very important to them.

Only 4 per cent of responses were to Whose reality? and 1 per cent to The imaginative landscape. Responses to the Whose reality? prompt worked well. The prompt provided plenty of scope for students to make good use of all set texts. Some responses centred on the contrast between ‘reality’ and ‘illusion’, discussing how Willie Lomax lives in a world of illusion, rather than focusing on how reality is seen differently by different characters.

Section B should be taught as a writing task and not as a text task. Working with the ideas of the prompt and/or stimulus material should be the focus of this piece of writing. The Context is about exploring ideas, and students need lots of classroom practice at teasing out ideas before they tackle the selected text. The text will be a source of ideas to explore later in their study. Reading texts from the point of view of the ideas rather than the events should be encouraged. In the best pieces of writing it will not dominate. Models of student writing should be used to explore how connections between texts, the prompt and/or stimulus material and students’ own experiences are made. This task rewards students who read widely, consider ideas carefully and synthesise them. It may be useful for students to develop an ‘idea bank’ and an ‘example bank’ from which to draw on for this writing. Not every item in the ‘bank’ can be used with a particular prompt or stimulus. Students should be encouraged to keep their own files of material during the year, including keeping reflections in a journal. Teachers can provide students with a number of activities that encourage them to write a variety of pieces in different forms and styles. Choosing to write three short, different pieces for the SAC task is one way of doing this. Imaginative writing where students take on the persona of a character from their chosen text is more appropriate for SAC writing than for the examination, as it can limit the exploration of the prompt and lead to just retelling the story, often poorly. Teachers could also model different ways in which the ideas of the chosen text could be incorporated into a piece of writing.

### **Student response – Example 1**

This upper-range response demonstrates how the Section B task draws on very different writing skills from those required for Section A. It is characterised by consideration of the wider implications of ideas from the Context, draws on a range of resources, includes brief personal anecdotes as well as adequate use of the selected text. It uses the prompt effectively as a springboard for a piece of analytical writing enhanced by sophisticated vocabulary. The misquoting of Walt Whitman at the end is a small distraction from the overall quality of this piece.

#### **‘Sometimes we need to accept change in order to grow.’**

*Under the communist rule of the Mao Government in the 1960’s, my father was denied the right to receiving an education for two years. Despite this tragic turn of events in his life, he did not allow his impoverished background to dictate his future and instead made his way to a medical school in the bustling city of Guangzhou. His story reveals to me that, although there are many variables and challenges that we will encounter in life, it is about how to respond and cope with unestimated changes, that will decide our identity and assist us to grow. Individuals should learn to adapt the change of environment, as well as confront different situations when they arise in order to learn and develop their identity. However, it would be remiss to neglect that we may lose our sense of self in the shifting landscapes around us.*



*Our sense of identity is strengthened through adapting to the changing environment. At a point in life, every individual is likely to move from one place to another; whether it is moving houses, schools or even countries. When this happens, it is essential that we embrace the new environment as well as being able to make connections with people that we are unfamiliar with. Simone Lazaroo in 'The Asian Disease' from Growing Up Asian in Australia describes how newer immigrants "mowed their lawns" and "learned how to barbecue sausages", reasoning that "we come to Australia, we must learn to be Australian", thus confirming how migrants have to get used to the lifestyles and the culture that they are surrounded by in order to fully assimilate into the distinct country and gain a sense of belonging. Similarly a person can feel empowered by accepting the change of relationships. When I first came to Australia four years ago, the fear of the unfamiliar environment had overwhelmed me so much that I almost cried myself to sleep everynight. I was not until I took my first step to develop new friendship with my classmates and neighbours that I once again realised life was interesting and hopeful. Indeed, there are times that we need to embrace the new landscape around us and be able to associate others as a means to develop and fulfill our sense of self.*

*Furthermore, one should accept unexpected challenges and find ways to resolve them when they occur in life. There can be many situations that threaten our sense of identity: how others forge a prejudicial view on us, the inability to fit in and belong, or even a natural disaster that falls upon us. In 2011, when the Queensland flood struck disaster, all members of Australia joined forces and offered their aid and support. More than 55,000 volunteers registered to clean up the streets of Brisbane. Politicians, world leaders, opponents and people from all over the nation were united in a rare moment, due to the commonality inherent in human nature – the capacity for empathy. Perhaps it takes calamity or adversity to teach us the things that we should have already learned, driving us to accept these new challenges and changes and search for solutions to overcome them. Likewise, Simone Lazaroo's father armed himself with tokens of respectability with his "BBC accent and [his] new car" against the Perth police who were contemptuous of his dark skin. Despite the society's preconceptions and assumptions of our true self, we should all be able to assert ourselves as self integrity is more important than prejudice. Hence, it is only through conquering new challenges and difficulties that we have not encountered before, that our identity can be shaped and completed.*

*Despite the benefits we receive from accepting changes and hardships, sometimes we may lose our real identity if we are completely conform to the society's changes. This is crystallised in Uyen Leowald's poem 'Be Good Little Migrants', which makes the point that migrants who move to Australia must know their place and follow the rules in order to maintain social cohesion. However, by silencing their voices and reducing their person hood, the cost to their identity is detrimental and significant. Clearly, people tend to conform and act in a certain way when the majority of people surrounding them engage in a certain activity. This is seen in the problem of 'binge drinking' and 'booze culture' that has recently come to the fore, demonstrating how teenagers struggle to defy the pressure exerted on them by their peer group, and hence, lose touch with their inner identity and stifle their true expression to speak up for their real needs and desires. Indeed, when we force ourselves to alter our values and beliefs to complement those around us, we can easily lose touch with our sense of self and become 'an invisible' amongst the collective. Individuals should all be able to adapt to their new surroundings as well as having the courage to accept and conquer new challenges when they arise. However, it is important that we assert our true selves under the forces and commands of the group, and not simply follow and obey the instructions given to us. By achieving so, one can fully refine their identity and mature in time. Ultimately, the search for identity is complex and we should all be able to embrace changes that happen around us. As captured in the words of Whitlam, "that" life exists, and identity; that the powerful places go on and you will contribute a verse."*

### **Student response – Example 2**

This mid-range response uses the form of a television interview to draw viewers into consideration of how difficult it can be to make decisions of conscience during war. In the interview there is an attempt to balance the prompt, the text and other ideas. It demonstrates that this is a writing task, not a text task. Expression problems do not detract from the engaging liveliness of the piece. Awareness of the viewer is maintained.

#### **'Conflict of conscience can be just as difficult as conflict between people.'**

*T.V. Talkshow Transcript*

*(C= Host, Charles  
S= Shinosuke)*

*C: Good evening viewers. Welcome to "Tell the Truth". Tonight's program focuses on the hardship of dealing with moral dilemmas in time of serious life-threatening events such as war. This is because it is usually difficult to make decisions in that environment because your decisions might result in a grave consequence. Actually, the decisions we make during conflicts really define who we are, and it brings out the best and the worst side of people. However, we must accept that we are ultimately responsible for our actions and decisions during conflict, even wars, which we cannot control. Our guest tonight will share his first hand experience of doing his patriotic duty during World War II. Please help me to welcome our guest, Mr. Shinosuke Nohara, who served as a former Japanese Imperial Army Sergeant.*

*S: Thank you Charles!*



*C: You have experienced the most shocking period in your life and I guess you must felt despair to make every decisions and actions. Now you have had sixty years to reflect on that turbulent time, what can you tell us about your experiences and how do you feel about them now?*

*S: Well, I admit that I felt despairing when my country first asked me to enlist in the army. Obviously, I was afraid of losing my life of comfort, safety and leaving my family. As I was young at that time, the pressure around me to serve my country was horrendous. I was educated, so they made me a sergeant. In a way, I felt proud to lead the army. However, I was joining a powerful military machine and I was only a small component. It was alarming how despairing that felt. If I did not obey the order, I would be executed and court-martialled. So I did what everyone else did. I developed a stony heart and I was told it was necessary because “the aim is to win”. After Europeans colonised most of Asia before the war, it was time for Yamato superiority. Then I was sent to a POW camp of civilian women in Sumatra and that was where I made more shameful decisions mainly by staying silent. Dietrich Bonhoeffer said “Silence in a face of evil is itself evil”. Instead of using my power to control my men, my “conscience stupidity” allowed me to do things “no human should ever do to another human”. Yet it was astonishing to see how much misery and indignity they could endure. My “sincere ignorance” allowed my soldiers to thrash and torture ordinary POWs. Those poor civilians suffered malaria, starvation and slave labour. I even kept their Red Cross Supplies because I thought “the time for rule was over”. I would never think my atrocities were acceptable during peace time. I do feel deep guilt, and I know I did the unacceptable.*

*C: That was impressive honesty and I guess you have highlighted how challenging it is to make a right decision during the conflict just like the war because of opposing political views. I think your actions and decisions can be explained by Abraham Lincoln’s words, “Nearly all men can stand adversity, but if you want to test a man’s character, give him power”. Do you agree?*

*S: Yes. Also, the local Sumatrans chose to stay silent and not to resist our invasion. I guess they must have being struggling and made their decisions.*

*C: So, the local Sumatrans changed their priorities from freedom to survival which was certainly hard for them because they gave up their precious land. But, did you ever felt any connections with your victims?*

*S: Well, yes. Long after they arrived, I thought they would be too weary to fight back, they developed a subtle rebellion by forming a vocal orchestra. I found out one night when they unexpectedly performed in the middle of the camp. I was initially enraged at their defiance of our rules. After hearing their beautiful and expressive music, my anger vanished. Also, one of my guard told me that the women actually argued with each other about the orchestra. Obviously, they were worried about our violence. But they chose to show their “will to survive [was] stronger than anything”. I think they certainly shows that “It’s better to light a candle than curse the darkness”.*

*C: It’s amazing that the women actually challenged your power. I guess you and they would never imagined they has such spirit. Their arguments also reveals people’s internal conflict which is as much as conflicts between people. Thank you Shinosuke, you have certainly enlightened our viewers about the effect of conflict on us and the importance and the difficulties of making right decisions. Good night viewers!*

## Section C – Analysis of language use

### Part 1

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Average
%	3	3	7	8	11	16	17	16	13	6	1	5.4

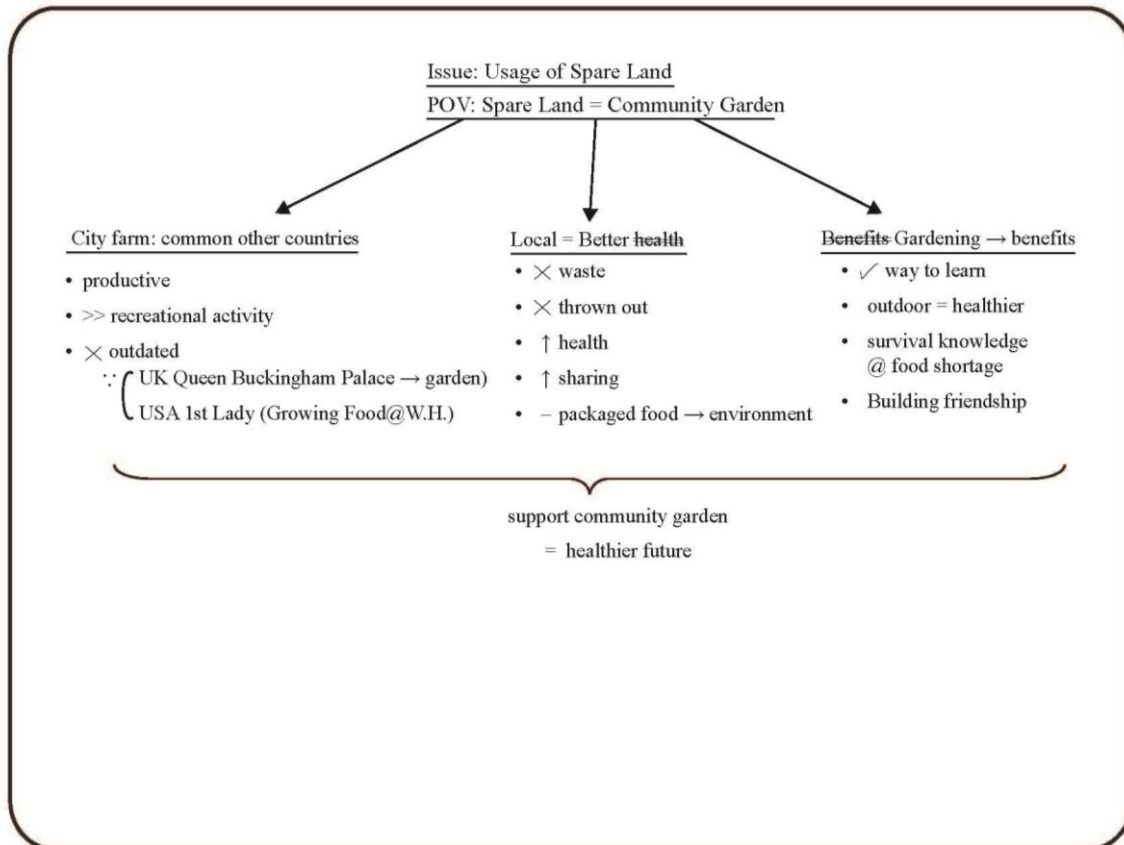
The task material was about converting disused land, owned by a local council, into a community garden. It took the form of a newsletter to residents from a garden group. The scenario was accessible to students and the material supplied gave them plenty of opportunity to comment on at least some aspects of the writer’s language and visuals. The form, word length and language were all appropriate for the task. It gave plenty of opportunity for students of all levels to demonstrate their skills.

The note-form responses mostly demonstrated an awareness of the key ideas in the newsletter. Some didn’t grasp the historical and wider references, and some overlooked the purpose of convincing the council to use the land for a community garden, limiting the summary just to the value of growing vegetables. The challenge in this task was to design a structure (for the summary) through which processing of the material could be demonstrated. Many attempted a response in the form of ‘yes/no’ or ‘positive/negative’. The main ideas could be satisfactorily presented in this form, but such responses did not always include the overall message of the material. Many students grouped ideas well, but there were still some who simply listed without processing the information. The strongest pieces demonstrated processing of the material, gave an overall understanding of the writer’s position and recorded the ideas appropriately using plain English.



The following student responses demonstrate an overall understanding of the material, processing of the information and selection of the key ideas presented in a meaningful form.

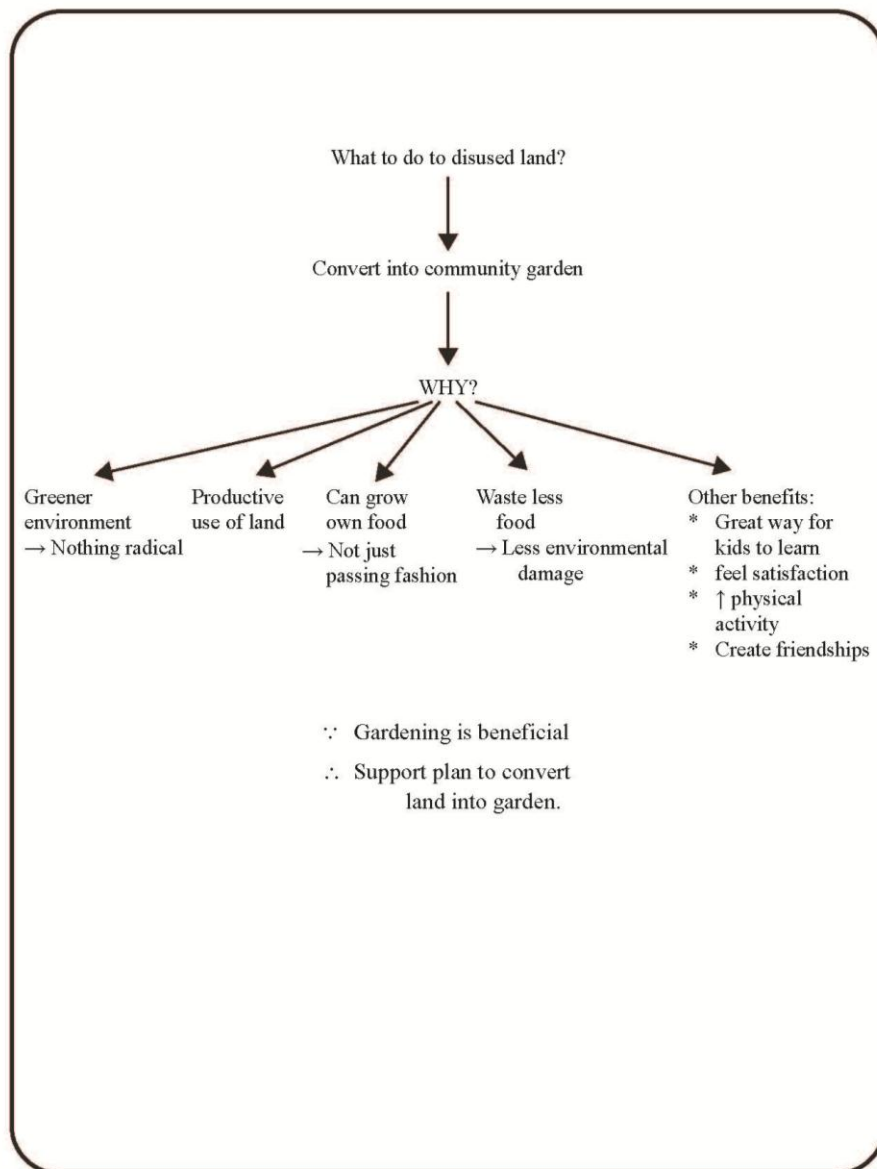
## Student response – Example 1







Student response – Example 2



**Part 2**

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Average
%	4	6	8	12	17	20	14	11	6	2	0	4.6

In Part 2 the context of the newsletter appeared to be well understood by students, but an ability to accurately identify the specific language use and appeals employed by the writer was generally confined to students with stronger language skills. These responses recognised that, although the newsletter was for distribution to residents to encourage them to ‘tell the Council you support the idea’, the Council was indirectly a section of the target audience. Students struggled to accurately describe tone, sometimes using contradictory descriptions in the same paragraph. There were also responses that simply worked through the piece. Some responses were structured around the techniques rather than the ideas. Many responses demonstrated a good knowledge of persuasive techniques but not an ability to apply this knowledge effectively to the task material. Weaker responses were descriptive rather than analytical.

Generally, the discussion of the visuals in student responses was satisfactory and they provided key discriminators that tested students’ comprehension. Identifying that the first visual was a historic poster from World War II, not a current poster, was important. Those who did not recognise the historical reference in the poster did not link it to community gardens being more than a passing fad. The second visual required students to recognise that the central thrust was about the cost of wastage to the environment, not to people’s ‘hip pocket’. The graph was often taken only as statistical



information rather than a visual. Hence, the trolley part of the visual was often treated separately or not at all. Analysing the intended impact of the images and the accompanying slogans was more difficult for students, and many did not grasp the more subtle implications of these visuals.

Upper-range responses were well written and demonstrated a strong understanding of the ways in which language and visual features were used through effective analysis of the material. Upper-range responses included

- a clear understanding of the context and the writer's point of view
- a focus on analysis of language, not argument
- an exploration of how the council as well as the residents might react
- clear explanations linking the visuals to the writer's point of view and exploring the intended effect of the visuals.

Mid-range responses showed awareness of the task, but some moved between explaining the material and an attempt at analysing it. Limitations in these responses included

- difficulty describing tone accurately
- limited understanding of the visuals and ability to explore how the writer has used them
- generalised descriptions of persuasive techniques
- reference to visuals not linked to the text.

### **Student response – Example 1**

This upper-range response demonstrates understanding of the task, the material presented and the context of the newsletter. It examines a range of ways in which words and visuals position the audience. There are lapses in fluency and some inaccurate use of English, but, in general, language has been used effectively to convey the student's understanding. There is a tendency to overstate the likely reader reaction.

*In the article "Getting our future back on the rails – slowly", the writer contends that the disused railway yard should be used as a community garden. The audience of the newsletter is mainly the families, especially adults and parents in the local area.*

*The writer corrects any misunderstanding towards community gardens by asserting the readers that community gardening is not a "passing fashion." Firstly, he mentions the situation in the Second World War, a historical fact, that British "was encouraged to 'Dig for Victory' by growing vegetables in every bit of the spare land". Since most of the people of the older generation are familiar with the Second World War they might have parents actually took part in them, the readers are familiar with the writer's example. The name of the campaign 'Dig for Victory' encourages the readers to think positively about community gardening, that it brings "victory" to people. It is designed to make readers agree with the significance of having a community garden, as these are facts in history. Since everyone wants to attain "victory", they will agree with the writer that having a community garden is able to bring victory and bright future to the people in the community. The poster displayed in Britain in World War II is also placed along the argument. In the poster, at the top it says "Dig for Victory" and there are children smiling blissfully as a background of a person digging. The readers are reminded how happily their own children can live, just like the children in the poster, if they "grow your own vegetables". The readers are likely to agree with the writer that, if they have a community garden, their children can perhaps live a life of victory.*

*Community garden alleviates environmental and economical problem. The writer uses statistics in the form of a chart that shows the "cost of processed food wasted each year in just one Australia State". The very tall bar of packaged food, reading a cost of \$370 million, scars readers as they are shocked by this very high cost. Presenting the statistics visually enhances the shocking reality of how urgent it is to find a way to solve the problem. They then agree that community gardening is indeed a very suitable solution. The writer also uses pejorative words such as "ugly", "inconsiderate" and "rubbish" in describing the current "use" of the land, and contrasts it with "everybody benefits" if they use this "ugly" land for community gardening. Since none of the resident in this area want to see their home become a place full of rubbish, they will agree with the writer that they should all "join in" to support the land to be used as a community garden, where "everybody benefits".*

*Community gardening is beneficial for health and it helps residents make the idea a "success". The writer recalls the memories of the readers, that most of them can "remember our Dad or Grandfather showing us how to put seeds in the earth and to water them in." Not only does this echoes with the way primary school children "learn", it also make the readers retrieve their happy memories of their own "Dad or Grandfather." This creates a picture in readers' minds of how happy gardening with the family is, so the readers will think that they should have these happy moments with their own children as well. They will agree with the writer that community gardening helps build a happy and healthy family life. Furthermore, the writer conveys to the readers that "their kids spend far too much time indoors" and might not equip survival skills if "there is a food shortage in the future". In conveying this idea, the writer uses inclusive language such as "our kids", which encourages to think that the writer is actually on their side, and shares the same experience. It makes the readers think that who agree that they should make their kids to outdoor in order to be healthier. Also, by mentioning "food shortage", the readers are scared as they will worry rather their children might not have the skill to grow crops and eventually die. They are persuaded that it is essential to have a community garden in their living area so that the children can learn survival skills.*



**Student response – Example 2**

This upper mid-range response demonstrates some understanding of how language and visuals are used to persuade, and some accurate application of this knowledge to the newsletter and context. It includes wordy explanations, but there is overall understanding of the material, organisation and general control of language and expression.

*In response to the issue of the disused railway yards near the city centre, newsletter titled 'Getting our future back on the rails - slowly', produced by the leader of Grow Slow Garden group, argues that the disused railway yards should be used for a community garden, using a thoughtful and determined tone. Accompanying the newsletter, there is a poster and a data included, which follows a similar contention with the newsletter, supports the newsletter using an assertive tone and a questionable tone respectively.*

*The poster titled 'Dig for Victory', reveals many children in the background and a foot stepping on the shovel on the soil and mud. It is displayed in Britain in World War Two. A text is also added, which stated that 'For their sake, grow your own vegetables'. The innocent looking children in the background will definitely gain sympathy from the audience and eventually convinced by growing their own vegetables for the children's sake. With the use of war, the producer tends to arouse the audience's emotion to understand the hard times the society has gone through and they understand that their society used to be vulnerable for being unable to produce their own food. The data included about the cost of processed food wasted each year in just one Australian state serves to make the audience who buys processed food all the time, realise their own convenience has caused the planet Earth to pay a big price. The readers will feel guilty and therefore agrees with the leader that growing their own food is a much better option. A trolley with a price tag hanging has also powerfully convinced the readers the consequences of buying processed food will definitely cost yourself as well as the earth a big price to pay.*

*The leader makes a clear explanation before he/she starts to explain the content of the true purpose of the newsletter. This will gain more interest from the readers as they will be curious to find out the truth. The leader stated that the community garden has the chance to bring the country 'up to date'. This serves to attract the patriotic readers as they will not want the country to be 'outdated'. Therefore strongly agrees with the proposal of community garden. Besides that, an estimation of a number of people who eat food grown in community gardens revealed in the newsletter to increase the courage of the readers to agree with the contention as some readers might be doubtful that if they are the only one who agrees with the proposal.*

*Besides mentioning the World War Two, the leader also mentioned the Queen. The leader expressed that the Queen has converted some land into a food garden during war when she was young. The use of a highly respected person may cause the readers to follow the Queen's footsteps as the Queen has a very good reputation in the world and so the readers will think that the conversion of land to food garden is considerable. Moreover, as most of the people concern about their health issue, the readers will consider to start growing their own food as the leader stated that the 'slow' method, grown from seed in the garden, are going to be for better health. By stating 'everyone benefits', most of the readers tend to agree with the leader as everyone will benefit from sharing your own grown food which you value, which people tend to cherish and value more as lots of effort were being put in.*

*The leader mentioned about old times may arouse the readers emotion as they reminisce the past. The leader stated 'our Dad or Grandfather' showing us how to put seed in the earth. The readers will miss their old times and therefore will start to 'put seeds in the earth' again. Furthermore, the leader also appealed to reason by stating that the kids spend far too much time indoors. As a parent, they will definitely agree as they experienced watching their kids staying indoor too often. The parents will start to plant some food so that the kids can go outside and breath some fresh air and at the same time, learn to survive food shortage in future.*

Examining and analysing model answers could assist students in understanding the requirements of the tasks in Section C. They should practise writing note-form responses with shorter one-sided pieces. Students need skills in presenting their notes in a variety of ways. Even if the material can be used for a neat division of points into advantage/disadvantage or yes/no, the notes still need to be framed under the overall contention of the piece. These skills are developed through practice and could be connected to other areas of study; for example, using material related to the Context study and practised from early in the year. EAL students in mainstream classes need specific teaching towards developing these skills. This teaching needs to focus on understanding the material as a whole, as well as how to structure notes. Building these skills needs practice throughout the year.

Short letters from the media that present only one point of argument using several persuasive strategies are a useful starting point for Part 2. These can also be used to consider how visuals are used within written material. Generic explanations of language devices are insufficient. Knowledge of a writer's possible tactics must be applied directly to the unseen passage. Set language stems will only help if there is understanding of the task material. Students do not need to be able to label persuasive language, they need to write about how it persuades and to look for subtleties in language choices. Students should focus on specific words and phrases, and fully explore their connotations within the piece.

# 2013 Examination Report



The background information given on the exam paper provided the context for the task material, including identifying the audience. Using language to persuade has an 'audience focus', and the analysis needed to be related to the specified audience. Introductions should be limited to showing an awareness of the audience, the context and the overall contention of the piece. The topic sentence of each following paragraph should identify the point of argument on which the language analysis will focus.