

VCE 2011 English Trial Examination

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SECTION A – Text response

Instructions for Section A

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

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 one or two in very close detail, depending on what you think is appropriate.

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

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

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

Text list

- | | | |
|---|-------|---------------------|
| 1. <i>A Christmas Carol</i> | | Charles Dickens |
| 2. <i>A Farewell to Arms</i> | | Ernest Hemingway |
| 3. <i>A Human Pattern: Selected Poems</i> | | Judith Wright |
| 4. <i>Bypass – the story of a road</i> | | Michael McGirr |
| 5. <i>Cosi</i> | | Louis Nowra |
| 6. <i>Dear America – Letters from Vietnam</i> | | Bernard Edelman |
| 7. <i>Dreams from My Father</i> | | Barack Obama |
| 8. <i>Great Short Works</i> | | Edgar Allan Poe |
| 9. <i>Interpreter of Maladies</i> | | Jhumpa Lahini |
| 10. <i>Life of Pi</i> | | Yann Martell |
| 11. <i>Maestro</i> | | Peter Goldsworthy |
| 12. <i>On the Waterfront</i> | | Elia Kazan |
| 13. <i>Ransom</i> | | David Malouf |
| 14. <i>Richard III</i> | | William Shakespeare |
| 15. <i>Selected Poems</i> | | Kenneth Slessor |
| 16. <i>The Old Man Who Read Love Stories</i> | | Rolf de Heer |
| 17. <i>The Reluctant Fundamentalist</i> | | Hamid Mohsin |
| 18. <i>Things We Didn't See Coming</i> | | Steven Amsterdam |
| 19. <i>Twelve Angry Men</i> | | Reginald Rose |
| 20. <i>Year of Wonders</i> | | Geraldine Brooks |

SECTION A**1. *A Christmas Carol***

- i. ‘*A Christmas Carol* begins with a realistic portrayal of the harsh Victorian world and finishes with an unattainable dream version of that world.’

Do you agree?

OR

- ii. ‘Scrooge’s attitude to the poor is “it’s not my business”.’

To what extent does Dicken’s novel show that a wealthy society should not ignore its poor?

2. *A Farewell to Arms*

- i. “Poor little kid! I wished the hell I’d been choked like that. No I didn’t.”

‘Frederic Henry’s life is dominated by anguish and grief, but he does not regret his life.’

Discuss.

OR

- ii. ‘There are two Frederic Henrys in the novel: the young soldier living the events as they unfold, and the experienced man who recounts those events knowing what happens.’

Discuss.

3. *A Human Pattern: Selected Poems*

- i. ‘Judith Wright’s poetry challenges our society’s assumption that science is more significant than spirituality.’

Discuss.

OR

- ii. ‘Judith Wright’s poems are inseparable from Judith Wright’s politics.’

Do you agree?

4. *Bypass – the story of a road*

- i. “I think I’ll enjoy the ride a lot more when I stop wishing the Hume was a little leafy lane in the countryside.”

‘McGirr directs the reader to appreciate and enjoy the Hume Highway for what it is.’

Discuss.

OR

- ii. “The road is a monument to restlessness.”

To what extent is this ‘story of a road’ a means for McGirr to chart the story of his own spiritual journey?

5. *Cosi*

- i. “He says politics is the real theatre.”

‘*Cosi* is first and foremost a political play.’

Do you agree?

OR

- ii. “Ppppretending to be other people.”

‘Staging Mozart’s *Così Fan Tutte* allows the play’s characters to be brought “out of their shells”.’

Discuss.

6. *Dear America – Letters from Vietnam*

- i. ‘A recurring idea in *Dear America – Letters from Vietnam* is that these young people had no idea what they were supposed to be fighting for.’

Discuss.

OR

- ii. “We are all afraid to die and all we can do is count the days till we go home.”

To what extent is this typical of the attitudes reflected in *Dear America – Letters from Vietnam*?

7. *Dreams from My Father*

- i. ‘Obama learns the lessons of several men who in some way “fathered” him to become the man he is.’

Discuss.

OR

- ii. ‘The strongest characteristic revealed in Obama’s memoir is his ability to listen to other people and empathise.’

Do you agree?

8. *Great Short Works*

- i. ‘Poe’s stories often feature irrational violence, but the reader is not asked to judge the characters morally.’

Do you agree?

OR

- ii. ‘Edgar Allan Poe’s settings often parallel the haunted psyche of the main characters.’

Discuss.

9. *Interpreter of Maladies*

- i. ‘Jhumpa Lahiri features food in her short stories to reflect her characters and their relationships.’

Discuss.

OR

- ii. ‘The stories in *Interpreter of Maladies* examine the harmful consequences of carelessness and neglect within relationships.’

Discuss.

10. *Life of Pi*

- i. ‘*Life of Pi* is preoccupied with the limits of human understanding.’

To what extent is this true?

OR

- ii. ‘Martell urges readers to accept the importance of suspending disbelief in our daily lives.’

Does your reading of *Life of Pi* support this view?

11. *Maestro*

- i. “... a great man had died”.

‘The reader cannot share Paul’s sympathetic admiration for this emotionally crippled piano teacher.’

Do you agree?

OR

- ii. ‘*Maestro*’s middle-aged narrator nostalgically recounts his past to make excuses for the foolishness of his youth’.

Discuss.

12. *On the Waterfront*

- i. ‘In *On the Waterfront*, Kazan depicts a man slowly realizing the truth about himself and his environment.’

Discuss.

OR

- ii. “You lost the battle, but you got a chance to win the war.”

To what extent does Terry Malloy “win the war” in *On the Waterfront*?

13. *Ransom*

- i. To what extent is story telling a way to construct identity in *Ransom*?

OR

- ii. "... we should have pity for one another's losses."

'Malouf shows that pity rather than rage is the means to achieve inner peace.'

Discuss.

14. *Richard III*

- i. 'The women of the play are the only characters to openly defy Richard and confront him with the truth.'

Discuss.

OR

- ii. "Since every Jack became a gentleman

There's many a gentle person made a Jack."

'Richard III is preoccupied with those in power having a right to that power.'

Discuss.

15. *Selected Poems*

- i. 'However bleak its message, the most memorable aspect of Slessor's poetry is its underlying sense of humanity.'

Does your reading of Kenneth Slessor's poetry support this view?

OR

- ii. "You find this ugly, I find it lovely"

'Slessor's poetry has been judged as having a "ground-base of disgust with life".'

Is this how you see Slessor's poetry?

16. *The Old Man Who Read Love Stories*

- i. 'Even though the jaguar hunts and savagely kills people, it is never seen as the enemy in Rolf de Heer's film.'

Discuss.

OR

- ii. 'The film shows the mayor becoming weaker at the same time as it shows Antonio Bolivar getting stronger.'

Discuss.

17. *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*

- i. “I was a modern-day janissary, a servant of the American empire at a time when it was invading a country with a kinship to mine.”

To what extent is the reader encouraged to endorse or reject Changez’s view of himself as having been a “servant of the American empire”?

OR

- ii. ‘Hamid suggests Changez’s anti-American feelings stem entirely from his feelings of rejection.’

Discuss.

18. *Things We Didn’t See Coming*

- i. ‘In *Things We Didn’t See Coming*, the strongest characters also tend to be the least admirable.’

To what extent is this true?

OR

- ii. “We will be the ghosts that feed off the edges of life.”

‘Amsterdam suggests that there is more to life than mere survival.’

Discuss.

19. *Twelve Angry Men*

- i. ‘In *Twelve Angry Men*, it does not matter whether the defendant is innocent or guilty.’

Discuss.

OR

- ii. ‘Rose suggests the conditions under which the jurors deliberate are inhospitable.’

To what extent does the setting have an impact on the events of the play?

20. *Year of Wonders*

- i. ‘*Year of Wonders* suggests that the greatest threat to an individual is the ignorance and misunderstanding of others.’

Does your reading of *Year of Wonders* support this view?

OR

- ii. “... these times, they do make monsters of us all.”

‘The malice and greed shown by people in *Year of Wonders* outweighs the generosity and altruism shown.’

Discuss.

SECTION B – Writing in Context

Instructions for Section B

Section B requires students to complete an extended written response.

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

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

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

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

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

Your response will be assessed according to the criteria set out at the end of this book.

Context 1 – The imaginative landscape

- | | | |
|--------------------------------------|-------|--------------------------|
| 1. <i>Island</i> | | Alistair MacLeod |
| 2. <i>One Night the Moon</i> | | Director: Rachel Perkins |
| 3. <i>The Poetry of Robert Frost</i> | | Robert Frost |
| 4. <i>Tirra Lirra by the River</i> | | Jessica Anderson |

Prompt

'We can imaginatively change and shape our environment in order to feel a part of it.'

Task

Complete an extended written response in expository, imaginative or persuasive style. Your writing must draw directly from **at least one** selected text for this Context and explore the idea that we can imaginatively change and shape our environment in order to feel a part of it.

OR

Context 2 – Whose reality?

- | | | |
|------------------------------------|-------|-------------------------|
| 5. <i>A Streetcar Named Desire</i> | | Tennessee Williams |
| 6. <i>Spies</i> | | Michael Frayn |
| 7. <i>The Player</i> | | Director: Robert Altman |
| 8. <i>The Shark Net</i> | | Robert Drewe |

Prompt

'The way we perceive reality is largely determined by an accident of when and where we are born.'

Task

Complete an extended written response in expository, imaginative or persuasive style. Your writing must draw directly from **at least one** selected text for this Context and explore the idea that the way we perceive reality is largely determined by an accident of when and where we are born.

OR

Context 3 – Encountering conflict

9. <i>Paradise Road</i>	Director: Bruce Beresford
10. <i>The Crucible</i>	Arthur Miller
11. <i>The Rugmaker of Mazar-e-Sharif</i>	R. Hillman & N. Mazari
12. <i>The Secret River</i>	Kate Grenville

Prompt

'It is sometimes better to engage in conflict than it is to avoid conflict.'

Task

Complete an extended written response in expository, imaginative or persuasive style. Your writing must draw directly from **at least one** selected text for this Context and explore the idea that it is sometimes better to engage in conflict than it is to avoid conflict.

OR

Context 4 – Exploring issues of identity and belonging

13. <i>Growing Up Asian in Australia</i>	Alice Pung
14. <i>Sometimes Gladness</i>	Bruce Dawe
15. <i>Witness</i>	Director: Peter Weir
16. <i>Members of the Wedding</i>	Carson McCullers

Prompt

'We do not have a single identity; we have multiple identities that are continually evolving.'

Task

Complete an extended written response in expository, imaginative or persuasive style. Your writing must draw directly from **at least one** selected text for this Context and explore the idea that we do not have a single identity; we have multiple identities that are continually evolving.

END OF SECTION B

SECTION C – Analysis of language use

Instructions for Section C

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

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

Read the opinion piece **Noise Sickness** and then complete the task below.

Write your analysis as a coherently constructed piece of prose.

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

TASK

How is written and visual language used to attempt to persuade the audience to share the point of view of the writer in the article **Noise Sickness**?

Background information

- Palatini Lauricle wrote this article for a national newspaper supplement in June 2011.
- On February 3rd 2011, a petition was presented to Canberra Parliament demanding legislation to put limits on ‘unacceptable levels of public noise pollution’.
- A member of the House of Representatives Petitions Committee, Paul Surd, was heard publicly dismissing the petition as a ‘silly campaign to get ambulances to switch off their sirens so that people can enjoy the birds singing’ before it had been officially heard.
- This caused a media outcry and campaigners have been given intermittent media attention ever since.

Noise Sickness

Palatini Lauricle is a Sydney based author of ‘Noise and the Fear of Silence’ published by Midas Press.

A recent Australian Institute of Hearing (AIH) study showing that one in five Australian teens suffer from some degree of hearing loss should ring a piercing alarm siren to health policymakers. And the facts should be a wake-up call to government officials such as Paul Surd who want to dismiss noise pollution campaigners as busy-bodies only concerned with fleeting high-volume noise sources such as ambulance sirens. Indeed, contrary to Surd’s absurd claims, no-one ever petitioned for ambulances to silence their sirens. What campaigners want is the government to recognise the research which proves what they have long suggested; that a growing health crisis in hearing is due to the avoidable exposure to noise which assaults most of our children every day. Indeed, the Institute’s Senior Researcher, Dr Geoff Merton, believes there could be serious implications if the report’s findings continue to fall on deaf ears.



My own concern with noise pollution was triggered when I began to experience increasing difficulty ordering food and drink at bistros and bars in the city. At first I put it down to an increase in mumbling servers, but then I realised I had problems holding conversations in public spaces with people I knew to be highly articulate. I have always been able to ignore the hum of other patrons' conversation and the clatter of cutlery and dishware; but I just cannot filter the painfully loud piped-in music that it seems no Australian establishment today believes it can do without. A health check suggested that both my ears were in very good shape, so I found myself wondering whether an overall degradation of hearing amongst younger people could be linked to this phenomenon of ever-louder "background" music.

Think about it. How much time does the average teenager, armed with an ear-phoned electronic device, spend in the absence of intrusive background music? A recent glance at a school web-site suggests perpetual musical accompaniment is to be assumed by allowing I-Pods in class. Setting aside the implications this might have for classroom learning, what is this phenomenon doing to the hearing health of our youth? Who hasn't encountered two people each strapped into their headphones holding a fragmented shouted conversation on a train or tram, where the only people not annoyed is anyone else similarly strapped into their own personal sound system.

Silence is rapidly becoming an endangered experience, especially the ability to hear only natural sounds. I had long thought that being deaf would be one of the scariest afflictions for a human to suffer, but after crossing the country and taking sound measurements to research my own book on silence and noise in the post-industrial world, I have found that at most we might get a 5-minute window of natural background before being invaded by an intrusive human generated noise, (and this is despite much of my sound sampling being done in parks and gardens!). Talking with middle school students, it is clear they think that wildlife cannot be found in the city because they cannot hear wildlife. But even when they can, they do not know how to listen to recognise it as such. A resounding image from Farley Mowat's memoir of his experiences in Italy during World War II is

how the birds stopped singing in answer to the barrage of war. But a more alarming idea is the way we no longer even listen for the sound of the bird song in the first place to be able to miss it. Most of us are too busy trying to find an internal balance from the constant barrage of human-made noise - what is the physical, mental, even spiritual toll exacted from trying to tune it all out?

Our society is quite literally becoming sick with noise. There is a flood of data demonstrating that this is the case. One alarming example is how chronic sound environments of relatively low scale — 55 decibels, for example, the level of suburban traffic — have measurable effects on cardiac health. And chronic low-level sound is proven to add to stress, degrading health overall. Yet even without the other harmful effects of noise on our physical health, this alarming finding about our youth's increasing problem with hearing has another unpleasant side-effect because according to leading child psychiatrist Sonya Black, the hearing damage among the young has secondary effects of lower grades and poor self-esteem. She claims this could even be a contributory factor to teen suicide rates.

As a society, we embrace noise sickness. Our culture associates high-volume sounds with parties, success and the ringing of cash registers. Anthropologists have shown Australians are conditioned to trust people who talk loud and long, and shun those who stay silent. "Silence", says Dr Merton, "has become a metaphor of malfunction". In researching my book, I got the overall impression that most people fear silence, perhaps to the same extent that they are dependent on the very system that destroys it.

Safe listening levels for portable music devices depend not only on the volume level, but also the duration of time; however, warning signs such as muffled-sounding speech or ringing in the ears should be reason to have a teenager's hearing tested. If these things are occurring and the teenager assumes they are normal because that is what everyone else experiences too, then perhaps we need to rethink the direction of our culture.

Yet silence, or at least its near relative — a low, comfortable level of day-to-day sound — is vital to palliate not only hearing damage, but the overall stress levels of our infotainment society. Until policymakers, and the culture generally, accept relative silence as a goal, our hearing and our overall health will continue to deteriorate. Surely this cannot be dismissed as a "silly campaign to get ambulances to switch off their sirens so that people can enjoy the birds singing"?

END OF SECTION C

Examination Assessment Criteria

The examination will address all the criteria. All student responses will be assessed against each criterion.

The extent to which the response is characterised by:

Section A – Text response (Reading and responding)

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

Section B – Writing in Context (Creating and presenting)

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

Section C – Language analysis (Using language to persuade)

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

End of 2011 VCE English Trial Examination

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