



VICTORIAN ASSOCIATION FOR THE TEACHING OF ENGLISH

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ENGLISH

Written examination sample paper

The scenario in Section C has been prepared for the sole purpose of providing sample material for the VATE English Written examination sample paper. 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.

Reading time: 15 minutes

Writing time: 3 hours

TASK BOOK

<i>Section</i>	<i>Number of questions</i>	<i>Number of questions to be answered</i>	<i>Marks</i>
A – Analytical interpretation of a text	20	1	20
B – Comparative analysis of texts	8	1	20
C – Argument and persuasive language	1	1	20
			Total 60

- Students are to write in blue or black pen.
- Students are permitted to bring into the examination room: pens, pencils, highlighters, erasers, sharpeners, rulers and an English and/or bilingual printed dictionary.
- Students are NOT permitted to bring into the examination room: blank sheets of paper and/or correction fluid/tape.
- No calculator is allowed in this examination.

Materials supplied

- Task book of 16 pages, including **assessment criteria** on page 16

Instructions

- Complete each section of the examination paper.
- If you choose to write on a multimodal text in Section A, you must not write on a text pair that includes a multimodal text in Section B.
- All written responses must be in English.

Students are NOT permitted to bring mobile phones and/or any other unauthorised electronic devices into the examination room.

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SECTION A — Analytical interpretation of a text**Instructions for Section A**

Section A requires students to write an analytical interpretation of a selected text in response to **one** topic (either **i.** or **ii.**) on **one** text.

Your response should be supported by close reference to the selected text.

If your selected text is a collection of poetry or short stories, you may write on several poems or stories, or on **at least two** in close detail.

If you choose to write on a multimodal text in Section A, you must **not** write on a text pair that includes a multimodal text in Section B.

Indicate which text you have chosen to write on and whether you have chosen to answer **i.** or **ii.**

Your response will be assessed according to the assessment criteria set out on page 16 of this book.

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

Text list

1. *After Darkness* Christine Piper
2. *All the Light We Cannot See* Anthony Doerr
3. *Behind the Beautiful Forevers: Life, Death, and Hope in a Mumbai Undercity* Katherine Boo
4. *Extinction* Hannie Rayson
5. *Frankenstein* Mary Shelley
6. *In Cold Blood* Truman Capote
7. *Island: Collected Stories* Alistair MacLeod
8. *Like a House on Fire* Cate Kennedy
9. *Measure for Measure* William Shakespeare
10. *Nine Days* Toni Jordan
11. *Old/New World: New & Selected Poems* Peter Skrzynecki
12. *Persepolis: The Story of a Childhood* Marjane Satrapi
13. *Rear Window* directed by Alfred Hitchcock
14. *Selected Poems* John Donne
15. *Station Eleven* Emily St. John Mandel
16. *Stories We Tell* directed by Sarah Polley
17. *The Golden Age* Joan London
18. *The Left Hand of Darkness* Ursula Le Guin
19. *The Lieutenant* Kate Grenville
20. *The Women of Troy* Euripides

1. ***After Darkness* by Christine Piper**

- i. ‘*After Darkness* shows that individual friendships can flourish even when there is social division.’

Discuss.

OR

- ii. ‘Honour and loyalty are Ibaraki’s strength and his weakness.’

Discuss.

2. ***All the Light We Cannot See* by Anthony Doerr**

- i. “I know you are very smart and keeping yourself safe.”

‘In *All the Light We Cannot See*, keeping safe is not the main consideration.’

Discuss.

OR

- ii. “A real diamond, his father used to say, is never entirely free of inclusions. A real diamond is never perfect.”

‘*All the Light We Cannot See* examines the way in which flawed individuals can achieve great things.’

Discuss.

3. ***Behind the Beautiful Forevers: Life, Death, and Hope in a Mumbai Undercity* by Katherine Boo**

- i. “...Asha, a woman on her own.”

Does the text suggest whether we should admire or condemn people like Asha?

OR

- ii. ‘*Behind the Beautiful Forevers* offers little hope that the slum dwellers will be able to rise above their circumstances.’

Discuss.

4. ***Extinction* by Hannie Rayson**

- i. ‘*Extinction* highlights the need to be pragmatic in the face of idealism.’

Do you agree?

OR

- ii. “I am not depressed...I’m just over being single.”

‘In *Extinction*, the characters are more afraid of getting old and being alone than addressing the needs of the planet.’

Discuss.

5. *Frankenstein* by Mary Shelley

- i. “I am alone.”

‘*Frankenstein* highlights the importance of real connections with others.’

Discuss.

OR

- ii. “Am I to be thought the only criminal, when all humankind has sinned against me?”

In *Frankenstein*, who deserves the harshest judgement?

6. *In Cold Blood* by Truman Capote

- i. “...I’ve seen some bad things...But nothing so vicious as this.”

‘Smith and Hickock are nothing more than cold-blooded killers.’

To what extent do you agree?

OR

- ii. ‘A deep sense of loss pervades *In Cold Blood*.’

Discuss.

7. *Island: Collected Stories* by Alistair MacLeod

- i. “...it’s bound to break your heart.”

‘Despite heart-breaking challenges in their lives, MacLeod’s characters display strength and endurance.’

Discuss.

OR

- ii. How does MacLeod pay homage to heritage and tradition, even as he depicts generational change?

8. *Like a House on Fire* by Cate Kennedy

- i. ‘The male characters in *Like a House on Fire* struggle to cope with disappointment.’

Do you agree?

OR

- ii. “I don’t know why they call it surfing. They should call it drowning.”

‘The characters in *Like a House on Fire* are often overwhelmed by events.’

Discuss.

9. ***Measure for Measure* by William Shakespeare**

- i. “Plainly conceive, I love you.”

To what extent is love a powerful force in *Measure for Measure*?

OR

- ii. “Most dangerous / Is that temptation that doth goad us on / To sin in loving virtue.”

‘While the characters in *Measure for Measure* aim to be virtuous, all sin in some way.’

To what extent do you agree?

10. ***Nine Days* by Toni Jordan**

- i. ‘*Nine Days* explores the intergenerational impact of conflict on families.’

Discuss.

OR

- ii. ‘Prejudice is the cause of most of the problems encountered by the characters in this novel.’

Do you agree?

11. ***Old/New World: New & Selected Poems* by Peter Skrzynecki**

- i. “Cattle...Their bodies heavy / with milk and beef...”

‘Skrzynecki’s poetic observations of the everyday often challenge or surprise.’

Discuss.

OR

- ii. “...a prayer / of thanksgiving for the food that I’m eating / and the decades that I’ve lived”

How does Skrzynecki’s poetry reveal a sense of gratitude?

12. ***Persepolis: The Story of a Childhood* by Marjane Satrapi**

- i. “It’s important that you know. Our family memory must not be lost.”

‘*Persepolis* is Satrapi’s way of acknowledging the effects of revolution on her family.’

Discuss.

OR

- ii. ‘In Satrapi’s graphic novel, defiance turns into despair.’

Do you agree?

13. *Rear Window* directed by Alfred Hitchcock

- i. “Trouble. I can smell it.”

‘For the characters in *Rear Window*, trouble is more of their own making.’

Do you agree?

OR

- ii. “Yeah, can’t you just see me? Rushing home to a hot apartment to listen to the automatic laundry and the electric dishwasher and the garbage disposal and the nagging wife.”

What view of marriage does Hitchcock ultimately endorse in *Rear Window*?

14. *Selected Poems* by John Donne

- i. ‘Donne’s poems are both playful and serious.’

Discuss.

OR

- ii. What insights on love does Donne offer his readers?

15. *Station Eleven* by Emily St. John Mandel

- i. “Survival is insufficient.”

Does St. John Mandel suggest that there is anything more important than survival?

OR

- ii. ‘In times of adversity, the best and worst is brought out in humans.’

How does *Station Eleven* explore this idea?

16. *Stories We Tell* directed by Sarah Polley

- i. “We’ve told you it’s a documentary. But it’s an interrogation process.”

To what extent is the film an interrogation rather than a documentary?

OR

- ii. ‘*Stories We Tell* shows that people need to reconcile the past with the present.’

Discuss.

17. *The Golden Age* by Joan London

- i. “He could overcome any hardship because he had a vocation.”

‘*The Golden Age* reveals the need to find a purpose in life.’

Discuss.

OR

- ii. ‘The Golds are not the only characters to feel like outsiders in *The Golden Age*.’

Discuss.

18. *The Left Hand of Darkness* by Ursula Le Guin

- i. “I had had two years of colour, choler, and passion in Karhide. A change was welcome.”

‘Le Guin’s imaginary world is not so different from our own.’

To what extent do you agree?

OR

- ii. “There’s really only one question that can be answered, Genry, and we already know the answer ...The only thing that makes life tolerable is permanent, intolerable uncertainty.”

How does *The Left Hand of Darkness* endorse the view that only uncertainty makes life tolerable?

19. *The Lieutenant* by Kate Grenville

- i. “Once two people shared language, they could no longer use it to hide.”

‘For Grenville, communication is all-important.’

Discuss.

OR

- ii. ‘Grenville’s novel reminds us that we are more alike than different.’

Discuss.

20. *The Women of Troy* by Euripides

- i. “What cowards you are...”

‘*The Women of Troy* challenges our understanding of cowardice and bravery.’

Discuss.

OR

- ii. How does Euripides suggest that women and children are the real victims of war?

NOTES

SECTION B — Comparative analysis of texts**Instructions for Section B**

Section B requires students to write a comparative analysis of a selected pair of texts in response to **one** topic (either **i.** or **ii.**) on **one** pair of texts.

Your response should analyse how the two texts present ideas and/or issues, and should be supported by close reference to both texts in the pair.

If you choose to write on a multimodal text in Section A, you must **not** write on a text pair that includes a multimodal text in Section B.

Indicate which text pair you have chosen to write on and whether you have chosen to answer **i.** or **ii.**

Your response will be assessed according to the assessment criteria set out on page 16 of this book.

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

Pair 1 *Tracks* by Robyn Davidson and *Charlie's Country* directed by Rolf de Heer

- i. “There’s lots of food in the bush. It’s like a supermarket out there.” (*Charlie’s Country*)
Compare how *Tracks* and *Charlie’s Country* portray what it means to survive in Australia’s remote places.

OR

- ii. “...they didn’t own the land, the land owned them.” (*Tracks*)
“My country is my home.” (*Charlie’s Country*)
Compare how relationship with the land is portrayed in the two texts.

Pair 2 *Invictus* directed by Clint Eastwood and *Ransom* by David Malouf

- i. “Words are powerful. They too can be the agents of what is new, of what is conceivable.” (*Ransom*)
Compare the ways in which the two texts explore the power of words.

OR

- ii. “The opportunity to act for ourselves. To try something that might force events into a different course.” (*Ransom*)
“Times change, and we need to change as well.” (*Invictus*)
Compare the ways that *Ransom* and *Invictus* reveal the need to be adaptable.

Pair 3 *Stasiland* by Anna Funder and *Never Let Me Go* by Kazuo Ishiguro

- i. “And I saw a little girl...holding to her breast the old kind world, one that she knew in her heart could not remain, and she was holding it and pleading, never to let her go.” (*Never Let Me Go*)
Compare how these two texts explore the need for human connection.

OR

- ii. ‘An individual’s identity is shaped by external forces.’
How do these two texts demonstrate this idea?

Pair 4 *Reckoning* by Magda Szubanski and *The Namesake* by Jhumpa Lahiri

- i. How do *Reckoning* and *The Namesake* explore the idea that parents’ experiences affect the lives of their children?

OR

- ii. “If not for my bruised heart I might never have created my most popular character ever—the lovelorn Sharon Strzelecki from *Kath and Kim*.” (*Reckoning*)
Compare how the two texts show people struggling to form relationships.

Pair 5 *The Crucible* by Arthur Miller and *Year of Wonders: A Novel of the Plague* by Geraldine Brooks

- i. Compare the ways these texts explore the impact of human failings.

OR

- ii. "...a person is either with this court or he must be counted against it, there is no road between."
(*The Crucible*)

How do these texts explore the idea that individuals suffer when they are expected to conform?

Pair 6 *Photograph 51* by Anna Ziegler and *The Penelopiad: The Myth of Penelope and Odysseus* by Margaret Atwood

- i. "We made the invisible visible." (*Photograph 51*)

"we had no voice / we had no name" (*The Penelopiad*)

Compare how *The Penelopiad* and *Photograph 51* explore the effect of being denied a voice.

OR

- ii. "Dr. Wilkins, I will not be anyone's assistant." (*Photograph 51*)

"It's hope, and hope alone, that keeps us afloat." (*The Penelopiad*)

How do *The Penelopiad* and *Photograph 51* explore the resilience of women?

Pair 7 *Black Diggers* by Tom Wright and *The Longest Memory* by Fred D'Aguiar

- i. How do *Black Diggers* and *The Longest Memory* reveal the difficulties of standing up against the dominant forces in society?

OR

- ii. How do these two texts give voice to those who were silenced in the past?

Pair 8 *I Am Malala: The Girl Who Stood Up for Education and Was Shot by the Taliban* by Malala Yousafzai with Christina Lamb, and *Made in Dagenham* directed by Nigel Cole

- i. Compare how *Made in Dagenham* and *I Am Malala* show that activism can alienate people from others.

OR

- ii. How do the two texts show the possibility of unlikely people becoming advocates for change?

NOTES

SECTION C — Argument and persuasive language**Instructions for Section C**

Section C requires students to write an analysis of the ways in which argument and language are used to persuade others to share a point(s) of view.

Read the background information on this page and the material on pages 14 and 15, and write an analytical response to the task below.

For the purposes of this task, the term ‘language’ refers to written, spoken and visual language.

Your response will be assessed according to the assessment criteria set out on page 16 of this book.

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

Task

Write an analysis of the ways in which argument and written and visual language are used in the material on pages 14 and 15 to try to persuade others to share the points of view presented.

Background information

Society Now is an independent, not-for-profit, online media source that publishes daily articles written by academics, journalists and social commentators about current scientific, social and political issues. Responding to the growth of reality television shows which have been dominating prime time viewing slots, Dr Taylor Phipps, a lecturer in Social Sciences from Torton University, wrote an opinion piece titled *A Dose of Reality*.

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Society Now

SCIENCE, SOCIETY, POLITICS

A Dose of Reality

By Dr Taylor Phipps

February 21, 2019

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There was thunderous applause as Atticus Bentley mounted the stage Monday night to accept Australia’s highest sporting accolade: the 2019 Sportsperson of the Year. He is the first AFL player to win the award. Clearly overwhelmed, there was good-natured laughter at his initial fumbled attempts to thank his coaches and fellow players. More laughter at his suggestion that he had just attended the night for the free food and drink. And finally, there were unrestrained tears from Atticus (and just about everyone in the house) at the end of his speech: “More than anything, I’d like to thank my mum. She has been my rock and my compass. She has been there to remind me who I am during some pretty tough times. Without her, I wouldn’t have my family, this trophy, or my life. Thanks mum – this is for you.” [kissing the trophy and holding it aloft].

The mention of ‘tough times’ will not be lost on anyone who has watched or read the news – his issues with alcohol, the death of his friend, becoming an outcast in the social wilderness, banned from playing and banished from public life. Last night, nobody balked at the idea of a tough guy, a grown man, crying. On the eve of his first game back from his ban in 2018, Atticus said, “I just want to show everyone that I can be a better person.” It is not just the Cinderella story of Atticus’s return that pulls at our heart strings, it is the fact that we relish an authentic person, warts and all. We love the fact that he is real.

Yet, there seems to be a contradiction emerging in Australian society. Another breaking story of the week provides a contrast – the leaving speech of Joshua, from the ‘reality’ television show, *Luv Bites*. Josh lamented, “To make it on this show, you need to be in it for the right reasons. I was the only one who was in it for love. It can’t be about your social media profile, or fame, or money.”

Call me sceptical, but my immediate thought was, “Are you for real?”

Who actually goes on a television show, a competition, where someone selects a person for you to fall in love with, then has your relationship scrutinised by complete strangers so that they can vote on whether it is interesting enough for you to continue? Is it someone who is genuinely looking for true love and the person of their dreams? Maybe there is no single formula for falling in love, but the absurdity of this approach is quite astounding.

The truth is that 'reality' television shows are contrived and unnatural. Many in the 'voyeur' genre follow the lives of people who are not doing much more than enjoying their undeserved wealth, idly being self-absorbed and superficial. Their jet-set lives seem to be exotic, but underneath the botoxed exterior, their lives are in fact depressingly pathetic and dysfunctional.

Then there is the 'romantic' genre. In this type of show, you might find a 'hopeless romantic' who wants to publicly compete against nine others, over ten episodes, to win the affections of someone so completely that he or she will want to marry them and live happily ever after. Pride and dignity are clearly not an issue for these people. Better still, make the setting a tropical island to minimise clothing and make it absolutely clear *why* we might want to fall in 'love' with them! Is it any wonder we are producing generations of people with an unhealthy fixation on body image, when they are led to measure themselves against such unrealistic standards of physical 'beauty'?

Like all great love stories, there is bound to be drama. But in this case, the drama is manufactured. Producers cast people according to how they are likely to behave. When in doubt, producers will actually tell these characters what to do at key points. They will ensure someone fills the role of provocative 'evil' person who manages to bring the worst out in others. Then they will call it a social experiment, even though they know exactly what will happen because they have contrived the mix of personalities to suit their dramatic intention.

These shows are full of improbable people doing improbable things in improbable situations.

And yet, it is called 'Reality TV'.

The popularity of these shows in fact suggests to me that we have lost sight of reality. In this new perverse reality, our impressionable youth will essentially learn that life is a kind of competition that you either win or lose. Using the right kind of manipulation (and often deceit) will enable you to win your heart's desire (usually a financial prize or somebody's 'love'). In this reality, there is no balanced view about what real success is and what positive qualities help you to attain it, like determination, resilience, optimism and integrity.

It is terrifying to think that this might be seen as the new normal. I crave the good old days, when people invariably saw past the glitter and only admired authentic people – people with meaningful values who are true to themselves. We have seen many failings in Atticus Bentley over the years but we can forgive these because he did not slip into the mire of mindless self-obsession, even though his relative wealth and fame momentarily led him there. His work with under-privileged youth shows us that he has committed to being a better person. Maybe the participants on 'reality' television shows have this potential too. I would like to think we all do. Well, everyone except, perhaps, producers of 'reality' television shows. Maybe the only way we can help them to become better people is to send a message that we are not into the ludicrous drivel they trot out *ad nauseum*, by choosing not to watch it anymore. Poor ratings might help them to look for better programming alternatives and a sense of reality we can all feel more comfortable with.



"You have no experience, skills or talent. I'm afraid we can only place you on a reality TV show, which will lead to wealth and fame."

Assessment criteria

Section A will be assessed against the following criteria:

- knowledge and understanding of the text, and the ideas and issues it explores
- development of a coherent analysis in response to the topic
- use of textual evidence to support the interpretation
- control and effectiveness of language use, as appropriate to the task

Section B will be assessed against the following criteria:

- knowledge and understanding of both texts, and the ideas and issues they present
- discussion of meaningful connections, similarities or differences between the texts, in response to the topic
- use of textual evidence to support the comparative analysis
- control and effectiveness of language use, as appropriate to the task

Section C will be assessed against the following criteria:

- understanding of the argument(s) presented and point(s) of view expressed
- analysis of ways in which language and visual features are used to present an argument and to persuade
- control and effectiveness of language use, as appropriate to the task

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END OF TASK BOOK



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