

## The Responding Section

### An overview

The Responding section is primarily concerned with your ability to articulate your understanding of syllabus concepts by applying your knowledge of your studied texts to the questions asked in this section. Your main aims in this section should be threefold:

1. to demonstrate an understanding of syllabus concepts
2. to demonstrate an understanding of studied texts
3. to compose a clearly expressed, analytical response

The following information about the Responding Section is taken from the Examination Design Brief:

<p><b>Section Two: Responding</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 40% of the total examination</li><li>• One question from a choice of six</li><li>• Suggested working time: 60 minutes</li></ul>	<p>Questions require the candidate to demonstrate analytical and critical thinking skills in relation to studied texts. The candidate can refer to any text or text type studied.</p> <p>Questions can require the candidate to interpret, analyse, compare, contrast, reflect on and/or evaluate a studied text or texts.</p>
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The Responding Section may require you to approach your studied texts in a number of ways:

- compare texts from similar or different genres and contexts
- compare and contrast distinctive features of genres
- analyse how the conventions of texts influence responses
- investigate and evaluate the relationships between texts and their contexts
- evaluate different perspectives, attitudes and values in texts
- investigate how texts offer perspectives (through their construction)

The Responding Section requires you to articulate a considered, well-argued and thoroughly evidenced discussion of your texts, within the framework of specific questions. These questions require you to simultaneously demonstrate your understanding of syllabus concepts and apply your study of texts to these concepts.

This section of the Guide will assist you in preparing for this section.

## General Observations

The Responding Section can be intimidating due to its high weighting and perceived difficulty, but if approached correctly, it can be your best friend in the exam. Some candidates look forward to the Responding Section, excited for the chance to showcase their essay writing skills and their understanding of the texts they have spent the year analysing. Others? Not so much. Regardless of how you feel, the truth is that this section of the exam can work *for* you, rather than against you. The pointers below will hopefully demystify this section of the exam and set you on the path to success.

### **1. The syllabus is king:**

There is absolutely no need to fear the Responding Section, as this is the part of the exam you have the most control over. You have gained experience in applying your studied texts to syllabus concepts throughout the year, and this section of the exam mirrors the work you have already done. Familiarising yourself with the critical syllabus documents is the first step in ensuring you are ready for any question you may face in this section of the exam.

### **2. Love them or hate them, you will be writing an essay in this section:**

Remember to follow the instructions of the exam very carefully. In the 2016 examination, the instructions for Section Two clearly stated that your response should take the “form of an essay.” Students who are already familiar with the syllabus (well done you!) may have noted that the exam brief does not explicitly state that you must write an essay in this section. If you take a closer look, you will see that the skills you are required to demonstrate involve “analytical and critical thinking” as well as interpretation, analysis, comparison, contrast and reflection; skills naturally embedded in essay writing.

### **3. The Responding Section is worth 40% of the exam. This does not mean you must write more here than in other sections:**

The Responding Section is worth 40% of the exam for a very specific and beneficial reason: this is the section of the exam you have the most control over. The Comprehending and Composing Sections feature unseen texts and prompts, so they are weighted slightly less than the Responding Section to reflect their challenge. However, in the Responding Section, you get to write on texts with which you are very familiar and knowledgeable. Unfortunately, many candidates interpreted the 40% weighting as a sign that they must write pages and pages. It resulted in many essays that were lengthy, repetitive and unclear. It’s a cliché, but it’s true: quantity does not equal quality. Your ability to write a clear, succinct and thoughtful essay is being put to the test. Making sure that your essay directly answers the question with a clear thesis and detailed body paragraphs is of critical importance. Prioritise taking a few extra moments to plan your essay, as well as proof-reading it once you are finished. A well-structured essay that answers the question will be looked upon far more favourably than a rambling or unclear one that just happens to fill the entire exam booklet.

### **4. Relying on pre-prepared responses is risky:**

WACE markers are wise to the age-old practices of candidates who do their very best to stretch a pre-prepared essay to fit their chosen question. You may have written a great essay earlier in the year, but that was in response to a different question. Trying to ‘re-create the magic’ may prevent you from addressing the question in front of you effectively. Some of

the ideas you expressed in previous essays will naturally still apply, but you must make sure that you directly engage with *this* question in the here-and-now. Take the time to select your question in this section as early as possible (during the reading time is a good moment). A thoughtful and well-tailored answer that addresses this particular examination question will fare better than a truly great pre-prepared essay.

#### **5. Pay attention to your question:**

To quote the wise words of *Mad Men*'s Don Draper, "sometimes you gotta dance with the one that brung you." Once you have decided on a question, stick by it and do it justice. You must work with the question as it is presented. However, if you feel it's appropriate, you may formulate a unique essay that argues against the statement in your chosen question. This is an artful skill that demonstrates great flexibility in your engagement with the question and can often yield good results. On the other hand, overlooking parts of the question or misapplying it weakens the foundation of your argument. For instance, candidates can often misread or misinterpret words or concepts in questions. Simple oversights like writing about one text when the question asks for two will lead you astray, as will changing 'or' in a question to 'and'. In Question 9 of the 2016 exam, many candidates accidentally read 'adapted' as 'adopted', altering the meaning of the question significantly.

#### **6. Hard work pays off:**

Ask any past WACE student about the secret to their success and they will tell you that it came down to hours of hard work. This is certainly one of the keys to achieving success in the Responding Section. The third American president, Thomas Jefferson, once said: "I'm a great believer in luck, and I find the harder I work, the more I have of it". Start trekking down the road to success long before exams begin: make detailed notes on your texts, study the syllabus and make your own exam questions, write responses to as many sample questions as possible, practice writing under timed conditions, perfect your spelling and grammar, and seek as much feedback from your teacher as you can. With this kind of preparation, you are bound to have luck in this section!

## Considering Question 4

Compare the effectiveness of the endings of **two** texts to position their audience to respond strongly to their themes or ideas.

### Interpreting the question:

There are several components to this question that must be addressed to create a successful response. Firstly, the question asks you to “*compare* the effectiveness of the endings of two texts”. Strictly speaking, to compare texts, you must find similarities between them. However, the process of comparison will naturally highlight differences between the texts, which you may also consider in your response. This question is unique, as it asks you to compare ‘effectiveness’, a somewhat abstract and evaluative comparison to make. A good starting point would be to identify two texts with unique endings that stand out to you.

To address this question, you must also ask yourself, what makes an ending *effective* in positioning its audience? Is it a resolution that shocks the audience? One that leads them to critique the world? An ending that elicits a strong emotional response? Once you have an idea of what you mean by effectiveness, you must take a position on which of the two texts is more effective than the other.

The final component of the question asks you to consider how effectively the endings encourage the “audience to respond strongly to their themes or ideas”. You must identify the themes or ideas in each text; this will form the bulk of the discussion and analysis in your body paragraphs. The term ‘*respond strongly*’ is important here. You must also identify and explain the strength of the audience’s response to justify why the ending is so effective.

Writing about texts that deal with similar themes or ideas may allow for easier comparison, but it is not essential if you are not able to do so. Avoid forcing similarities between your chosen texts by suggesting that they explore the same themes or ideas, as this may result in a contradicting and unclear response.

### Marker’s comments to keep in mind:

- Candidates found it difficult to address all parts of the question in their essays. Many overlooked the word ‘endings’ in the question which resulted in essays that compared two texts more generally. Remember to stick very closely to the requirements of the question.
- Stronger responses were those that explained what makes an effective ending as part of their introduction.
- This question required candidates to adopt a more challenging essay structure as it required the comparison of two texts. Many candidates opted to draw comparisons between the two texts within one paragraph. This meant body paragraphs became lengthy and confused at times.

## Question 4 Sample Response One

This response demonstrates detailed textual knowledge that is effectively supported by the use of quotes and evidence. The candidate addresses the endings of their chosen texts, referring to the themes or ideas explored. This response features an effective introduction that summarises the candidate's chosen texts logically, despite their differences. Although it does compare the endings of the texts, it dedicates two paragraphs to evaluating the construction of characters before doing so, limiting the comparison. The candidate requires closer attention to comparing how effectively the endings create a strong audience response to successfully address the key aspects of the question.

The resolution or ending of a text serves as an author's last chance to effectively position their audience to respond strongly to the themes or ideas explored throughout the text. After the Ball and Fahrenheit 451 are two extremely different texts that effectively use their endings to provoke a specific response. After the Ball is a play written by David Williamson in 1997, about family life in Australia from the 1960s to the 1990s. Fahrenheit 451 is a science fiction novel published in 1953 by Ray Bradbury that follows Montag, a fireman in a society that burns books, as he begins as a conformist and develops into a rebel who realises the importance of literature. Both of these texts possess a strong ending that ties together the themes of the text, in order for the reader to believe the opinions conveyed by Williamson and Bradbury.

The candidate begins with a sentence that directly addresses the components of the question: how the endings of texts can influence the reader's response to the themes or ideas explored. The final sentence of this introduction does not outline a clear thesis or argument. The candidate acknowledges that both texts "possess a strong ending", but the question invites candidates to evaluate the effectiveness of the endings. A link back to the key words of the question, particularly "effectiveness" and "respond strongly", would be more effective.

After the Ball carries many themes, most importantly Australian identity and the effect your childhood can have on who you become. Stephen is the son of Ron and Kate and he represents those who suffered from 'cultural cringe'. This was a concept of the 1960s, involving embarrassment of the lack of culture in Australia. Stephen wants desperately to move away from Australia to pursue his dream of film-making because he sees this country as "the most boring, self-centred, smug country in the world. This is the graveyard of creativity." Stephen does eventually move to Europe to escape the country that he believes he hates. Throughout his life he continually sees Australia as boring and lacking culture, saying comments such as, "the only question this country debates; where to buy a Holden or a Ford." Stephen's character also strongly represents the theme of how your childhood can influence who you become. From a young age, Stephen has witnessed the constant arguing of his unhappy parents, Ron and Kate. Stephen recalls an incident from when he was 11. His parents had a horrible fight and his mother went to cry in the laundry. As he went to console her, he saw her "standing there laughing." The treatment of his

The candidate begins this paragraph by suggesting that Australian identity is a theme of the text. This requires further extension, as it is not strictly a theme. For example, "After the Ball explores the complex idea that Australians often find it difficult to identify with their country" may be more effective.

The candidate has incorporated quotes and textual evidence naturally and grammatically as part of their analysis. Here the candidate mentions that Stephen does "eventually move to Europe", but it is not clear whether they are referring directly to the ending of the text. Further attention to the question is needed in this paragraph as the candidate is discussing the text broadly, rather than focusing on the ending.

parents towards one another caused Stephen to believe that they never loved each other and he always disliked his mother. At the end of the play, Stephen begins to truly change his views, when he returns to Australia to see his dying mother, shocking truths reveal themselves to Stephen. He realises that he had actually come to miss the country that he had always professed to hate and also realised that in fact his mother and father did love each other. With these realisations came others, such as the revelation that he was now in an unhappy marriage, just as his parents had been, and his career was quite unsuccessful. He says, "I thought about how many friends I have and came up with the answer zero." In realising that he is unhappy, he sees the world differently and appreciates Australia more, and also has a new desire to "tell (his) mother I love her and mean it." It is through the development of the character of Stephen that Williamson causes the audience to see and understand the true Australian identity and the effect that their 'cultural cringe' had on the lives of young Australians as well as how our childhood can influence who we become and the values we hold.

Fahrenheit 451 explores the themes of the importance of literature and the effect of advanced technology on the world. Science fiction texts act as a warning about what the future would could become and this novel is no exception. Bradbury presents his audience with a futuristic society in which roles are reversed and fireman start fires to burn books, rather than put them out. Guy Montag is a fireman who, at the beginning of the novel, believes "it was a pleasure to burn." Through his meeting with Clarisse, an unusual seventeen year old girl who possess values such as individuality and curiosity that the rest of society lacks, he realises that "he wore his happiness like a mask...and the girl had run off with the mask and there was no way of asking it back." Montag truly develops from a conformist, to a man who begins to understand the importance of literature. When the fireman burns down a house with a woman still inside it he realises "there must be something in books, something we can't imagine." His wife, Mildred, represents the rest of society, who believe that they must "stand against the small tide of those who want to make everyone unhappy with conflicting theory and thoughts." When Montag tells her of the woman who was burnt, Mildred says, "well...she is nothing to me. She shouldn't have had books." This shows the lack of emotion that people in this society had. Montag always described technology as "spidery" or likens it to snakes and beetles, presenting advanced technology as dangerous and sinister. Bradbury uses the development of Montag to show his audience the horrible effects of advanced technology and banning literature.

The candidate is reflecting on the ending of the play here. This is a relevant link to the question.

The candidate has explained how the themes of the text are revealed by the ending of the play. This directly addresses the question, but further consideration of the way the audience is positioned to respond is required.

Further identification of the audience's 'strong response' to the themes and ideas is needed here to address the question. The candidate mentions that the audience can "see and understand", but what response is provoked? For example, a sympathetic response?

This paragraph moves on to discussing *Fahrenheit 451*, but further comparison of the texts is required. Identifying a point of difference between the texts may be an effective way to remind the marker that they are reading a comparative essay.

The candidate incorporates textual evidence naturally into their analysis here.

The candidate must acknowledge whether the fireman's observation occurs at the end of the text to directly address the essay question.

The candidate refers to the "development of Montag" as essential to the audience's understanding of the themes of the novel, but it is not clear to the marker whether they are referring to the ending of the text. Specific attention to key words of the question is required here.

After the Ball and Fahrenheit 451 are two different texts that use their resolution to provoke a strong response from the audience. In the Australian play, Stephen's development presents the themes of Australian identity and the influence of your childhood on who you become. The play ends with Stephen realising he had been wrong all of these years and his revelations cause the reader to understand the importance of Australian identity and the negative effects of 'cultural cringe', as well as how important our childhood is in our future values. Fahrenheit 451, however, has a dramatic ending much unlike that of After the Ball. Montag's development and realisations occur throughout the middle of the novel, whereas in the play, this happens at the end to tie in all of the ideas. After Montag has realised the importance of literature he begins to rebel. He torches his own house, and then the fire chief, Beatty. At the end of the novel, Montag is being chased by the police and runs away. When he meets up with a man called Granger, he discovers that there are other people out there who believe what he believes. At the resolution of the novel, the entire city is destroyed by bombs during a war, but Montag and Granger survive. This is an extremely effective ending, as the reader sees the shocking, catastrophic occurrence, due to the negative view towards literature and extreme technological advances. This ending is certainly effective as it presents a horrific scene that the audience is appalled and shocked by.

It is evident that the endings of both After the Ball and Fahrenheit 451, although extremely different, are effective in positioning their audience to respond strongly to the themes and ideas. The play teaches the audience of the importance of Australian identity and the influence of childhood through the ending in which Stephen returns home and realises that he had been wrong throughout his whole life, and develops into a more appreciative man. The novel warns the audience about a futuristic society in which literature is banned and causes them to strongly agree with Bradbury's opinion that this is destructive. This is done through the ending in which the entire city is destroyed, yet Montag survives metaphorically and coincidentally because of his appreciation of books. Both texts successfully provoke strong responses from the audience, through their powerful endings.

The topic sentence of this paragraph signals a shift in the focus of the response; the candidate has dedicated a paragraph to comparing the texts.

The candidate acknowledges the ending of After the Ball here.

The use of the phrase 'however' implies a direct concessional comparison of the effectiveness of the endings. The candidate suggests that Fahrenheit 451 has a more dramatic ending. Further consideration of whether this makes it a more effective ending is required.

The candidate clearly identifies the reader's response to the ending here by using adjectives such as 'shocking' and 'catastrophic'.

A marker may assume that that the candidate finds the ending of Fahrenheit 451 more effective than After the Ball, but further comparative analysis is needed.

The candidate returns to their broad comparison of the texts here by suggesting that audiences are positioned to 'respond strongly' to both texts. Specific identification of the reader response is required.

It is not clear what the candidate means by 'metaphorically and coincidentally'. They should avoid introducing new points of information in their conclusion.

#### Hint: Using comparative language

When writing a comparative essay, many candidates fall into the trap of referring to their texts separately, without making the necessary comparisons between them. Use comparative language to help you grammatically express the similarities and differences between your texts. You may find it useful to keep a bank of these phrases in mind. For example: on one hand, if we consider, alternatively, after consideration, through careful comparison, although, conversely, similarly, in the same way, and in contrast.

## Activity: Comparing Texts

The ability to compare texts is an important skill that is promoted throughout the ATAR English syllabus. The process of comparison allows you to make deep connections between the texts you have studied, showing your ability to analyse and reflect on complex ideas.

The process of comparing texts has been addressed in the “Revising the Syllabus” section of this guide, but this activity will provide you with an opportunity to practise comparing the texts you have personally studied.

Re-read the essay on the previous page. As you are reading, highlight any points of comparison the candidate makes and reflect on the questions below:

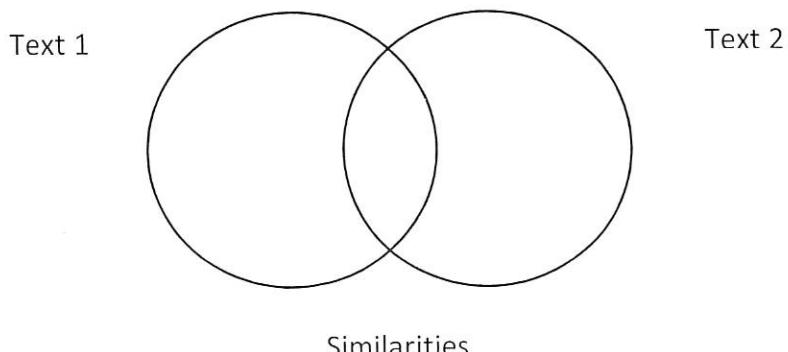
- How many points of comparison does the candidate make? Could this be improved?
- What essay structure does the candidate use? Does this allow for detailed comparison?
- Does the candidate use comparative language (e.g. similarly, both, in comparison)?

## Activity: Comparing your own texts

Now it is time to make some comparisons between two texts you have studied so far. It is not necessary to compare texts from the same genre or that deal with the same ideas, although this may be a logical place to start. Similarities can be found in texts that may appear to be extreme opposites from the outside. When comparing texts, you may consider:

- **contextual similarities:** links between the times of production and reception or the dominant ideologies explored by the texts
- **structural similarities:** links between the narrative structure of the texts
- **stylistic similarities:** links between the ways text structures and language features have been used in the texts
- **generic similarities:** links between the generic conventions used by texts (but keep in mind it is also possible to compare different text types as well as texts from different genres)
- **thematic similarities:** links between the themes and issues explored in texts and the perspectives offered by individuals within the texts,
- **functional similarities:** links between texts that operate in similar ways, such as in their purpose, or representations, or the audience responses they are designed to generate.

**Hint:** Not sure where to start when comparing texts? You may find it useful to draw a Venn diagram to assist in illuminating the similarities and differences between your chosen texts. This could form part of your planning during the exam.



Select two texts you have studied to compare in the following table. This activity requires you to find both similarities and differences between your chosen texts. Remember that the word 'compare' dictates that you must focus on similarities specifically, but this process will also illuminate differences between the texts. A sample has been provided for you.

Texts	<b><i>Mad Max: Fury Road and Wake in Fright</i></b>
<b>Similarities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• construction of a bleak and desolate Australian landscape through camera angles and lighting (e.g. very similar long shots at the start of both texts)</li> <li>• the suggestion that characters in both texts are 'trapped' in the outback</li> <li>• use of colloquial Australian language revealed through dialogue</li> <li>• excessive alcohol consumption and abuse</li> <li>• destruction of the natural landscape</li> <li>• aggressive masculinity revealed through the construction of characters</li> <li>• references to madness and insanity, brought on by isolation</li> <li>• a direct critique of traditional Australian values, particularly mateship and loyalty</li> </ul>
<b>Differences</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• contextual differences: <i>Wake in Fright</i> was first released in 1971 and was rejected by Australian audiences. <i>Mad Max</i> was released as a 'blockbuster' in 2015</li> <li>• stylistic and generic differences: <i>Wake in Fright</i> is an arthouse movie, making it surreal and impressionistic at times. <i>Mad Max</i> is a more conventional fantasy/post-apocalyptic film</li> <li>• <i>Mad Max</i> includes representations of women, <i>Wake in Fright</i> purposefully lacks female voices</li> <li>• difference in ending: <i>Mad Max</i> has a hopeful resolution as society is liberated whereas <i>Wake in Fright</i> has a bleak ending. Grant does not grow as a result of his experiences and returns to his remote school to start the process again.</li> </ul>

Texts	
<b>Similarities</b>	
<b>Differences</b>	

## Considering Question 7

Account for the differences in the way **two** texts used generic conventions by considering their contexts.

### Interpreting the question:

To successfully address this question, you must identify the genres of two texts you have studied while acknowledging that the contexts of their production will influence their use of generic conventions.

The phrase '*account for the differences*' implies that responses must justify, rationalise and compare the differences between two texts. You are required to make connections between the texts rather than analysing each text's use of generic conventions in isolated paragraphs. Candidates may find it appealing to discuss two texts from the same genre, but this is not essential; equally effective responses could account for the differences between texts across genres. Regardless of your approach, adopting an essay structure that allows for the close comparison of your chosen texts is critically important.

In response to this question, candidates must demonstrate their sound understanding of genre. Texts can be organised into genres based on their subject matter, such as dystopian fiction, science fiction or film noir. Alternatively, genre can refer to the broad structure of texts, such as narrative, memoir or documentary. Texts belonging to a genre may adhere to its set of generic conventions. This extends to the structure and style of the text, as well as the construction of characters and the themes or issues explored.

Responses to this question must acknowledge how contextual factors may influence a text's ability to adhere to generic expectations. For example, early films that belonged to the war genre traditionally represented a very patriotic or jingoistic attitude towards war, reflecting the dominant attitudes of society. However, as societal attitudes towards war have changed, so too have the texts of this genre. Contemporary war films tend to represent a cynical and reluctant attitude towards war with a focus on its emotional and personal consequences.

### Marker's comments to keep in mind:

- This question highlighted the importance of understanding syllabus concepts. Many candidates demonstrated an unclear understanding of genre, affecting the clarity of their responses.
- Candidates must be mindful of addressing all aspects of the question. Candidates tended to identify the generic conventions of their chosen texts without acknowledging the importance of context in shaping the texts.
- Although this question suggests that context directly influences the generic construction of texts, candidates could argue against this. Several successful responses suggested that because generic conventions and audience expectations are so rigidly fixed, context cannot influence genre.

## Question 7 Sample Response One

This is a successful response due to the candidate's attention to all aspects of the question. The candidate accounts for the stylistic and thematic differences between two texts belonging to the gothic genre while acknowledging that these differences are influenced by each text's context of production. The candidate demonstrates a clear understanding of their chosen texts by providing relevant textual evidence. Although this response engages with the question, its attention to the conventions of the gothic genre requires further development. Also, as the question requires candidates to '*account for the differences*' between their chosen texts, further direct comparison was required in the candidate's body paragraphs. This response could also be improved by the inclusion of a detailed introduction that outlines the context of each text.

Conventions of genre adapt and change over time to match changing attitudes, values and beliefs in society. This is evidenced in the contrasting ways that the film The Piano and the novel Snowy utilise conventions of the gothic genre, including disempowered characters, and isolation to convey different perspectives. The Piano has a perspective supporting feminism, while there is a post-colonial viewpoint offered in Snowy.

The candidate begins their introduction with a justification for why generic conventions will vary in texts. This highlights their understanding genre.

The candidate acknowledges that both texts can be linked to the gothic genre, but more explanation of the context of each text is needed to develop a clear thesis.

The topic sentence of this paragraph directly addresses the key aspects of the question: how context influences the generic conventions used in a text.

The candidate mentions that Ada is disempowered. This would be a good point to remind the marker that disempowerment of a central female character is a common convention of gothic texts.

The candidate mentions that Ada's costuming contrasts with her setting, but why is this significant? How does this relate to the context or the gothic genre?

The example of Ada's imprisonment reflects the dominant attitudes of the nineteenth century, but they do not acknowledge this. An additional sentence to draw attention to the context of the text would be useful here.

The candidate mentions two conventions of the gothic genre here, but further detail is needed to directly address the question. For example, clarify that this text offers a

The Piano utilises generic conventions to create empathy for the character Ada with the aid of a 19th century context highlighting the male-dominated attitudes of the time. Ada is shown to be disempowered, as she is forced by her father to marry a stranger and move to New Zealand to live with him. Throughout the film Ada is mute, representing the way that female voices of this time were silenced, furthering her disempowerment. By moving, she is thrown into an unfamiliar and remote setting of forest and wilderness. This contrasts greatly with her clothing, which consists of unwieldy dresses made from fine fabrics and well-polished shoes. This unfamiliar setting and the lack of people that Ada knows in this new world serves to alienate her from the setting with the unfamiliarity making her powerless. Her new husband, Alastair, also attempts to diminish her power and control her. He refuses to allow her to bring her piano, her one form of expression, into his house, and barricades the doors to prevent her from leaving the house. It is clear that he views her as nothing more than an object for his affections as he speaks of it often with his friends. "She will not lie with me" and "does she not love me?" are two examples which demonstrate his intentions. He even severs one of Ada's fingers when he discovers that she cheated on him. The Piano uses the gothic conventions of isolation and powerless characters in order to demonstrate the oppressive nature of men and produce a

feminist perspective that supports Ada and other oppressed women from this 19th century context.

contemporary feminist of the 19<sup>th</sup> century context.

Sorry has a more modern focus, creating empathy for marginalised Aboriginal people, which is still an issue in Australia today. The context of Sorry lies in World War Two - era rural Australia where Aborigines are not even officially considered human, this view is demonstrated by the character Nicholas. "The Aborigine, like most primitive peoples, have a tendency to expire upon contact with a superior race... it is the duty of civilised man to raise or erase the lesser folk." His prejudiced views translate into actions as well. "He discovered that he could force the cook, Martha, and that she would not tell." Nicholas' actions in raping multiple Aboriginal Australian women, demonstrates the prejudice and disrespect towards indigenous people in 1940's Australia. When Nicholas is killed, his daughter's Aboriginal teacher is immediately convicted and dies in jail, despite her innocence. This shows the powerlessness of Aboriginal people and how they are silenced by a corrupt justice system. This girl, Mary, is an important example of a disempowered character as a great amount of contrast is observed in how people perceive her. The protagonist, Perdita, views her as wise and clever and comes to think of her as a sister. Other Aboriginals regard Mary as an exceptional hunter and prominent member of the community. She is thought of as less than human by non-Aboriginal Australians, however. "Nicholas was hunting Mary", highlights this fact and also demonstrates how someone powerful like Mary can still be made powerless in isolation. Respect and empathy for Mary is gained through this loss of power, aided by the historical context of colonial history in Australia showing the mistreatment of Aboriginal Australians.

The candidate clearly states the context of Sorry here and identifies a dominant attitude from this era.

The candidate has attempted to incorporate a quote here, but it is placed in a sentence without explanation or analysis. This limits the impact and significance of the quote.

Here, the candidate refers to the 1940s context of the text, but has not mentioned a convention of the gothic genre. Further attention to all parts of the question is required in this paragraph. How has the context influenced the generic conventions used?

This paragraph does not directly add to the candidate's response to the question as it does not address the relationship between context and the use of generic conventions. As the question requires candidates to 'account for the differences', further comparison of the texts is required.

While the texts convey different perspectives, they are conveyed through the use of similar conventions. Both texts take characters and disempower them through isolation and unfamiliar settings, Ada in New Zealand, and Mary in colonial Australia. There is also a convergence between the texts as they briefly explore ideas from the other. The Piano analyses the division of culture between the British and the Maori people and shows how they are used for labour and knowledge of the land. Sorry has feminist ideas, highlighting the mistreatment of Nicholas' wife, Stella. "Nicholas tried to reason with his wife but ended up hitting her... Stella wept before performing her wifely duty." The common themes in these texts shows that while Gothic texts have, for a time, been similar in creating empathy for marginalised groups, the main focus has shifted over time from a feminist perspective to a post-colonial one as current

The candidate begins this paragraph by comparing the texts. This directly addresses the question. The candidate acknowledges that the texts use similar generic conventions to explore different ideas. An acknowledgement of the context of each text would also work well here.

This is an insightful comparison between the texts and the word 'convergence' is well suited here.

The candidate makes an insightful comment here about the function of the gothic genre, directly addressing the question by suggesting that changes in society have prompted a change in the way

societal issues have shifted with it.

The texts Sorry and The Piano utilise Gothic conventions of disempowered characters and isolation to create perspectives which match the contexts in which they take place. The similar use of these conventions to support changing perspectives over time demonstrates a connection between contextual attitudes with societal beliefs.

conventions from the genre are used.

The first sentence of this conclusion is clear and well suited to the question. Overall, the conclusion is brief and requires a summary of both texts and the differences in their use of generic conventions.

## Activity: Identifying generic conventions

- In the table below, identify the generic conventions commonly associated with three genres of your choosing. A sample has been provided for you:

Genre: <b>Dystopian Fiction</b>	Genre:	Genre:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>rigid control of the population through force, propaganda or fear.</li> <li>strictly defined and segregated social hierarchies.</li> <li>a denial of past events or history.</li> <li>technological advancements coinciding with the destruction of the natural world.</li> <li>oppressed citizens with limited rights.</li> <li>technological advancements that enslave or track citizens.</li> <li>the construction of a dystopian protagonist: a main character who becomes aware of the flaws in society and sets out to destroy or escape them.</li> </ul>		

Keep in mind that the example above focuses on genre as it relates to the subject matter, themes, characters or motifs of texts. Genre can also relate to the broad structures of texts such as narrative, short story or documentary. You may find it useful to repeat this activity, instead focusing on the generic structure of different text types.