

Year 12 English Practice Exam – V1

Section A – Text Response (Reading and Responding)

Instructions

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. Indicate in the box on the first line of the script book whether you are answering i. or ii. 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. 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.

Medea by Euripides

- i. 'Medea has no choice but to seek revenge.' Do you agree?

OR

- ii. 'The Chorus in *Medea* presents a set of moral and social values for the audience's consideration.' Discuss.

In Cold Blood by Truman Capote

- i. 'It is the idea of the "American Dream" and being self-sufficient that leads to Perry and Dick's ultimate downfall.' Discuss.

OR

- ii. "Sometimes you gotta feel sorry for Perry. He must be one of the most alone people there ever was." Do you agree?

Section B – Reading and Comparing

Instructions

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

In your script book, indicate which text pair you have chosen to write on and whether you are answering i. or ii. Your response will be assessed according to the criteria set out on the last page of this book. Section B is worth one-third of the total marks for the examination.

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

- i. 'It is difficult to bring together former enemies but not impossible, and it benefits everyone.' Discuss, with reference to *Invictus* and *Ransom*.

OR

- ii. 'Stories are an essential means by which we come to understand our history and human experience.' Discuss, with reference to *Invictus* and *Ransom*.

Section C – Analysis of Language Use

Instructions

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 *Boxers in Boxes, Danes in Drains* and then complete the task below. Write your analysis as a coherently structured piece of prose.

Background Information:

St. Jude's Academy, a Melbournian school has recently decided to cut funding from the academic departments, and instead enhance their technical and vocational facilities. The school also established compulsory weekly vocational lessons for students in years 9-11.

In response, a current Year 11 student, Armano Eli wrote the following article for the school's weekly newsletter to be distributed amongst parish families: students, parents and educational staff.

It is accompanied by various responses from members of the school community.

We don't need no SHEDucation! by Armano Eli

What are the basic staples of an education? Reading, 'Riting, and 'Rithmetic, right? My earliest scholastic memories were of these critical '3 Rs.' We had to get a good grip of the basics before moving on to bigger and better things.

As the years went by, our school days became a lot more varied. We were introduced to the wonderful worlds of arts, music, languages and sport teams. These out-of-classroom activities became part of daily life. Gradually, as we matured, we were given more and more choice. By the time we get to Year 12, we'll have full control over our subjects, and I can't wait!

But balance is important. Even those of us fulfilling the necessary university prerequisites for our future need some variation. Many of my peers learn a language or take up an instrument to break up the occasional monotony of regular academics.

However, trust plays an important part in developing a curriculum; trust in the students to know what they're capable of, what their preferences are, and what they want to do with their lives. We might need a little guidance here and there, but we're meant to be learning from our mistakes, aren't we?

That's why this new system confuses me. There's a big difference between us choosing to opt out of the classroom environment and experience some real world skills occasionally, and commanding us to 'learn' in a shed instead of a classroom. From the beginning of this year, all students from Years 9-12 have one day a week of 'vocational learning,' which largely consists of making wooden chopping boards and getting our fingers sawn off by electronic equipment we don't know how to use. Is that the kind of education you'd want for your child.



I'm aware not all of us know exactly what we want to do in life, especially at a Year 9 level. The activities may even open up some minds to the possibility of working in mechanics or engineering. But are we really going to subject an entire cohort to this experience on the off-chance one kid out of a hundred enjoys it? You don't see piano lessons being made compulsory just in case we have a budding virtuoso in our year level, do you?

Of course not. Because in all other areas of administration, St. Jude's is wise and cautious with their budget. So what is it about these tradie-classes that are important enough for our teachers to think they can bend the rules?

I am not advocating a system of pure academia, however I don't think it's beneficial to enforce this kind of learning. We're told that everyone learns at different paces, and in different environments, and I believe our school has done well to give us a variety of opportunities.

But the key word here is opportunity. We should of course have the option of more practical, skill-based classes if we want, but imposing compulsory vocational sessions makes as much sense as forcing everyone into Advanced Mandarin and expecting us to enjoy ourselves. Sure, a few people might love it, but it's still a waste of time and resources.

Some might argue one day a week is a small sacrifice, but personally, I don't want my quality of education compromised by this scheme.

Education is one of the most important investments you can make, both as a student or a parent, and we should of course appreciate every opportunity we get. However, I believe this is the perfect moment to re-evaluate the current system in the hopes of maximising its efficiency and practicality.

How about some more funding for the technology department? The rise of globalisation and industrial science means we should all be prepared for the demands of a new millennium. Or some new equipment in the science labs? Biology and Chemistry are some of the most popular subjects, and yet we still only have one beaker and lab coat for every eight students.

I'd even accept some general life-skills classes, teaching us about things like workplace disputes or scary social situations. If we're aiming for real-world benefits, wouldn't a class on how to talk to a friend going through a tough time be more helpful in the long run than a wobbly

table you made in Year 10?

So let's band together and oppose this new decision. If you value education and free-will as much as I do, I encourage you to talk to your teachers and parish representatives about altering this new proposal, before we're turned into a generation of people who actually believe Writing begins with an 'R.'

Comments Section: 'Word on the playground?'

Bruce: (Year 11 student, currently enrolled in the new vocational system)

What's the point of me learning a bunch of poncey Shakespeare or Romanian geography when I know I want to be a tradie? Balance may be important, but a balance of useful and useless skills is just dumb.

We've put up with useless, compulsory academic subjects for so long, it's about time us vocational kids got the education experience we need!

Mrs. Haywood: (Year 11/12 History Teacher)

As someone who's seen many schools over the years simply pour all the funding into one department and leave others floundering, I'm glad to see the student body are fighting this administrative decision. Let's have a bit more equality between our disciplines; surely that's a better, more positive message to send to our students!

Victoria: (Year 12 student)

Why not just abolish this 'vocational' nonsense altogether? Students need a proper, traditional education; being 'well-rounded' is just some pretentious new-age jargon to disguise the fact that sub-par subjects aren't actually giving us the "important" life skills they promise. Learning to make a birdhouse or a saucepan won't prepare us at all for the real world. Why should we cater for the lame-brained simpletons among us who can't handle real school?

END