



2022 VCE English external assessment report

General comments

Close to 40,000 students sat the 2022 VCE English examination and the skills and knowledge shown by the majority of students were of high quality. The examination was consistent in its presentation of the three sections of the course.

- Section A – Analytical interpretation of a text offered students the choice of two distinct topics for each of the 20 texts and students were required to complete one response.
- Section B – Comparative analysis of texts asked students to meaningfully compare and contrast the ideas and issues in a chosen pair of texts.
- Section C – Argument and persuasive language required students to analyse the ways in which argument and language were used by Janelle Tanley, a lifelong resident of the Hapsey Wetlands, in her podcast on the dangers being posed to the local environment by encroaching commercialisation of the area.

It is important to remember that the assessment of English is global and norm-referenced. It is based on criterion-referenced descriptors that are applied holistically and reflect the assessors' estimate of the whole answer. There is no such thing as the 'right' answer – the assessors make judgements about the unique qualities of what is written by each student, understanding that this is first-draft writing completed under the time constraints of an examination.

In the 2022 VCE English examination, most students were able to present three completed pieces of writing, with very few incomplete and/or blank answers. Students tended to write at length, particularly on the analysis of single texts in Section A and argument and language analysis in Section C. Students displayed control of the essay structure and the majority gave clear indications of appropriate textual knowledge. However, assessors must be able to decipher students' handwriting to ensure their responses can be assessed.

Some general observations for improvement are:

- In spite of strong textual knowledge being displayed in Sections A and B, students needed to give more attention to the specific question on the examination paper. There were many long essays written on individual texts that addressed characters, ideas, issues and plot points from their set texts but failed to address the question. There was evidence of pre-learned paragraphs from published material being used by some students, while others were using their responses from practice essays and trying to 'tweak' it, unsuccessfully, to fit this year's question. In order to score highly in Sections A and B of the examination, students **must** address the set question, take a position and construct an argument to defend it, and resolve the topic by the end of the essay.
- Further, students needed to give more thought to planning their responses. Many very long answers were heavily descriptive and reliant on detailed and unnecessary quoting. Using the first five minutes of the time allocated to the task to plan a clear and coherent response would result in sharper, shorter, more controlled essays.

While some students were confident in identifying contentions and supporting arguments in the Section C material, they relied on restating the author's language, indicating need for analytical skills.

Students could have considered

- how the argument is shaped
- why it is developed in this way
- how the language is used to weight the argument and position the audience in particular ways
- why these decisions are so consciously and deliberately made by the writer.

Specific information

Note: Student responses reproduced in this report have not been corrected for grammar, spelling or factual information.

This report provides sample answers or an indication of what answers may have included. Unless otherwise stated, these are not intended to be exemplary or complete responses.

The statistics in this report may be subject to rounding, resulting in a total of more or less than 100 per cent.

Section A – Analytical interpretation of a text

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Average
%	1	1	3	8	14	20	22	17	9	4	1	5.6

Section A required students to 'write an analytical interpretation of a selected text in response to a topic'. Most students demonstrated knowledge of their text and a sound capacity to structure an appropriate response to the question.

A student's capacity to 'read' the text question accurately had a significant impact on their success. Most students understood that the task required them to comment on the ideas and values presented by the text's creator. However, there were responses that tended to focus on general textual detail rather than addressing the specific focus of the topic. Consider the *Station Eleven* topic: 'Life for the characters in *Station Eleven* is a constant struggle'. Do you agree?

Many mid-range responses presented paragraphs outlining the different struggles faced by characters in the post-apocalyptic world. Higher-scoring answers considered the term 'constant' and presented ideas about the 'struggles' that Mandel suggested pervade place and time, and presented a sequence of ideas relating to the degree to which these were 'constant' and the factors that Mandel presented as offering temporary respite from the 'struggles' inherent in human existence.

Many students were aware that absolute terms in topics invited challenge, and were able to explore the complexity of the ideas presented by the author. Certainly, the language used in the topic needed to be well understood before a student started to plan a response. It must be noted that there are sometimes phrases in topics that students will not find clarified in dictionaries. For example, the phrase 'living in the moment' (*Nine Days*, topic 2) caused some challenges. Many students equated that phrase with living in modern times. Obviously, this misreading had repercussions when the student attempted to address the topic. Equally, some students did not distinguish between the terms 'alone' and 'lonely' when considering the *Rear Window* topic: 'How does Hitchcock present a world in which people are lonely despite being surrounded by others?' Students must read topics carefully.

High-scoring students used their inferential reading skills to discern the implications of the topic they selected. For example, one of the implications in the topic on *Much Ado About Nothing* is that being unmarried might be detrimental to social status. Exploring such a notion was a logical part of a well-substantiated response.

Students who read the implications of topics addressed more complex and nuanced ideas and were rewarded for their efforts.

There were many candidates who had the skills and confidence to address an unseen topic and wrote carefully argued and well-substantiated responses. However, there were many instances of students who delayed beginning their response by commencing their essays with lengthy, general observations about the text. This may be because candidates lacked the confidence to directly address the question.

In a concerning trend, many students began their responses with variations of the following: Set against a backdrop of (insert context) and dominated by the (insert ideas of the time), this didactic (insert text type) written by (insert adjective) (insert author's name) has been critically acclaimed by (insert group) as an (insert adjectival phrase) exploration of human concerns.

It bore a disquieting resemblance to material published on the internet and gave assessors limited evidence of the student's own response to the topic.

However, a number of high-scoring responses began with fresh, engaging openings, such as the following example.

Truman Capote's 1966 true-crime novel In Cold Blood questions the effects of human nature, asserting the notion that although one's upbringing and treatment by others is the strongest factor in one's likelihood to kill, ultimately murder is a capacity of all humans...

High-scoring responses were characterised by an immediate engagement with the topic, and ideas that were sequenced into strong arguments. These factors culminated in impressive introductions, such as the following example on *Station Eleven*.

Life can often feel as though it is the push and pull between necessity and desire, while one thing is needed to survive another thing might make your life worth living. Station Eleven, a novel by Emily St John Mandel, explores this. Through the context of a post apocalyptic pandemic being compared to modern society Mandel investigates this constant struggle people go through no matter the circumstance and how people find refuge away from the world and its struggles. Mandel utilises the context of the world and civilisation brought to its knees to show that no matter the circumstances people search for way to escape struggle through the presentation of art and beauty. Furthermore, Mandel challenges the definition of living, suggesting that a life without fulfilment or meaning is not sufficient as a human desire for deeper satisfaction trumps the need for survival. Finally, Mandel's contrast of modern and collapse society serve as a reminder of the many miracles of technology in the modern era even while underpinning our of habit of ignoring them and taking them for granted until we need the most. Station 11 is a novel that shows us that no matter the seemingly depressing situation there are always opportunities that allow people to escape their struggles temporarily and enjoy life.

The following is another example of a high-scoring introduction.

Within the vivid natural landscape of his magical novel "Flames", Robbie Arnott creates a narrative between the instincts of humans and the greater power held by nature. By depicting humans, whose vulnerability causes them to revert back to their 'animal instincts', Arnott contends that the human mind is susceptible to the primal influences of nature. However, he simultaneously illustrates that humanity does have a degree of power over nature, bending it to its will during the destructive process of colonisation. Despite this "Flames" in its entirety does show humans not only at the mercy of the natural cycle, but a part of it themselves. Ultimately Arnott contends that humans have some capacity to influence nature to their will, but, in truth, the natural cycle will always remain an innately powerful influence over humanity.

Most students used the text effectively to substantiate their reading of it. However, mid-range students tended to describe textual elements, whereas high-scoring students were able to explain **how meaning was constructed and conveyed**. For example, to support an argument that Arthur Leander, in *Station Eleven*,

was unable to maintain relationships because of his preoccupation with the world of celebrity, a student with some textual knowledge might describe the intertextuality used by Mandel's setting of Arthur's death while playing King Lear, whereas a stronger response would be able to explain how Mandel's choices of the character Arthur played, the imagery of him being 'unmoored', and the words he spoke at the moment of his death, conveyed and enriched the reader's understanding of the ways in which an inauthentic life can lack meaning.

The following two examples are from high-scoring responses explaining how a complex idea was conveyed by an author. The first is on *All the Light We Cannot See*, and the second is on *Pride and Prejudice*.

...Despite demonstrating the worst of human behaviour in World War II. Doer still recognises the humanity in those perpetrators and invites sympathy and understanding. This is further illustrated in Von Rumpel, the antagonist and embodiment of sheer cruelty and evil, committing evil acts for his own gain. However, Doer reveals his poignant circumstances, the threat of imminent death – portraying him as an “emaciated old man” who really fears blackness “choking off his heart”. It is the utter desperation of Von Rumpel that allows Doer to shed light on him and his actions, inviting the reader to question whether it is amoral to prioritise self-preservation – a visceral instinct – in times of conflict and adversity. Thus, while Doer conveys that indeed war can reveal the worst behaviour in individuals, it is important to sympathise and recognise the incredibly difficult situations they are fixed in.

Austen lambasts a society where despite, their intellectual capabilities, women are often forced into marriages deprived of affection for purely economic reasons. Through her use of social realism, Austen presents an androcentric society where women, especially those with limited fortunes, are forced to a crass survivalist posture. Therefore, whilst upon cursory examination, Charlotte Lucas may appear callously focused on economic comfort over affection marrying solely for “worldly advantage” Austen does not condemn, but rather at times praises her for being a sensible, intelligent person”. However, through her biting satire and use a free indirect discourse, Austen exposes a reality where Charlotte ardent desire for an establishment deprives her of happiness, for even she believed Mr Collins to be neither “sensible nor agreeable”. By describing Mr Collins’ fervent admiration for the Longbourn property through the lexical range of inanimate objects, “hall”, “dining room”, “furniture” Austen reveals how Charlotte will only ever be appreciated by Mr Collins for her ability to blend into the stately mansion she hopes to be part of, rather than the intelligence of her mind. The fact that Charlotte finds her marriage with a “narrowminded silly man” Mr Collins as liberating, in contrast with spinsterhood, further reveals to the reader the depths of Austen’s irony. Austen thus critiques a society that compels women into loveless marriages for economic reasons, as such marriages will ultimately only lead to strained and mismatched relationships deprived of genuine affection.

While many students were able to present an adequate conclusion by summarising the arguments they had presented, higher-scoring students were able to resolve the topic, as shown by this conclusion to *All the Light We Cannot See*.

Although “All The Light We Cannot See” is a novel about war and its consequences for all people, Doer amidst his sorrow and sympathy for victims, is hopeful in his representation of humanity. In particular, he recognises the way that the worst behaviours demonstrated are the sum of many factors and pressures and is multifaceted, inviting sympathy for the so-called perpetrators. However, above all, Doer celebrates the ability of individuals who demonstrate courage and integrity in redeeming themselves, and the ability of such resilience to transcend difficulties and last.

Similarly, this conclusion on *Flames* resolved the topic question succinctly.

Ultimately, Flames is a narrative designed to depict humans at the mercy of, and more importantly a part of, nature and its cycles...Arnett's human characters...attempt to repress the natural cycle, but in time, they recognise that they are at its mercy and must allow themselves to move at its pace.

Assessors are looking to reward students for demonstrating close reading/viewing of their selected text, for explicitly addressing the question and for presenting their point of view in an engaging and substantiated way.

Section B – Comparative analysis of texts

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Average
%	1	2	3	7	13	20	22	17	10	4	2	5.6

Section B sought to enable students to explore the diverse ways in which two, ostensibly unrelated, paired texts explored specified issues and conveyed ideas. It was centred on the capacity of students to compare these texts meaningfully, arising from close analysis of one of the eight pairings of texts. Similar to Section A, students were expected to construct and develop a controlled argument with which to resolve the selected unseen topic. The ensuing essay was expected to carefully use textual evidence that demonstrated the intentional choices made by the writer/film-maker so as to convey, examine and communicate core ideas and issues. Students were expected to consider the connections, similarities and differences that arose from such textual comparison through the lens of the chosen topic.

While all eight pairings of texts were attempted by students, three pairings were especially popular: Pair 2, *The Queen and Ransom*; Pair 5, *The Crucible* and *The Dressmaker*; and Pair 7, *The 7 Stages of Grieving* and *The Longest Memory*. These particular pairings were unchanged from 2021.

It should be noted that if one text in a pairing is altered, the shared ideas and issues invariably shift in a significant manner, and this was reflected in the questions posed on the 2022 exam.

Section B assessment criteria indicated the need for close textual analysis, centred around pertinent exploration of the shared focus of both texts on major ideas and issues, and through comparing them, how connected, similar or different the key messages were. Such analysis invoked the need to consider and explain how and why both texts have been constructed and operated to convey these ideas. All of this was reliant on students carefully dissecting and addressing the direction of the chosen topic in its entirety. Despite the advice provided in previous examination reports, some students simply addressed one key word in a given topic, thereby missing its overall intended direction. Accordingly, some students unsuccessfully decided to focus on broad issues of 'humility', 'compassion', 'growth', 'ambition', 'generosity', 'power', 'the past', 'belonging' or 'communities', as included in different questions. This resulted in loose and imprecise essays that could not fully respond to either the directional verbs or indeed the entire topic.

An approach such as the following topic sentence was ineffective and imprecise: (Question 1, Pair 5) 'The idea of power is presented through the many characters who hold and use this power'. Whereas the following topic sentence was powerful and adept: (Question 1, Pair 6) 'Both Franklin and Zeigler denounce the denied ambitions and desires of females due to their suppressed independence and value in society'.

Each of the 16 topics was carefully and precisely worded to guide and direct students to adeptly compare and contrast the paired texts. Consider the following topic for Pair 2: 'Compare how *The Queen and Ransom* question the purpose of traditions.' This topic was not inviting students to simply write a generic comparative essay about traditions shown in both texts, but rather to examine the extent to which each text challenges the need for such traditions and, by implication, whether there ought to be change.

Similarly, one of the topics for Pair 7 (*The 7 Stages of Grieving* and *The Longest Memory*) posed: 'Compare how the two texts explore the intergenerational impacts of racism.' This was not inviting students to loosely

describe the incidence of racism as revealed in both texts, but rather necessitated an examination of the inherited and long-term incidence of such racism in both texts.

Students should use dictionaries to clarify the precise meaning of key words in context and use reading and planning time to ensure a full appreciation of all the words in a topic, which should never be viewed as a loose or generic prompt.

Five of the sixteen topics centred the comparison around a quotation from both of the paired texts, but some students seemed uncertain how to incorporate these in their approach. As in Section A, such quotations were intended to direct the student's textual considerations towards related key moments in each text, which exemplified the key idea or issue in the topic. Students who were most assured in their consideration of these given quotations internalised the connection revealed between them and the actual topic. Consider the following excerpt from a high-scoring response to the first topic on Pair 6, *Photograph 51* and *My Brilliant Career*.

Isolation is also presented as a consequence of ambition...Ziegler's character of Rosalind possesses ambitions in the scientific domain which give rise to loneliness...in a male-dominated domain. Franklin's protagonist similarly ventures into a traditionally masculine domain of literature and the arts, causing a converging sense of isolation...In essence, the scientific world of 1950s London and late 19th century Australian society are delineated to be remarkably similar in how ambition can precipitate failure and isolation. However, combined, Ziegler and Franklin offer an alternative view of ambition...

This response revealed assured conceptual complexity, whereby the student was able to explore the core ideas being conveyed in both texts through astute explanation and insightful textual analysis, which are hallmarks of the most effective responses as identified in the expected qualities for the upper range of scores.

When reflecting upon the focus of the assessment criteria, students need to recognise the importance of structuring a clear and unified argument with which to resolve the chosen question. This necessitated a clarity of intent from the outset of the comparative essay, as well as regulated and carefully sequenced topic sentences, leading to a logical conclusion. Consider the following excerpt from the introduction to a high-scoring response to Question 1, Pair 5.

Within the insular and repressive confines of isolated and too conservative communities, individuals are driven to leverage power to avoid oppression and possess control...First and foremost, both texts examine how the oppressive nature of conservative communities drive marginalised characters to try to leverage power. Moreover, both Ham and Miller portray a desire for power as a driving force for many leaders. Ultimately, both The Crucible and The Dressmaker reveal the desire to oppose abuses in power is perhaps the strongest driving force.

Likewise, in the following excerpt of the conclusion to a high-scoring response to Question 1, Pair 2, the student adeptly drew together the strands of argument.

Malouf and Frears frame the purpose of traditions as differentiating ruler from ruled, with the aim of enshrining institutional power. However, The Queen and Ransom convey traditions as destructive to the integral relationship of the people and their leader, thus presenting tradition as failing in its own purpose. While both author and director convey tradition as dehumanising and obstructive to change, Frears directly displays it as an institutional threat, effectively praising the power of the populace to force its removal. Malouf contrastingly portrays individual leaders, such as Priam and Achilles, as those who are capable of defying tradition... By refuting tradition's ability to benefit leaders and enhance their power, Ransom and The Queen unequivocally condemn tradition and encourage those who seek to overcome it.

Here, the student successfully and purposefully concluded the essay, with quite nuanced differences as well as similarities between the two texts being identified and noted. Here also, this student revealed the desirable trait of conceptual complexity.

As already noted, the precise wording of each topic is intended to enable students to compare the paired texts skilfully and purposefully in alignment with it, recognising the essential drivers offered therein. The approach taken should reveal close textual analysis, optimally supported by close textual reading and re-reading, since there is no pre-ordained line of argument to be taken. Some students, however, attempted to insert portions of pre-learned essays in their exam essays. The focus on the entire topic and its resolution, through meaningful comparative analysis, can never be overstated.

The following excerpt from a high-scoring response to Question 1, Pair 7 illustrates such positive attributes.

Like the “stick” of physical colonial imposition, D’Aguiar’s horrifying personification of the whip as a “glutton”... illustrates the rapacious and cannibalistic impact of racist ideology... However, whereas the woman’s suffering derives from a loss of culture, the intergenerational impact of racism in Whitechapel is greatest in his guilt. His macabre metaphor of “blood on [his] conscience” because of his complicity indicates the perils of teaching compliance to the youth, which eventually haunts the elderly. Hence both texts demonstrate that racism impacts generationally through sustained violence, regardless of age. While the indigenous intergenerational pain due to racism is founded on a loss of culture and displacement, D’Aguiar warns that intergenerational suffering is exacerbated by one generation sowing the seeds of compliance and servitude, harming the whole community.

Likewise, those students who could employ close and insightful textual analysis, and apply this to their explanations and approach to the chosen topic, produced high-scoring responses, as seen in the following extract to Question 1, Pair 1.

...de Heer and Clarke both criticise the bias of Australian institutions and system, presenting the need for systemic equality to shake off the prejudice of the past. In Charlie’s Country, de Heer conveys systemic bias through the healthcare sector... Although not explicitly attempting to be racist, the doctor has harmed Charlie’s sense of belonging in modern Australian culture through his systemic ignorance. De Heer then presents a close shot of Charlie’s face, ensuring that David Gulpilil contorts his expression in confusion. This highlights to the audience Charlie’s dismay and discomfort at being seen as foreign in his home country... In The Hate Race, systemic failure is found in the education system. In Maxine’s grade 3 show and tell, upon stating that she is from England, Maxine’s teacher, Mrs Hird notes, “no, where are you really from?”, wrongfully stereotyping Maxine as being African due to her skin colour... Clarke uses this passage to highlight how the education system itself fosters racism... through old, colonial values which are used by Clarke as a symbol for old Australia. By imputing her outdated perceptions onto the young students, she is teaching them to be racist, carrying on past perceptions into modern culture.

This response clearly demonstrated a capacity to use these textual events and situations in a conceptually assured manner, which purposefully addressed the heart of the topic, ‘explor[ing] the need to challenge perceptions of the past’.

Overall, it is important that students consciously and deliberately base their comparison upon the full direction of the chosen topic, developing a controlled, reasoned and unified argument with which to resolve the topic. This must be centred around sustained comparison of both texts, through close analysis, which coherently argues a case with insight and assurance. There must be no tendency to deflect part of the unseen question being addressed. The expression used should facilitate a complexity of thought, without being pretentious, such that logical reasoning is continuously apparent. In their study of the paired texts, students should not only examine common ideas and issues, but also explore the ways in which each text examines, presents and reveals such elements.

Section C – Argument and persuasive language

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Average
%	0.5	0.5	2	6	15	24	24	17	8	3	0.7	5.6

Students addressed the Section C material with assurance, and there were many substantial answers written in response to the given material. They handled the transcript of the podcast, accompanied by two graphics, with reasonable confidence. The clarity of the material appealed to students, and there were very few who did not make some attempt at this section of the examination.

The main piece for analysis was the transcript of episode 32 of the *Hapsey Happenings* podcast series presented by lifelong Hapsey resident, Janelle Tanley. The straightforward nature of the material allowed students clear entry into the identification and analysis of argument and language. Nearly all students could identify Tanley's basic contention, and the connection between at least one graphic and her arguments.

There were levels of complexity built into the material that allowed students to analyse basic ideas about personal responsibility to the more complex political and economic considerations of environmental protection. Janelle Tanley presented herself as a host, a spokesperson and part of a local community, so there was considerable scope to examine how she used herself in the construction of her argument. She opened by relating to her audience on a personal basis – 'Let us consider ...', 'our wetlands', 'my friends and I' – and made clear appeals to them to protect the area. Her tone shift with '... we are the guardians of this area ...' opened up the parameters of the argument to the broader environmental concerns epitomised by the large photograph of the bird tackling the problems of human waste, and from here evolved into a rather emphatic discussion on commercial interests versus environmental concerns. High-scoring responses identified and examined the complexities, such as the distinction between questioning the proposal for the Hapsey Wetlands, as opposed to discrediting the motives of the Nature+Adventure Group.

Nearly all students showed sound comprehension of the material itself and were able to demonstrate their basic understanding of Tanley's arguments. Higher-scoring responses often started with controlled, contextual introductions that highlighted the complexities of her argument. The following is an example of a high-scoring response.

As a new proposal for the development of Hapsey Wetlands by Nature+Adventure Group emerges, renewed attention has been directed towards the conservation as opposed to the development of natural environments around the town. Weighing into the debate, podcaster and local resident, Janelle Tanley in a new episode of her podcast Hapsey Happenings adamantly contends that such invasive and destructive endeavours into the local ecosystem must be prevented. Adopting a conservative lens, Tanley seeks to garner the support of fellow environmentalists and community legislators, and also to dissuade commercial companies and their proponents from pursuing their project. In the cartoon and photograph accompanying the podcast transcript, a dichotomy is presented between the ideal present and the potential devastation that Tanley envisions.

Students chose many varied ways of structuring their responses. Some moved through the material paragraph by paragraph, which often resulted in excessively long and repetitious responses. Many tracked the development of the argument across three body paragraphs of analysis, and there were some high-scoring students who used Tanley's voice and change of tone to examine her argument. This process allowed for the easy recognition of how and why her language choices changed throughout the piece, and led to fluent integration of language and argument analysis.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response.

Transitioning from a self-assured tone “we know from experience” to one that is more ominous and foreboding “this will only be the start”, Tanley argues that the future repercussions of irresponsible development is unimaginable and devastating. Such a shift in tone highlights the more insidious damage that could result which may be entirely unfathomable from prior experience, overstating the impending doom to coax those in the audience who may initially be indifferent to become more aware and apprehensive. In short succession, the audience is bombarded with words and phrases such as “walkers”, “cyclists”, “carparks” and gift shops”, along with their association of heavy construction, compounded by the image of “digging machinery” “desecrating the home of fragile species”. Creating a notion of significant upheaval, Tanley urges the more conservative audience to be wary and develop a negative attitude towards companies like Nature+Adventure Cynically calling the Hapsy Wetlands “Hapsey Amusement Park”, Tanley insinuates that the traditional values of the community might be replaced with more superficial and unsophisticated ones associated with transformation of a natural landscape into a place for lowly entertainment. As such, she guides the local residents to vehemently oppose and detest this degradation of their home.

While it was quite appropriate to structure the analysis on the development of the argument, and move sequentially through the material, an ability to work across the material was another mark of higher-scoring responses. There were students who could identify the impact of references to ‘money-making ventures’ and ‘commercial ventures’ but also group these descriptions with accusations of a ‘charge for parking’ and the prospect of ‘Hapsey Wetlands Shopping Centre or the Hapsey Amusement Park’.

Many students identified and explained the workings of language such as ‘destruction’, ‘damage’ and ‘desecrate’. Astute responses explained the invasive nature of this language and then provided a more extended analysis, examining the ways in which Tanley increased alarm, steering listeners to feel a loss of control. Equally as good were the responses that juxtaposed these descriptions of ‘destruction’ against the stimulus of ‘the magnificence of this natural space’, ‘precious environment’ and ‘wonderful wetlands’.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response.

Portraying herself as a member of the ‘nature lovers’ who frequent the wetlands, Tanley exposes the extensive network of support around the effort of conservation, as well as stimulating a sense of solidarity presenting a united front. A juxtaposition is constructed between the ‘tranquil surroundings’ and ‘peace’ of the untouched wetlands, as opposed to the ‘threat of destruction’, eliciting aggressive, war-like images ... depicting locals as ‘guardians’, Tanley imbues them with the responsibility of safeguarding what is closest and most valuable to them, especially those who enjoy the outdoors as illustrated in the cartoon where figures of all ages and genders congregate in joy and release surrounded by the picturesque environments of nature. Skating, riding bikes, playing soccer ... seeking to resonate with those who have enjoyed such activities, presenting the prospect that all these cherished moments will be eradicated should commercial development be implemented.

The identification of particular language was generally done well. Students selected words and phrases and used quotation marks to indicate these selections, but they also needed to provide a context. Is the language describing the wetlands? Is it about the possible consequences of the proposal? Higher-scoring responses made it clear what the language was referring to and were able to group language appropriately. Terms such as ‘disguised’ and ‘claiming’ related to the motives of Nature+Adventure Group and had different intentions to predictions of ‘damage beyond repair’ and actions that ‘will take out an entire species’ that were ascribed to the commercial sector.

The photograph of the bird accompanying the transcript was consistently analysed satisfactorily by nearly all students. It was examined closely and relevant connections were made to the written text.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response.

Compounding this argument is an image presenting a waterbird trudging through a shallow pond with a scrap of plastic in its mouth. The composition of the image, with the bird implied as miniature

by its positioning next to fallen leaves, draws parallels to Tanley's claims that nature is 'delicate' to bolster sympathy and coax genuine care for the future of the wildlife in the wetlands by exploiting basic human tendencies towards care. Contrastingly, the dull grey colour of the plastic scrap held by the bird relates to Tanley's emphasis in her ubiquitous and foundational idea that humans 'erode' the environment and 'concrete over' nature, redirecting this remorse for the wildlife to outrage ... against Nature+Adventure Group's proposal ...

There were some differing interpretations of the banner that headed the transcript – some students saw the image of the community biking, playing with children and enjoying the outdoors together as an example of the lifestyle that was at the heart of the Hapsey community. This was the lifestyle threatened by the proposals of the Nature+Adventure Group. However, some students interpreted the social activity portrayed as excessive, the type of behaviour encouraged by the commercial groups that was to be avoided if the wetlands were to be protected. Assessors accepted both analyses of the image so long as the student gave clear explanations of how it connected to Janelle Tanley's language and argument, and why she chose to use it in this way.

In 2022 most students were less reliant on labelling language techniques, but there were other weaknesses:

- There was a tendency for students to write lengthy, descriptive introductions that were sometimes up to a page long. These added very little quality to the analysis, and the student was wasting valuable time that would have been better spent on examining the development of the argument.
- There were many unnecessary listings of the speaker's tone. Identification of Janelle Tanley's tone and tone shifts were often exaggerated and, at times, contradictory. Her tone was variously labelled as: outraged, desperate, virulent, realistic, pleading, emphatic, passive and vitriolic. Higher-scoring responses carefully considered descriptions of tone and provided an example from the material that creates the tone. Why did the speaker choose to do this? What is the intended impact on the audience?
- Some responses in Section C were excessively long due to a reliance on extraneous quoting. Some lengthy paragraphs were simply forms of summary and paraphrasing with dozens of single words and phrases in quotation marks making up the bulk of the work. Students may be under the misapprehension that they are analysing language when they do this; in reality, they are simply copying from the paper. Any quoted language should be accompanied by analysis. Otherwise, the quoting becomes part of summary.

As in the other two sections of the examination, there were no expected responses in Section C. Assessors were looking for the skills that allow students to demonstrate their understanding of how the argument develops and functions, and how language is used to persuade. Students could, and did, achieve full marks by selecting different parts of the material to analyse. There is never an expectation that everything in the article has to be identified and analysed.

Text selection and average scores

The following table shows the Section A texts selected by students in 2022 and the average Section A scores achieved by those students, shown as a percentage of the possible marks. The table also shows the average scores achieved by the same students for Sections B and C, again shown as a percentage of the possible marks for each of those sections.

Section A text	% of students	% Average Score Section A	% Average score Section B	% Average score Section C
<i>After Darkness</i>	4.0	52.2	50.4	51.7
<i>All the Light We Cannot See</i>	3.3	61.7	61.5	61.9
<i>Extinction</i>	3.0	48.0	52.1	52.5
<i>False Claims of Colonial Thieves</i>	1.7	50.4	51.5	52.2
<i>Flames</i>	1.2	56.2	57.2	54.9
<i>Go, Went, Gone</i>	0.5	60.1	60.7	59.0
<i>In Cold Blood</i>	2.5	55.5	57.6	57.2
<i>Like a House on Fire</i>	3.5	55.7	53.4	53.7
<i>Much Ado About Nothing</i>	8.1	58.3	63.2	61.1
<i>Nine Days</i>	8.2	48.9	53.3	52.5
<i>Persepolis: The Story of a Childhood</i>	1.1	59.3	59.2	56.8
<i>Pride and Prejudice</i>	3.4	63.0	63.5	61.1
<i>Rear Window</i>	24.2	54.1	53.9	54.9
<i>Runaway</i>	0.9	55.2	55.9	56.5
<i>Station Eleven</i>	14.9	57.0	56.3	55.8
<i>Stories We Tell</i>	0.3	53.5	47.3	49.4
<i>The Erratics</i>	1.0	49.0	54.7	55.9
<i>The Women of Troy</i>	11.5	58.6	57.4	56.8
<i>Things Fall Apart</i>	2.6	58.0	58.2	56.8
<i>William Wordsworth: Poems Selected by Seamus Heaney</i>	3.3	65.1	64.4	62.1
No text	0.9	0	24.0	36.2