**Section Two: Responding (40 marks)**

Attempted by 38 candidates

Exam: Minimum: 34.0 Maximum: 73 Mean: 54.4 (σ: 8.79)

Section Two: Responding Mean: 21.59 (/40) Max: 30 Min: 11

By far the most popular questions were Questions 5 and 7. There were a good range of responses for both, which displayed textual understanding and knowledge. The lower range of marks and mean for this section reveals that candidates are still having difficulty answering all aspects of the question, answering in the required five paragraph response and using appropriate textual evidence to support their arguments.

Strongly linked textual evidence is necessary for this section, as is a solid thesis statement and outlining your key argument through the use of techniques. Remember that whatever goes into your introduction needs to be discussed in your body paragraphs. Conversely, putting too much information in your introduction and then not referring to it in your body paragraphs may affect the organisation of your ideas for your essay. A number of candidates discussed ideas and information that should have been put into their introduction in their body paragraphs. Remember that essay writing is an art and that your key purpose is not only to show your depth of knowledge but to express it in a clear and cogent manner through one main, central argument.

One of the purposes of this section is for candidates to demonstrate their textual knowledge and understanding of metalanguage specific to the form through text/texts studied. It was disappointing to see a lack of specific textual evidence through quotes, retelling of texts, or too many underdeveloped intertextual links in one body paragraph in some answers. Learning how to embed evidence in sentences, and where to place this in paragraphs is crucial.

Questions in this section required close discussion of studied texts and great control over essay structure and expression. The larger weighting for this section is not a signal for a longer answer. While candidates might chose to allocate a little more time on planning for a section with a larger weighting, the response should be a tightly structured and focused answer to the question. Some candidates felt obliged to write lengthy responses that they were unable to control under examination conditions, and many candidates wrote strong responses for the beginning of their essays, which quickly deteriorated, ultimately harming their mark. The principles of clear and focused essay writing apply to this section.

**Q4 (40 Marks)** Mean: 21.16 (/40) Max: 27 Min: 15

Some texts of the past remain timeless and relevant. Discuss how at least one text represents values and ideas that resonate in your context.

* This question requires candidates to discursively consider how values and ideas texts can resonate over time and in different contexts.
* ‘Values’ are defined as basic and fundamental beliefs that guide or motivate attitudes or actions. They determine what is important to us and provide general guidelines for conduct. Values that resonate are universal such as the value of freedom, empathy, equality, tolerance, human rights. These are especially emphasised in a democratic context like Australia and recognition of this should be rewarded.
* Considering how a text represents ideas and values; the power to circulate values in and through a text and position response would have gotten higher marks.

Six candidates attempted this question, with only some successfully passing. This question asks how (through techniques) at least one text represents values and ideas that resonate in your context. While some candidates restated the question as a summarising sentence, few candidates actually referred to how values and ideas in texts resonated in their context. When answering questions such as this, you need to be clear on what your context is. Simply stating that ‘these issues resonate in my context’ without explaining how or why they resonate does not answer the question. Be specific. Explaining that democracy resonates in your context as you come from a democratic country that values equality is a stronger response.

**Q5 (40 Marks)** Mean: 26.88 (/40) Max: 30 Min: 17

How does a text represent a familiar genre or challenge that expectation through an experimental style?

* This question requires candidates to demonstrate an understanding of the way traditional conventions guide interpretation and expectations of or the way a text uses an innovative style that manipulates genre for effect and audience.
* ‘Genre’ is defined in the glossary as: ‘the categories into which texts are grouped… and is often used to distinguish texts on the basis of their subject matter, form and structure.’
* ‘A familiar genre’ has defining conventions / textual features and a plot formula that is recognised collectively of a text type e.g. a biography or traditional narrative. Storytelling genres can be distinctively formulaic in plot or structure. Candidates might refer to traditional fictional genre forms, plays, poetry and familiar characteristics of particular sub-genre such as Gothic, epistolary, buldingsroman, science fiction etc.
* Candidates should be rewarded for acknowledging that standard structures help to identify and interpret genre and genre recognition is mediated by context and cultural tradition. They might consider how expectations of genre have developed and the effect when those expectations are met or not met, extended or subverted.

The majority of candidates were able to pass this section as they discussed *Maus* in detail and had a good understanding of the generic conventions of graphic novels and how Speigelman challenges these. Choosing the best evidence to support your argument in this section and this question is essential. Some responses did not refer to *Maus’* multimodality in reference to visual/written evidence/quotes. In answering a question on genre challenge, please detail the expectations of the genre, *then* how the text challenges this using textual evidence as it provides a more logical response. Very few responses discussed the effect on the audience.

**Q6 (40 Marks)** Mean: 14.75 (/40) Max: 19 Min: 11

Compare how two texts use voice to challenge assumptions and generate empathy in an intended audience.

* This question requires candidates to compare how voice is constructed in two texts for a particular purpose and audience. This involves an analysis of similarities and differences.
* ‘Voice’ is defined in the glossary as ‘the nature of the voice projected in a text by an author; the persona, role or character adopted or used to refer to narrative voice and the ways in which a narrator may be related to the story. Texts may also contain multiple voices’. Candidates should be rewarded for relating the use of voice to purpose and audience.
* The construction of voice depends on the text type and is usually through conventions. The choice of narrator, characterisation, a voice over, a persona in a poem. Different historical, cultural, social contexts in each text also influence the construct of voice as do perspectives that assume a vantage point to bear witness to an event or experience.
* ‘Assumptions’ infers beliefs, suppositions, bias, generalisations of particular groups and influences values and attitudes in a society.

A very poorly answered question as most candidates did not understand or address the concept of voice, the challenging of assumptions or an intended audience in their response. Some responses were simple re-tellings of the text or offered minimal analysis. The nearly successful candidate was able to link their text to the construction of a persona and the impact of this on an audience, although not an intended audience.

**Q7 (40 Marks)** Mean: 20.4 (/40) Max: 27 Min: 18

Analyse how at least one text combines multimodal elements to generate debate about power – or the loss of it.

* This question requires candidates to identify and analyse textual features that are combined in a way that positions debate about the distribution of power in a society or community.
* The question requires reference to a multimodal text type. Candidates might refer to a media text, hybrid or multimodal text, narratives, feature articles, films and this will affect the techniques and conventions selected in response.
* ‘Elements’ include structural and stylistic features, conventions and techniques, special effects.
* A criterion is how the techniques and conventions are used to ‘generate debate’ this also relates to historical, social, cultural and personal context, controversial ideas and representations of powerful groups, institutions, ideologies.

Another question where the majority of candidates were able to pass this section as they discussed textsin detail and had a good understanding of the generic conventions of texts and how they represent power. The focus of this question should have been how texts generate debate about power/disempowerment. Solid textual evidence and full engagement with all aspects of the question – in particular the words ‘debate about power’ were lacking. Candidates must get into the habit of referring to the key words from the question throughout their responses.

**Q8 (40 Marks)** Mean: 17 (/40) Max: 22 Min: 12

Compare how the representation of place promotes the idea of human resilience or adaptation in two texts.

* This question requires candidates to compare how the convention of setting is used in two texts (similarities and differences) and how this reveals resilience in different ways.
* ‘How’ infers the way conventions, techniques, language and structural features are used to immerse an audience in a sense of place.
* The word ‘promotes’ suggests that place is central to meaning and purpose in the text. A text might engage with place through descriptive language, the experiences and viewpoints of individuals, significance of setting that is sacred, cultural, social, alienating, communal, historical, imaginative, provide a backdrop to unsettling ideas about the world.
* The experience of place can be domestic, imaginary, etc. Representations of place might relate to internal or external conflict that is physical and/or psychological e.g. ideas about possession and dispossession, historical injustice, dystopian and post-apocalyptic scenarios, industrialisation, a changing society, threats to individuality and free will.

Three candidates attempted this question, there was a distinct lack of understanding of how techniques, such as description, language and conventions were used to represent place in their chosen texts.

**Q9 (40 Marks)** Mean: 20.25 (/40) Max: 29.5 Min: 15

Discuss how the pressure to conform in a conservative society is explored through generic conventions in a specific text.

* This question requires candidates to identify generic conventions and demonstrate how these shape perspectives of identity in a conservative society.
* ‘Conventions’ include conventions of genre and sub-genre, mode, medium; narrative approach and choice of narrator, the layout and organisation of the text, chronology, intertextual references, themes, etc.
* Candidates should demonstrate an understanding of social expectations that influence assumptions of masculinity or femininity or race or status or the model citizen. A ‘conformist society’ rejects individualism and self-determination in favour of fitting in. It imposes sameness on all and rejects independence of thought and action or authenticity.

Generic conventions and the definition of what makes a particular society a conservative society was the undoing of many for this question. When discussing a film, please discuss the generic conventions of film. When discussing a film such as *Gran Torino*, specific links to the type of society you are discussing and why it is conservative is necessary. Is it US hegemony? The aged? The migrant Hmong?