VU PRESENTS THE FREE VCE LECTURE SERIES

ARTS, EDUCATION AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

VCE SUBJECT: ENGLISH
PRESENTER: David McLean B.A.(Hons.), Dip.Ed., M.Ed.Stds.

REVISION NOTES
*Assessment
*Language Analysis
*Context Writing
*Text Response

DATE: Saturday 24 September 2011, 10am – 1pm
Prepared by: David McLean

VCE ENGLISH

SUMMARY LECTURE

VICTORIA UNIVERSITY

LECTURER: Mr David McLean

David McLean has extensive experience with VCE English in all its forms; English/ESL, Literature and Language. He was the former Head of English at Mentone Grammar and has, at various times in his career, implemented the new VCE courses in all three fields.

David chaired the Heads of English in Independent Schools and has assessed VCE English GAT and exam scripts.

In his role as an author, David has written numerous texts for English and has developed print, digital and viewing resources for English classes. He is currently provided professional development sessions for teachers through Teacher Training Australia.

Most recently, David has published a novel – Finding Coaby. It addressed the topical concern of adolescent depression and was the focus of a presentation at last year's VATE conference. It also earned him an invitation to Melbourne's recent Emerging Writers' Festival.

Contents

ASSESSMENT

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 characterized 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

Be aware:

1. Knowledge is not just the story or content, it is how you interpret and the connections and contrasts you make.

2. Structure is the progression of the written response as well as the progression of ideas.

3. Language effectiveness is the choice of the appropriate word, the flow of the expression and correct sentence structure. Do you know where to place the commas and full stops?

LANGUAGE ANALYSIS

When you first approach the language analysis texts, skim through them looking for the following things:

1. Contention(s)

Definition: *A statement communicating the author's main point of view: what the writer or writers want you to agree with. The contention is the* **broadest** *possible argument, and should be present throughout the whole of the text. All of the arguments presented in the text will support the overall contention.*

Be aware: If there is more than one article there might be more than one main contention. This allows you to establish a contrast.
Look to determine if the contention in a single article is consistent.
Establish if the supporting graphics or headlines support or compete with the contention being put forward.

2. Supporting arguments

Definition: *Supporting arguments are the two or three main reasons used to justify the overall contention. These supporting points do not permeate the entire text, but are the main reasons given for the overall argument.*

Example: If the article is about allowing girls to play in the local football team, supporting arguments might be:

The girls (how they are depicted; brave or reckless and irresponsible)

The parents of the teenagers (how they are depicted - supportive)

The football club (how they are depicted – out of date or forward thinking)

Be aware: The friction between the points of view will generate the possibility of establishing who has the better argument and where it is most effective.

3. Writer's position

Definition: *You need to identify* who *the writer or writers are and* how *this influences their views in the debate. This involves their job and political orientation. It may also involve their race, gender, religion, sexuality etc, although you should be careful to refer to these characteristics only if the author makes it clear it has had an influence on the argument.*

Example: Devout Catholics would oppose legalizing abortion. Their faith is influencing their views. By way of contrast, a feminist might be expected to support a woman's right to choose. The orientation of these individuals is influencing the stance taken.

Be aware: Your task is not to say if the writer's point of view is correct or incorrect. You are there to establish how effectively the writer has communicated a point of view. Have the techniques employed been effective and appropriate given the topic and nature of the discussion.

4. Tone

Definition: Tone r*efers to the voice or attitude of the writer. When determining tone, look not at* **what** *is stated, but* **how** *it is stated. To identify the tone of a piece, think about how the piece made you feel as a reader and what impressions are generated about the author.*

Sample list of tone words (of course, there are plenty more!)

1. angry	27. desperate	53. enthusiastic
2. sarcastic	28. superficial	54. snooty
3. sweet	29. sad	55. dreamy
4. harsh	30. artificial	56. lighthearted
5. cheerful	31. authoritative	57. humble
6. pleasant	32. surprised	58. instructive
7. sharp	33. ironic	59. disinterested
8. disgusted	34. content	60. uninterested
9. haughty	35. hurt	61. cheery
10. soothing	36. confused	62. manipulative
11. melancholic	37. questioning	63. contradictory
12. depressed	38. inquisitive	64. aggravated
13. ecstatic	39. arrogant	65. serious
14. agitated	40. condescending	66. calm
15. sympathetic	41. coarse	67. proud
16. seductive	42. romantic	68. apathetic
17. hollow	43. upset	69. encouraging
18. humorous	44. paranoid	70. consoling
19. passive	45. pleading	71. friendly
20. persuasive	46. numb	72. loud
21. afraid	47. cynical	73. brash
22. tired	48. facetious	74. apologetic
23. happy	49. hating	75. appreciative
24. disappointed	50. nervous	76. joyful
25. dejected	51. loving	77. miserable
26. excited	52. scornful	78. Vibrant

Examples:

a) Outraged, angry: This is the most ridiculous proposal I have ever heard! Why should my tax-payer dollars go towards supporting this scheme?

b)Sarcastic: I'm *sure* that you didn't mean to hurt him, after all, you *did* hit him over the head with a bottle while he wasn't looking. Everyone can see how that would be deemed an accident.

c)Hurt, surprised, dejected: How could you even think I would suggest that? You know I love the Richmond Football Team. I would never ridicule their performance..

Be aware: Establishing the tone provides the general umbrella under which ideas can be grouped. It's a way of structuring your response. A single writer may transition between several tones or we can contrast the different tones of multiple writers.

5. Audience

Definition: *The intended audience of a text is the people the author is targeting. Think about who the author is trying to reach with their message. To identify the audience, think about:*

-Whether anyone is being directly targeted: For instance, is the text written or presented to a particular person or persons? Does the text appear in a publication for a specific group of people (such as retirees, movie goers, or fashion devotees)?

- The content: Who is influenced by the content of the article? Whose interests are represented, or whose opinion does the author seek to challenge?

-The tone and techniques used: Who would react to the tone? Are the techniques markers of a particular group – "gnarly dude"? What sort of people would respond to them? Who would be alienated?

Be aware: The audience may well determine the approach and style taken by the writer/speaker. A large public audience will require different techniques and approaches to an individual reading a paper over a morning cup of coffee.

Part 2: Persuasive Techniques

The next step is to think about the persuasive techniques that the authors have used to support their contentions. There are three broad types of persuasive techniques that you should be aware of; logos, pathos, ethos.

Be aware: Do not fall into the trap of focusing only on techniques you can name. If something feels persuasive to you, this is because it *is* persuasive, whether it has a "name" or not.

Logos – 'Logic or Reason'

Definition: *Logos (Greek for "word") is an appeal based on logic or reason. It refers to the internal consistency of a message the clarity of the claim, the logic of its reasons and the effectiveness of its supporting evidence.*

SAMPLE

The following discussion between Constable O'Laughlin, Anna Ferral of the Environment Protection Society and the Arts Centre's Hugh Riddington-Smythe was aired on 3AW after members of LEO, Liberation Of Environment group, scaled the tower of the arts centre this morning and unfurled banners in an attempt to highlight the current government's appalling record on environmental protection.

Host: And how does the police force feel about the actions of LEO? Was there any harm caused by their actions?

Constable: Whenever someone breaks the law there is some harm done. The perpetrators scaled the tower at approximately 5.30 this morning. I had to deploy my constables to redirect traffic as the spectacle caused traffic chaos and thereby endangered the public. We could not retrieve the perpetrators for fear of risking the lives of those on duty. When you speak of harm, you need to define it in terms of potential community danger and our need to minimize the chances of harm occurring.

Anna: Really constable, you're being far too serious. Think what a magnificent act this was. Like lions in the night, the LEO group stalked upon their prey and mauled the sitting government in the week before the election. You must applaud their daring escapade as they have highlighted one of the most overlooked aspects and issues in our society today – the environment.

Constable: Don't be ridiculous. We have a violation of property, potential traffic chaos and others will have to go up there and repair all the damage that has been made all the riskier by those vandals disabling all the backup security so that no one can bring them down. The RACV data on these sorts of incidents reveal there is a 20% increase in traffic congestion and a 5% increase in traffic accidents that can be attributed directly to protests like this.

Hugh: I'm trying to look at the positives. If the sign had been better painted we could have excused the cost of repairing damage as an offset against a performance work of art – the unfurling of the piece, and it has brought attention to the Arts Centre but I'm afraid the board of trustees will not look at it in that light. There is a definite cost involved here to the center.

Anna: People seem to ignore the damage to the environment; the seals throttled by getting their necks caught in discarded plastic can holders, the chipping of ancient timbers and clear felling of forests. And what has this government done about it? They've extended the licenses of some of the major criminal companies.

Host: Well, I'm afraid that's all we have time for now. Obviously this issue will continue to reverberate in the community with action pending in the courts. 3AW will keep you informed.

Analysis:-

Cause and effect   I had to deploy my constables to redirect traffic as the spectacle caused traffic chaos and thereby endangered the public. We could not retrieve the perpetrators for fear of risking the lives of those on duty.

Support assertions with reputable data   The RACV data on these sorts of incidents reveal there is a 20% increase in traffic congestion and a 5% increase in traffic accidents that can be attributed directly to protests like this.

Appeal to an authority   The RACV data . . .

Appeal to reason   There is a definite cost involved here to the center.

Formulaic summation   Well, I'm afraid that's all we have time for now. Obviously this issue will continue to reverberate in the community with action pending in the courts. 3AW will keep you informed.

"Logos" techniques

Expert opinion

Expert opinion is when highly-regarded academics or organizations considered experts on an issue give their opinion on it. Eg: According to Professor John Stapleton of Melville University, drivers who speed are more likely to be killed.

Research

Eg: According to the Transport Board, 13 862 people were caught speeding last year, 3576 more than in the previous year. Therefore, despite the operation of speed cameras, speeding is increasing

Eg: A recent study conducted by the University of Shacksville has confirmed that people who drink too much alcohol have a higher risk of developing liver disease.

Anecdotes

A short, personal story told by an everyday person. Anecdotal evidence connects with people's experiences and feelings and can be more interesting to readers, capturing their attention and leaving them receptive to the authors,, arguments. Personalized, first-hand experience can also have a strong emotional impact on readers, arousing their sympathy.

Eg: Two large, long-haired dogs were allowed to roam the streets on Friday afternoon. They came into our yard and killed our pet rabbits. This is why dog owners should obey their local council's rules.

Reputable sources

If statistics are given, are the sources cited? The Australian Bureau of Statistics, for instance, is reputable because it is independent and has a reputation for gathering statistics in a reliable way. If, however, a survey is conducted by a pharmaceutical company suggests that a particular drug should be marketed Australia wide as a cure for a particular disease, we can question the validity of this source and raise the possibility of it being biased

Appeals to common sense and rationality:

Does what the author is saying make sense? Is it a sensible solution to a complex or emotive problem?

Cause and effect statements and logical conclusions:

Does the author show a clear link between the cause of a problem and the solution he or she is proposing?

Recognition of opposing viewpoints

Does the author acknowledge alternative views and their merits? These alternatives can be dismissed, but this shouldn't be done off-hand or for no reason – the author should present clear, cogent arguments to rebut any opposing viewpoints.

Pathos – 'Emotion'

Definition: *Pathos (Greek for "suffering" or "experience") is an appeal based on emotion (often found in advertisements, for example.) Language choice affects the audience's emotional (as opposed to "logical" or "reason-based") response. An appeal to pathos*
causes an audience not just to respond emotionally but to identify with the writer's point of view.

Example:-

Peter Wilson struggles to drag himself out of bed each day. If he manages to rise before noon he will consume a cocktail of medication for breakfast and then spend the rest of the day sitting in front of the television. He will stare at the screen until it's time to go back to bed. This is his life ever since the car crash that crippled his once muscular frame and that took the joy from life.

Peter's wife, Melissa, was killed by a drunk driver almost four years ago. "Every day's a living hell," he says. "I can't go anywhere or do anything without thinking about Melissa. In the and, I just stopped leaving the house."

The monster responsible for Melissa's death is now living in the lap of luxury. He was sentenced to three years at the new Wilmott Centre, a minimum security "rehabilitation facility" based on human rights principles. Apparently, human rights entails living in self contained cottages, full access to education, sport and entertainment facilities, even your own TV. What happened to the days when criminals were treated like the scum they are? What price a life? Now, kill a young woman in the prime of her life, get a slap on the wrist and, to add insult to injury, grant them a lifestyle fit for a king!

"It makes my life unbearable, knowing he's living it up in Wilmott. He's been rewarded for taking my wife's life," Peter says.

Imagery (Metaphors & Similes)	cocktail of medication, the monster
First names	Peter, Melissa – humanizes them as opposed to 'the monster'
Peter is characterized as caring and suffering – "I can't go anywhere without thinking about Melissa"	
Contrast	Peter's 'hell' as opposed to 'lap of luxury'
Quotation marks	"rehabilitation centre" suggests it is the opposite
Exaggeration	education, TV, sport, entertainment = lack of accountability
Rhetorical question	What happened . . .? What price . . .? emphasizes the disparity
The driver	a monster, drunk and no name
Anecdoate	everyone has to get out of bed – we can all identify with this.
Appeal	appeal for justice in the rhetorical questions.

Pathos techniques

1. Connotations

Definition: *A connotation is the emotional meaning associated with the word. Connotations can be historical, biblical or current social references. For example:*

If a man is killed we imagine that he has died.

If a man is 'slaughtered', we understand that he was violently and brutally killed.

If a man is 'euthanised ', then we understand his life has been compassionately and gently ended. Thus the connotations or 'suggestions ' behind each word differ.

Effect: Connotations have the effect of positioning the reader to feel a certain way about a topic. Readers usually respond to them on an emotional level because of the images they tap into when they hear a particular word or phrase.

Attacks/praise is also a very common technique – where the writer:

- Denigrates or humiliates another
- Discredits opponents
- Attacks a person or their credibility, rather than an idea
- Discredits another idea

2. The sound of language

a) **Alliteration:** Alliteration is the repetition of a sound, often at the beginning of a word, that plays on the same constant or syllable. For alliteration to occur, a sound must be repeated several times in a short space e.g. *"Dirty deeds done dirt cheap!"* <u>Be aware of alliteration.</u> Only make note of alliteration that has a purpose i.e. supports an argument.

b) **Repetition :** Repetition is the repeating of words and phrases throughout a text. Repetition doesn't necessarily make a statement true but it makes sure that a reader remembers the statement.

c) **Colloquial language and idioms:** Colloquial language, or slang, is language that is used in every day conversation. *It is persuasive because it is friendly and invites the audience to see the writer as being "one of us", someone who is on the same wavelength. There appears to be no pretension about someone who uses such language, making their message more palatable to readers, e.g. "G'day mate!"*

d) **Clichés:** Clichés are overused expressions, e.g. "*There's a time and a place for everything."* Clichés can be used because they often carry an array of connotations. They can also help readers to feel familiar with the material presented and thus attract their attention. On the other hand, however, the overuse of clichés in intellectual writing can detract from the quality of the writing

3. Generalizations

Definition: *A generalization is a phrase that is said to be true for* all *because it is true for* some. *Generalizations are also known as stereotypes* e.g. *"All teenagers are fat and lazy. "*

Effect: They can be persuasive because they appeal to our general sense of what seems true and they also appeal to social stereotypes and racial prejudices which are familiar. This familiarity can lull the reader into

accepting the claim

4. Hyperbole or exaggeration

Definition: *Hyperbole is the use of language to denigrate an opposition to make them appear ridiculous, e.g. "Those who support this ridiculous idea would have us believe that it will dramatically improve the quality of modern living. Of course it will! And it will probably cure cancer, eradicate pollution, improve traffic flow and make the kids go to bed when we tell them!"*

They may also emphasize the author's point e.g. if someone were to describe the damage caused by a storm as "pretty bad", the reader won't be likely to think much of it. However, if they were to describe the aftermath as a storm as being "like a warzone" the effect is to emphasize the severity of the situation (even if the only damage was a few broken windows).

5. Inclusive language

Definition: Inclusive language refers to the use of pronouns such as "you and me", "we" and "our". Through these words, the writer seeks to identify with the readers.

Effect: The writer is identifying as one of us, implying that we are equally affected by the issue and that he or she speaks for our concerns. For instance, *"people like you and me don't want to see this happen. We know how socially destructive it will be, and we don't want our kids growing up in that sort of society."*

6. Rhetorical questions

Definition: A rhetorical question is a question posed for persuasive effect without the expectation of a reply, e.g. "*How much longer must we suffer in silence?*"

Effect: The effect of a rhetorical question is to encourage the reader to think about what the (often obvious) answer to the question must be. Make sure you are very specific with your explanation of the effect, however: *what* is the obvious answer? *What* does the author want you to think and *how* does the question he or she posed lead to that conclusion?

7. Appeals to <u>emotion</u> and to <u>values</u>

Definition: *Writers often appeal to values that they think that the reader will hold.*

Here is a list of appeals to values:

a) **Family values**: Appeals to family values evoke ideas of belonging, security, caring/nurturing, togetherness, safety, love and comfort.
b) **Justice/fairness**: An appeal to a sense of justice or fairness is often used when the rights of two opposing sides come into conflict, especially when one side appears to be being treated unfairly
c) **Modernity**: Advertisers tend to use this type of appeal most often they urge consumers to

buy the latest in technology or fashion, and do so by hinting that those who do not consume the latest products are old-fashioned and outdated.

d) **Generosity:** An appeal to generosity makes the reader feel like they would be acting greedily or selfishly in their own interests, rather than the greater good, if they do not agree with a certain proposition.

e) **Humanitarianism:** Appeals to humanitarianism play on people's desire to promote general human welfare it evokes notions of kindness, sympathy and benevolence.

f) **Hip pocket nerve (money) and self interest**: Appeals to self interest are designed to make the reader feel that something they personally value is being threatened, or that they will be better off as a result of a particular proposal.

g) **Belonging:** An appeal to belonging makes the reader feel as though they will be excluded if they do not agree with a certain proposition.

h) **Patriotism**: The term "un-Australian" is an example of an appeal to patriotism. References to the national interest, Australia's interest in the world and its economic well being, international reputation, and safety, and the respect that other nations feel for it are examples of appeals to patriotism

i) **Tradition:** An appeal to tradition suggests that because "we've always done it like this " or "our ancestors fought for this", an idea is inherently good. Going against it would mean going against everything we (as a culture, a nation etc) stand for.

Here is a short list of appeals to emotion:

a) **Nostalgia:** Nostalgia is the feeling one gets when they look back on the past fondly. Often, appeals to nostalgia are used to justify a return to older, simpler times.

b) **Guilt**: Guilt is a powerful emotion and writers who make their audience feel guilty about an issue (and, in particular, about not acting upon an issue) can be very persuasive

c) **Sympathy/empathy:** Encouraging people to feel sympathy for someone (sorry for them) or empathy (put themselves in another's shoes)

d) **Fear**: Appeals to fear may rely on fear of physical violence or death; of loss of security, family, stability, money, safety; of change; of a specified negative event.

e) **Compassion**: A description of the plight of the underprivileged is designed to appeal to the reader's sense of compassion it aims to make them feel outraged, sorry, or upset. Whatever the emotion elicited, the aim is to cause the reader to feel like they want to take some action in response to the situation

Effect: *Once you have identified the emotional appeal, you should be able to identify its effect, as the author is trying to position you to feel a particular way about their topic.*

Example (appeal to humanitarianism): Philip Craig positions the reader to feel sorry for the people affected by the tsunami and, more importantly, encourages them to feel altruistic, when he describes the Samoans as "poor, downtrodden people who continue to suffer due to the lack of Western aid."

Ethos – 'Anecdotal/Expert Opinion'

Definition: *Ethos (Greek for "character") or an ethical appeal means convincing*

based on the character of the author. We tend to believe those people we respect not only those who are an authority on the subject, but also those who are likeable and worthy of our respect.

Example:

I am a refugee rights advocate with over 20 years experience. My efforts have been decried as everything from foolish to disgusting to un-Australian. However, since Australians are at heart sincere, honest people, I know that you can understand the principles of basic human rights that everyone should have. I, like every other Australian, am a woman concerned about injustice.

Ever since my family resettled here many, many years ago, I have known Australia is a just and reasonable country. My family came here to escape the war in their own country, and was given sanctuary by a kind and generous population. So, when I was old enough to make a difference, I decided to focus my energies towards helping some of the most disenfranchised of our population: refugees.

I am not foolish, nor un-Australian. I am deeply committed to the principles upon which Australia stands proud: justice, equality, a fair go for all. This is why I support the extension of basic human rights to all refugees, and that is why I have serious questions about the current political attitude of stopping the boats.

Personal credibility	authority as a spokesperson – 20 years experience, a refugee
Praise of audience	sincere, honest, generous, kind, proud, just
Personal concerns	making a difference
Australian	what is being Australian? Are you just?
Australia's future direction	serious questions

"Ethos" techniques

Ethical appeals are used to establish the writer as fair, open- minded, honest, and knowledgeable about the subject matter. The writer creates a sense of him or herself as trustworthy and credible. *When used correctly, the writer is seen as...*

> Well-informed about the topic
> Confident in his or her position
> Sincere, honest, respectable and trustworthy
> Understanding of the reader's concerns and possible objections
> On the reader's side
> Reasonable and rational
> Humane and considerate

When used incorrectly, the writer can be viewed as...

- •Unfair or dishonest
- •Distorting or misrepresenting information (biased)
- • Insulting or dismissive of other viewpoints

Part 3: Visuals

The second 'text' could well be a visual and needs to be seen in conjunction with the written text.

Pictures

How does this image support the author's contention?

Cartoons are sometimes difficult to analyse, as they present a contention just as an editorial or opinion piece would. Other images, such as pictures or graphics accompanying an opinion piece, are easier to analyse as they do not have a contention per-se rather, they merely support the contention of the author. You can still refer to the same things as you do for a cartoon. However, not all of these things will be relevant, and your analysis will be much shorter.

Take a look at the following examples:
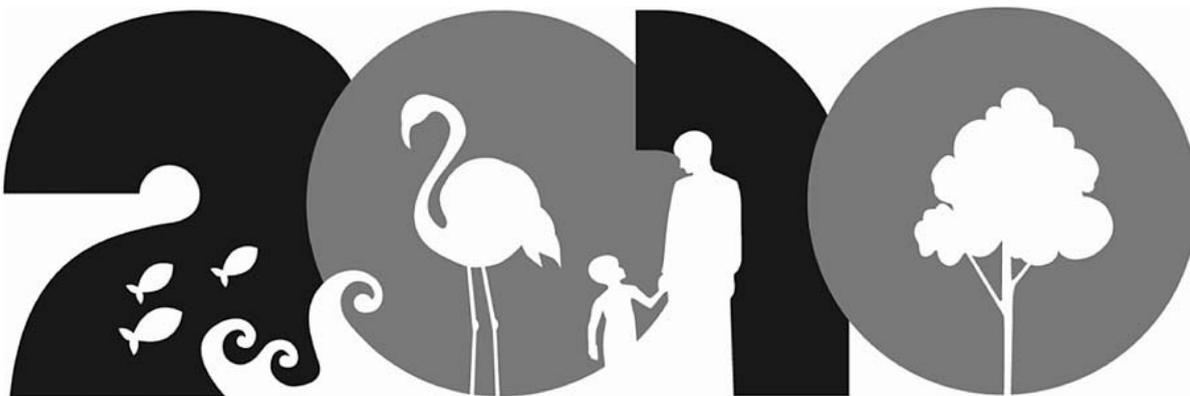
1. **What can you see in the image?**
2. **What persuasive techniques are used?**
3. **How does the image support the author's contention?**

A graphic/ conference logo/ integration of people with nature/ flora and fauna/ date/ adult and child.

1. What is suggested here?
2. What is the tone?
3. How does it fit the overall tone?

Think about other types of visuals

The formatting:-
       dot points, letter, report
The framing:-
       computer blog

Part 4: Effect

Once you have identified any persuasive techniques used, you should think about the effect of the techniques – how do they persuade the reader?

NOTE: Explaining the effect should be the bulk of your analysis.

1. Language (WHAT)

Throughout your body paragraphs, you will need language sentences to introduce the quote that you will be examining. These sentences will:

Include a quote that you think is persuasive from the text (e.g. "stringed puppets") Use a verb such as: describes, depicts, purports, debunks, illustrates, suggests, labels
Use a tone word before the verb to add more detail to your analysis (e.g. *comically*)

Example: Columnist Phillip Craig comically labels the politicians as "stringed puppets."

2. Intended Effect (WHY AND HOW)

Throughout your body paragraphs, you will need an intended effect sentence/s AFTER your language sentence. These sentences will:

Include consideration of both the wider and narrow intended effects:-

Narrow: *How does this quote make the reader feel about the thing being described?*

Wider: *How does this quote position the reader to feel about the issue generally?*

Be specific! Do not say, "this technique makes the reader think about whether they agree with the author or not", or, "this technique persuades the reader to agree with the author."

Example 1: "stringed puppets"

This label is designed to make the reader see the politicians as controlled and unthinking (narrow), thus positioning the reader to condemn the politicians actions as merely the opinion of the party

machine. (wider).

Example 2: "The fruit bats have taken over and destroyed our treasured botanical gardens"

The writer depicts the fruit bats as far-from-harmless, vindictive and violent creatures which are deliberately destroying the natural beauty of the state's prized and adored Botanical gardens (narrow). The phrase "taken over" suggests a collaborated, militant and sinister usurpation of the gardens which are, in turn, suggested to be unsuspecting, innocent and defenceless (narrow). When followed by the word "destroyed" an image is created of a torn battle-ground of irreplaceable and irretrievable beauty and value (narrow). The word "treasured" appeals to our sense of community and culture. It suggests that the gardens possess a priceless value and are a source of community spirit that transcends time and transcends and consequently, must be protected at all costs (wider).

3. **Using Quotations**

Generally keep quotations short and focus on key words that capture the point. Eliminate unnecessary sections or words by replacing them with ellipsis dots.

Example: About her performance, a critic once said, "her Medea was . . . without feeling and form."

Part 5: Structure

Now you're ready to write. In the exam, students will be required to analyze the use of language in unseen persuasive text/s.

Note: The last three exams have had a single text passage. There could be more than one.

Introduction

The introduction introduces the persuasive piece you are analyzing and gives a brief overview on what you will be focusing on in your essay.
- Introduce the issue: What is the issue? How was it sparked? What has happened? Be specific as to who, what, where and when in regards to the issue (1-2 sentences)

A speaker Chris Lee at the 2010 international Biodiversity Conference speaks with conviction to his audience, attendees involved in the area of nature conservation, contending that action must be taken to safeguard the variety of life, or, biodiversity. At times an accusatory and disapproving tone is adopted, however alternates with an alarmist tone, the two complementing each other and utilised to successfully persuade the speaker's powerful and influential audience to take action to preserve biodiversity. The use of a visual aid in the form of a slide presentation assists the speaker, presenting the argument through a different medium.

Introduce the text's title and author. Chris Lee/speaker
Identify the publication, date and text type   Biodiversity Conference/2010
Restate the author's contention in your own words.   Action must be taken
Identify the writer's tone.   Disapproving, alarmist, accusatory

List the themes (body paragraph headings) you will be exploring.
Form   speech/visual aids

Body paragraphs

Each body paragraph should deal with a different IDEA or GROUP that you identified. Completely deal with one text, then use a connective word (in contrast, similarly etc) and deal with the second text. The body paragraphs should be structured according to **TEEL.**

Topic sentence: Re-introduce the author, tone word and the first argument you will be examining. Rephrase the sentence that you used in your introduction

> *Lee begins by introducing his contention, an issue of 'vital significance.'*

Evidence and explanation: State what the *language* used was using a <u>language sentence,</u> then explain the narrow and broad effect using an<u> intended effect sentence. </u>Repeat this pattern until you have analysed all the relevant language.

This alarmist tone is further continued, Lee speaking of what has been lost in the past tense, implying that the problem is already here, and the effects are evident. 'Sadly', hundreds of species are 'already extinct' the speaker taking on a more nostalgic tone full of longing for what has been lost.

Linking sentence: Your final sentence should sum up the overall effect. How is the reader left feeling about the idea or group presented?

The short, blunt statement, 'It is too late for them,' the extinct species, once again raises alarm in the audience members, . . .

An appeal to social responsibility adds to Lee's persuasive power.

Conclusion

Your conclusion should include an assessment of the relative merits of the piece/s. The effectiveness of the text/s be they written or visual. You could make a comparison between the visual and written or comment on the appropriateness of the progression of the piece.
End with an overall statement that sums up the contrast between the authors in terms of their style and contention. Have they been effective?

A comparison from last year
Introduction

Average response
In 2010, a conference was held introducing International Biodiversity year, focusing on the needs of biodiversity in the world today. Through this presentation, the writer uses many language uses to get their point across to the audience. An informative and serious tone is used throughout the presentation to help have an effect on readers.

Complex response
A speaker Chris Lee at the 2010 international Biodiversity Conference speaks with conviction to his audience, attendees involved in the area of nature conservation, contending that action must be taken to safeguard the variety of life, or, biodiversity. At times an accusatory and disapproving tone is adopted, however alternates with an alarmist tone, the two complementing each other and utilised to successfully persuade the speaker's powerful and influential audience to take action to preserve biodiversity. The use of a visual aid in the form of a slide presentation assists the speaker, presenting the argument through a different medium.

Body Paragraph

Average paragraph
The tone of the writer is given in the first few words of their speech. By introducing the speech with 'ladies and gentlemen'. This gives a serious and professional tone to readers. This serious and professional tone is used consistently throughout the speech, which confirms and reassures readers of the seriousness of the topic, 'vital significance to our world'. By using the words 'vital significance' tells readers that this speech is important. Giving facts and figures also tells readers the seriousness of the matter as when given facts, they can really believe what is being said is true, instead of just listening to and opinion, '38% are today threatened and 804 already extinct'. By finishing this figure with 'it is too late for them' tells readers that something should have been done before now, but because nothing was done, and the species could not help themselves, it is too late.'

Average Conclusion
Through the many uses of language, tone and effectiveness on the reader, the writer successfully convinces the audience of the seriousness and the desperate need of action on the issue of biodiversity today.

Complex conclusion
The speech uses a range of different tones to appeal to the different emotions of the conference audience. The addition of visuals allows the audience to 'see' the argument Lee is presenting, and each slide complements his words. In doing so, the audience is able to be persuaded of Lee's conviction that the safeguarding of biodiversity is vital, and also convinces the conference attendees to take action.

Examiners' Report

The unseen material was based on a presentation given in Nagoya at the International Biodiversity Conference 2010.

Arguments
Most students showed good comprehension of the material and were able to understand its intention.

The more successful responses included insightful and sophisticated analysis. Weaker responses showed an understanding of the task but tended to be generalized and lacked depth.

Some responses were just simple summaries or lists of the techniques used, with little development. These pieces did not score well as they did not fulfill the task.

Audience
The context of any piece of writing is crucial to understanding how language is being used.

Thoughtful responses understood that the audience consisted of participants in the conference and that

they had come from a number of different countries around the world.

Context
An important feature of the 'Background information' given on the examination was the clearly nominated purpose of the conference, and important insights were offered that underpinned everything Chris Lee opined. Students who did not understand and articulate the basis of the material found it more difficult to contextualize their analysis. The more astute responses were aware of the nature of a presentation that was about reviewing progress already made and looking forward with plans for biodiversity.

Visuals
Many students treated images separately from text, and only the very good responses drew the visual into analysis of the written material. It is important that the connection between the passage and visuals is understood and explored. In this case the visuals were the opening and closing slides to the presentation and the context was important in analyzing how these slides contributed to the persuasiveness of the presentation.

Some critical advice

- Work on analysis throughout the year.
- Use a wide range of persuasive texts.
- Focus on the language.
- Avoid technique identification and explore how language is being used to persuade.
- Focus on the tone – why it is being used and how it may change throughout a piece.
- Explore how a visual adds to the persuasiveness of a piece.
- Work on incorporating visuals fluently into the response.

<u>CONTEXT WRITING</u>

Part 1: The Contexts

You will have studied at least two texts for your context, and you should start by thinking how the ideas raised in those texts relate to the context itself. You should also start thinking outside your texts: there are plenty of relevant examples to be found in newspapers, on television and radio, in movies and books and in your everyday lives.

WARNING: If you intend to write on a film as part of your single study text, do not use a film in your Context.

Whose reality?

Whose reality, as a context, encompasses ideas such as reality truth and perception. It asks you to question what reality is and whether there can ever be an 'objective reality' or an 'absolute truth'. Many of the texts you will have read raise the idea of reality being 'subjective' – that is, what is real for a person depends on a variety of factors, including life experiences, memories, relationships, cultural, social and religious background and values. There is never only one version of reality – it differs from person to person, as implied in the title. The context is not asking you which reality is 'correct'; it is asking you to look beyond and consider which factors influence perceptions of reality.

The question 'Whose reality?' not only raises questions of *actual* reality, but also fantasy. It asks you to question what it takes for a person to keep believing that their version of reality is accurate, even though other people question or deny it, and it asks what sort of person, and what life experiences (particularly those related to emotional trauma or even mental breakdown) are needed for a person to choose fantasy over reality.

Whose reality also encourages thought about the nature of memory, and its subjectivity. Memoirs such as the *Shark Net,* for instance, invite you to think about the impact of the lapse of time on the nature of reality – can we ever look back and remember the past exactly as it was, or do our perceptions change as we change, as we experience life and alter our values?

What types of reality are depicted in the texts you have chosen?
Do these realities come into conflict?
What is the nature of that conflict – subjective/objective view?
What causes the difference of opinion? Perception, memory, mental illness, cultural upbringing,

values.

Real Life References

- Fundamentalist belief of religious groups.
    - Right wing Christian
    - Muslim traditionalists
    - Hasidic Jews

- Political Activists
    - Carbon tax
    - National parks
    - State funding
    - National curriculum

- Isolates
    - Lone gunmen
    - Schizophrenia
    - Depression
    - Aspbergers

Encountering Conflict

Encountering Conflict, as a context, asks you to question the types, causes and consequences of conflict. There are many different types of conflict, ranging from:

1. **Internal conflict:** When a person is confronted with a difficult choice to make. It is a mental or emotional struggle that occurs within a character's mind.
2. **Conflict of conscience:** When a person struggles internally either because they have done something they feel is wrong, or are being asked to overcome their conscience and do something that they feel is wrong
3. **Cultural conflict:** When people from different cultural backgrounds disagree, find it difficult to live with one another or even fight because of their inability to understand one another (either literally, in terms of language, or because of different beliefs, traditions and cultural practices)
4. **Interpersonal conflict:** When two or more people disagree or fight
5. **Physical conflict:** When there is a conflict that leads to physical violence
6. **Familial conflict:** When there is conflict between people from the same family
7. **Generational conflict:** When there is conflict between people from different generations (this often overlaps with familial conflict)
8. **Class conflict:** When there is conflict between people of different social classes
9. **International conflict:** Conflict between countries
10. **National conflict:** Conflict *within* countries, such as different ethnic groups
11. **Local community** or neighbourhood conflict

Encountering Conflict also asks you to think about how conflict arises. What are the causes of a particular conflict, or conflict in general? The causes of conflict may range from ignorance and

prejudice, to self interest and fear, to the struggle for power, justice or truth. One might even argue that conflict is an essential or inevitable part of human life.

Finally, Encountering Conflict asks you to think about the consequences of conflict. You might like to think about how individuals, or a society as a whole, respond and react to conflict. The way an individual or a community responds to conflict reveals a lot about them, especially their strengths and their weaknesses. You might also like to think about the lasting consequences of conflict for individuals, families and communities. Conflicts rarely end once the war is over, or the fight has been won. There are winners and losers in every conflict, who remain affected long after the conflict is over. The consequences may range from trauma and physical and emotional pain to more positive outcomes, such as change, opportunity and growth. One thing is certain: people are changed by experiences of conflict.

Real life references

1. Truth and reconciliation commissions: A commission tasked with discovering and revealing past wrongdoing by a government in the hope of resolving conflict left over from the past, e.g. in South Africa after apartheid ended. The purpose of the commissions is not punishment or revenge, but rather to get to the truth of the events that occurred, apportion responsibility and move forward together as a community (often aiming to re-integrate perpetrators into the community)
2. Reconciliation for the Stolen Generations
3. War protests: The division in countries participating in unpopular wars, such as the Vietnam war or the most recent war in Iraq
4. Wars and conflicts that have stemmed from prejudice: Apartheid in South Africa, the conflict in Sudan and the war in Sri Lanka are just some examples
5. Any situation in which individuals have to take sides
6. Cold War witch hunts (of which *the Crucible* is symbolic): Refers to the heightened fears of communism in 1950s America, which led to the creation of the House of Un-American Activities Committee's hysterical rooting out of suspected communists during this time, including the play's author Arthur Miller.
7. Response of victims and people affected by September 11 bombings

Exploring Issues of Identity and Belonging

Exploring Issues of Identity and Belonging, as a context, asks you to think about the nature of belonging and the ways in which it impacts and influences identity. A core proposition is that belonging to groups is essential to survival. In many of the texts you have studied, this idea is explored the impulse to belong, the social pressures to belong, the feelings of alienation and isolation that result from a lack of belonging and the consequences of seeking group membership on one's identity. The flip side is also explored the ways in which people reject the norms of society, and thus devalue the importance of belonging, largely in an effort to control or determine their own sense of identity.

Identity is the other core concept of this context. The texts you have studied look at the ways in which identity is created, changes (or stays the same) and affects an individual. Of particular importance is the role of relationships in the creation of identity (family, community, culture and tradition); in this sense, identity and belonging are intertwined.

Real life references

1. Body image and cosmetic surgery
2. Hazing rituals in the United States: Hazing is a term used to describe various ritual and other activities involving harassment, abuse or humiliation used as a way of initiating a person into a group. An equivalent in Australia might be workplace bullying, in which new employees are expected to submit to humiliating bullying in order to gain acceptance to the group
3. Discrimination and racism
4. Totalitarian regimes which belonging, cutting out all difference, dissent or independent thought in favour of ensuring the unity of the state/nation etc
5. The Amish and similar groups (even extending to cults)
6. Various groups that people join in order to find community and belonging, and the expectations placed upon members (especially in terms of giving up part of yourself)–clubs, sports teams, political groups, support groups, families, etc.
7. Countercultures –groups that reject mainstream society (from the sixties and seventies counterculture, which embraced social issues like civil, women's and gay rights, to beatniks, hippies and punks, to more modern forms of counterculture which range from rejecting an increasingly technological lifestyle to embracing it wholeheartedly.)
8. White Australia Policy (Australia), segregation (USA), apartheid (South Africa)
9. National identity–what does it mean to be Australian? What does it mean to be unAustralian? What are the consequences of adopting or being assigned either label?
10. Nature vs Nurture debate –how is identity created?

The Imaginative Landscape

Representations of landscape within texts – that is, the imaginative landscape – are not so different from our own lived experiences of landscape, in that both are highly symbolic and offer rich material for analysis and understanding. Obviously the setting of a narrative or any other form of imaginative writing is significant in a range of ways. While students are usually at ease in describing the world of which they are reading, they tend to be less confident in speculative or exploratory discussion about symbolic or metaphoric aspects of that world.

The relationships between setting and the interior world of a character, or between setting and the ideas central to a piece of writing, are often complex: how might the physical landscape in writing mirror or parallel or echo the interior landscape of the character/s? How might it illuminate behaviour? How might it convey a sense of feeling? These questions require a more complex understanding of language, and a more analytical approach. In thinking about them, and talking about them with others, students can gain insight into their own ways of seeing their world, and in this way, will be better equipped to represent their own experience meaningfully in writing. The four texts in this Context are chosen to help us to think about the way that writers and readers engage in this idea of landscape.

1. Are we looking at a natural world or something that is totally imaginary?
2. Is there any association between the world of the author and the world of the reader?
3. Has the landscape been constructed to illicit a particular response or see a situation or an issue in a particular way?
4. Do the characters work within the landscape or against it?

5. How does setting illustrate the world of the character? Is there an emotional connection?
6. Is the landscape serving as a metaphor for something larger? It might be a metaphor or an abstract representation.
7. What feelings are associated with that particular landscape?
8. Look at the landscape in detail; the weather, the topography, the inhabitants. What are they adding to the reader's understanding?
9. Is there a divergence or similarity between the dream landscape and the real life landscape?
10. Is the landscape one from childhood to which one escapes?
11. Has the landscape altered over time?
12. What do images of the past and present landscape tell us about the changes that have occurred?
13. How do landscapes change over time and what does this tell us about culture?
14. What is our psychological relationship to particular landscapes?
15. Is the landscape welcoming or frightening?
16. What characters do we normally associate with the landscape?
17. Who are the people or characters we associate with particular landscapes?

Real Life References

A war zone reflecting someone's state of mind.
A refugee camp suggesting hopelessness and desolation.
A dream world allowing an individual to escape.
A football game allowing one to vent emotion.
A car representing a bubble world of family.

Part 2: Structure

The context writing section of the exam is designed to enable you to think broadly about the *ideas* presented in texts, rather than just the events and characters.

On the exam, you have three choices: you can write an imaginative piece, an expository piece or a persuasive piece.

Here is a short checklist for you to complete whenever you receive a prompt:

1. What general form will I choose – expository, persuasive or imaginative?
   a. Think about the style you are most comfortable with.
   b. What are the challenges of an imaginative piece? Will it be appreciated by everyone?
   c. Which style will have the most impact?
2. What specific form will I choose e.g. short story, editorial, letter, essay?

a. Am I aware of the demands of the form I have chosen?
    b. What are the structural features of that form?
3. What is the purpose of the piece?
    a. How will it address the prompt?
    b. What is your contention or position in response to the prompt?
4. Which ideas from the texts will you draw from?
    a. Am I confident these are the most appropriate examples?
5. Which external references will you draw upon?
    a. Is there dimension to the ideas I have chosen from real life?
6. How will you incorporate the ideas from the text/outside the text into your piece?
    a. Will you quote from the text,
    b. create parallel situations or characters,
    c. interview a character,
    d. argue a similar or alternative viewpoint?
7. What features of the original text will you incorporate?
    a. Will you use a similar structure to the text?
    b. Will you use similar language (colloquial or formal, idioms, figurative language)?
    c. What aspects of the text will you refer to (e.g. setting, symbols, tone)?

Examiner's Report

Students who wrote excellent responses were obviously thinking about responding to the prompt as written. They used their understanding of the text(s) and concepts from their Context study to inform the ideas they explored within their writing. The less successful responses did not think critically about the idea that the prompt was communicating or ignored the prompt altogether. The more successful responses got to the core of the prompt instead of treating it like a text response. Students need to be reminded that there is an important distinction between the Context they have studied and the task they are required to complete in the exam – that is, to explore the idea that is represented in the prompt.

The most successful responses drew thoughtfully from the text; however, the least successful only used a scene or a feature of character in a superficial way or retold the plot of the text. This approach was not always relevant to the prompt. There can be no definitive advice on the success of relying on a single text or employing both (or more). Some students used the two texts expertly to demonstrate exceptions and qualifications, while others did little more than use the second text to add yet more of the same examples. While students writing using an expository approach tended to employ both texts, a number of students explored only one text. Students who used more than one source to illustrate their ideas often produced pieces with a strong sense of unity and purpose. This cohesiveness was contrasted by pieces where one idea followed the next as students went through their list of examples. The product was more a plan for an essay than a thoughtful, finished piece.

Some critical advice
- Formulaic approaches were limiting.
- Memorised responses failed to address the prompt(s).
- Use texts as vehicles, not as the centre of the task.

- Avoid retelling the plot.
- Work on the transference of ideas that are offered by the texts.
- Teach/learn a variety of forms of writing.
- Incorporate texts in ways appropriate to the form.
- Practise writing in a range of approaches, styles and forms.
- Ensure there is adequate practice and strategies for exploring the prompt.
- Develop more sophisticated imaginative pieces.
- Develop pieces which are well crafted.
- Teach/learn the use of text(s) to explain complexity, not as simple illustration.
- It may be useful to ask the question: 'What does the text suggest about our Context?'

Tackling a prompt

'It is difficult to remain a bystander in any situation of conflict.' (English Exam 2010)

Examine the prompt.

1. What is a bystander?
   a. An impartial observer
   b. An accomplice
   c. A reluctant or eager participant
2. What situations of conflict are there?
   a. Internal/external
   b. Mental/physical
   c. Domestic/national
3. Is it difficult
   a. The nature of the difficulty
   b. The degree of difficulty

Think about both audience and purpose.

Who are you writing for?   What is your intent?

Be aware: Unlike the internal assessment there is no statement of intent submitted with the exam response. These aspects, therefore have to be clear without explanation.

Expository

Purpose of the piece: To explore the degree of difficulty associated with particular types of 'bystander' when confronted with defined 'conflicts'.

Ideas from texts: *The Secret River* (fear of the unknown or different; prejudice), *Rugmaker* (oppression and transition), *The Crucible* (fear of losing one's self) *Omagh* (fear of reprisal)

Ideas from outside the text: An individual watching someone being bullied at school – should he/she respond? Social change causing uncertainty – will the carbon tax cost me more? Will refugees be

relocated next door to me?

Look for a progression. Is there a development in scale or consequence? Has there been a progression and at what point does that progression make it difficult for the bystander to remain impartial?

<u>Imaginative</u>

Purpose of the piece: To explore the struggle of an adolescent challenged by peer group pressure.

Ideas from texts: *The Crucible* (a young girl in the community struggles with her desire to be accepted by her peers and the demands of a fundamentalist adult world with which she cannot identify.).

Incorporation of ideas from text: The hysteria of the girls on trial pulls the more impressionable in to a point where one loses identity even though the aim has been to differentiate oneself from the mainstream. The language and symbolism used in the text can be incorporated along with the Puritan setting.

<u>Persuasive</u>

Purpose of the piece: To condemn the actions of both the RIRA and other such fundamentalist groups.

Ideas from text: Omagh (the personal, national and political cost of indiscriminate acts of terror)

Incorporation of ideas: Argue about the injustice of such an act and use examples from the text to illustrate the nature and consequence of that injustice to condemn it.

Expository Writing

Expository essays are the most formal type of essay you can choose to write on the exam. **<u>Introduction</u>**

In an expository piece, you are essentially exploring the connection between ideas.

First: Outline what the terms are (place any re-definitions you have here.)
Second: State your contention
Third: Outline your arguments. Remember, your arguments are NOT based on a text, at all, they are yours, there's no need to mention a text, or characters, etc here.

Prompt: **'It is difficult to remain a bystander in any situation of conflict.'**

We are all bystanders. In the process of our development as individuals we have the chance to both observe and participate in the welter of challenges that confront us daily. This will inevitably force us to question and evaluate our own morals in the context of our upbringing and culture. Our responses will also challenge our own sense of pride and dignity and force us to question ourselves. There are times when we will face forces beyond our control but the test of our character will be in how we respond.

<u>Body paragraphs</u>

Each body paragraph should deal with a different argument. Some of your arguments will be from the text/s you have studied, others from external sources. The body paragraph is a place to state, and

support your argument. The support comes from the examples you wish to use, be that a text, history, current news, a famous person, etc. You cannot use your own life or friends, as this is more reflective. A good way to approach an expository essay is to brainstorm your topic sentences first. What do you want to say about the topic?

- **Topic sentence**: In your topic sentence state your argument. Remember this is NOT based on a text, so don't mention any characters or texts – *just the idea.* **The argument must exist separately to the text (even though you spend the majority of the paragraph discussing a particular text or example) – this is important!!**

Life is both observation and participation.

- **Evidence**: State the example you're looking at

A student watching another being bullied is implicated in the bullying by the act of observation.

- **Explanation**: Explain how the example shows your argument, giving more evidence as you do so. Quotes are not especially important for context essays – you do not have to include them, and if you do you do not have to analyse them in as much detail as you would a text response (or in any detail). It's a good idea to play it safe and include quotes where relevant, but don't stress out about it.

The passive nature of their observation could suggest they approve of what is taking place. At the very least it suggests the bystander does not have the moral courage to intervene or is simply scared to break what is an accepted schoolyard practice. This incident is a microcosm of those who watch others being persecuted in society without taking action. Proctor in The Crucible felt he had to take a stand when the social paranoia he observed began to affect not just his immediate family but the entire community.

- **Linking sentence:** Link the your argument to your contention

He knew he was contravening the social conventions that allowed such injustice to happen but he could no longer remain impartial. To be a bystander at such a time was to be a proponent of fear and, ultimately, murder.

Conclusion

Identify the discoveries and insights you have made. These should be clearly evident in your explanation. Use these insights to conclusively state what it is to be a bystander, the specific nature of the difficulties faced and how comparable these outcomes are to the various types of conflicts you have explored.

Planning an Expository Response

Introduction

Have you defined your terms? What aspects of the context are you going to include?

Contention: _____

Explanations of what your contention means (include the general issues your essay will explore)

_____

_____

_____

Body Paragraph:

Topic sentence: _____

     Take your cue from the introduction. What issues have you raised?

Examples:

_____

_____

What evidence can you provide from personal events, current affairs and the texts you have studied that illustrate the point you want to make? Keep it brief and don't tell the story.

Interpretation:

_____

_____

_____

How do your examples or evidence illustrate the point you are making? What insights are revealed? This is where you can demonstrate the quality of your thinking.

Imaginative Writing

Imaginative writing asks you to use the ideas from a text or texts to produce your own creative response. The typical features of an imaginative response are that it:

1. Concentrates on one or two main characters and has parallels with in the text
2. Follows the structure of a narrative:
    a. introduction, complication, climax, resolution

3. Incorporates creative writing conventions:
    a. description, figurative language, dialogue and internal thought about the character's feelings

4. May be the same tone, style and narrative perspective as the original text

5. Is creative in presentatio. You might add a scene to the original text, write a short story, journal entry or letters or a script.

6. Crafts a consistent voice:

<ol start="7">
Keeps the prompt in mind:
<ol type="a">
There's no point writing a brilliant story if it doesn't relate to the prompt and the ideas presented in the text. It's a good idea to focus on one text in an imaginative response; more than one and you risk losing control.

<p style="margin-left:2em">a. An old woman sounds different to a small child, who sounds different to a working-class builder and a high-flying businessman</p>

<ol start="8">
Does not just rewrite the text using different characters!

Persuasive Writing

A persuasive response is inviting you to respond to the context by presenting a point of view on it. Your answer will be narrower in scope that in an expository essay – whereas the purpose of an expository essay is to explain or expose the main ideas raised by the prompt, using it as a springboard to further explore your ideas, a persuasive essay is asking you to present a biased reading of the context and argue a particular point of view.

Persuasive essays may include a rebuttal.

TEXT RESPONSE

Part 1: Understanding the text

Before you go into the exam, you should have a well-structured and comprehensive set of notes on all aspects of your texts.

Setting

The setting refers not only to the place, but to the time and social context of the text. The setting of a text is important because it locates the place, helps establish historical and social contexts, can change and be used to signal changes in characters and can directly influence themes. The key questions to ask yourself include:

What is the physical place in which the text is set? The location of the text has been deliberately chosen for the text, because it has significance for the characters.
What is the historical context? This is the period in which the text is set – the century, year. The historical time has a great impact on gender customs and belief, politics, race relations etc.
What is the social context? What are the circumstances and customs of the society depicted in the text? Is there any discrimination, class distinctions or other values portrayed?
Are there any significant changes of location and/or setting?

Can you see any direct effect/s on the plot, characters, relationships or themes?

Example: *Look Both Ways* is set in an ordinary inner suburb that could be essentially anywhere in Australia – it is a fictional suburb, firmly grounded in the Australian context (e.g. with Australian news and current affairs programs). Suburbia is often the setting of films that deal with isolation and alienation from society, as suburbia is often the scene of underlying oppression.

Structure

Structure of narratives:
The structure of a text refers to the arrangement of events; the sequencing of events or material. Events can unfold chronologically, through flashback, using the juxtaposition of different viewpoints and different narrative accounts. What effects are gained by the conscious arrangement of events?

Structure of poetry:
In poetry, the structure is often dependent on form. For instance, a sonnet will have a certain structure within the 14 lines. Some poetic forms are lyric, elegy, ode, epic. Think about how the form or structure of the poem shapes the meaning of the poem.

Structure of short stories:
The structure of the collection as a whole: What is the unifying principle or set of related ideas or common issue or image that runs through the stories?
The structure of each story: Most short stories are complete and self contained

Narration and Point of View

The narrator tells the story. This can be a first person or third person narrator. There are particular reasons why authors select a form of narration:

The first person narrator is often used in novels and short stories: This is where the author uses the word "I" to give the impression that the character, not the author, is telling the story. It engages the reader, gives eye witness immediacy to the story and controls the point of view. However, the narrator must have witnessed the events being told and may lead to bias.
The first person retrospective narrator gives dual perspective – the adult and the younger self. The narrator has the benefit of hindsight and maturity, and can offer insight and judgment on their earlier experiences.
An omniscient narrator tells the story in third person and gives the impression the story being told is objective. The narrator seems invisible, and the story appears 'true'. However, you cannot assume that there is no authorial input in an omniscient story.

You should also think about point of view:

From whose point of view do you see the text?
Are you sympathetic to this character? What are the effects of this?
Does the narrator control your point of view on other characters in the text?

Language and style

It is very important that you do not ignore the language and style adopted in the text. In the texts you study you are asked to consider the kind of language that is used, and how it contributes to the author's purpose, our perception of the characters and our understanding of the themes.

Recurring images, symbols and patterns: Symbols add depth to the themes and ideas in a text. These might include light and dark; natural elements like sun or storms; body parts like eyes, hands and scars; animals to represent human qualities (e.g. the cooped up pigeons in *On the Waterfront* represent Terry) and any special objects
Similes and metaphors, imagery and other figurative language techniques
Sentence length, grammar and punctuation.

Film techniques

Camera

The framing or length of the shot: Is the camera situated a long way away or very close to the subject? A long shot from high in the air might indicate the length/immensity of a journey, or the insignificance of a character. A close up of face can make us feel extremely comfortable, or extremely uncomfortable, with a character and gain a better insight into their thought process.
The camera angles: The more extreme the camera angle, the more meaningful and symbolic the shot is. A bird's eye view shot, from directly overhead, puts the viewer in a god-like position, looking down on the subject. A high angle makes the subject seem less significant or scary; a low angle shot gives a sense of confusion to the viewer, and a sense of powerlessness and makes the subject seem more dominant and imposing. A slanted camera angle creates a general sense of confusion and ambiguity.

Lighting

Soft lighting gives objects and people soft edges, and creates a warm feeling: of happiness, intimacy, calm, comfort or security. Hard lighting consists of bright whitesand dark blacks and creates harder edged shadows. This creates a cruel, cold feeling. High key lighting, where the set is flooded with light, creates a real sense of happiness and relaxation, whereas low-key lighting, which creates big, dark shadows, can have an eerie effect and contribute to the mood of a scene as one which is mysterious, scary, uneasy or even sad.

Lighting works with other film techniques to create mood. In the *Third Man,* it works with setting (a depressing tunnel), costume (a man dressed all in black) and camera angles (an extreme long shot) to make us feel isolated from and sorry for the character. Similarly, in *Singin' in the Rain* lighting works with camera movement (a panning shot), the film score (a joyful tune) and acting (the expressions of happiness on the character's face) to create the overall mood of happiness.
Lighting also contributes to the impression of a character. Characters portrayed with soft or high key light might be viewed as innocent and vulnerable, strong, youthful and healthy, or about to embark on something new. Characters portrayed with hard or low key lighting might be viewed as cruel, mysterious or frightened.

Sound

The way music contributes to the mood of the film.
The way music reflects the themes of the film.
The way music and sound effects position us to feel certain ways about a character.
Whether the sounds are symbolic of anything.
Whether the characters' voices reveal anything about them.
The contribution of dialogue to characters, themes and mood.

Character

We learn about characters from the story they are involved in.

Step One: What are the key features of the main characters?

- Their vital statistics (name, age, gender, location, job, appearance, likes/dislikes)
- The role they play in the text (hero, villain, or something in between)
- Their personality traits: give evidence from the movie to support your answers about their actions/quotes and what they reveal about their character. Be specific!
- Their relationships (supported with evidence from the text– again, be specific!)
  Who supports your character/who are their friends, and why?
- Who doesn't your character get along with, and why?
- Their motivations why does he/she act the way they do?
- What are the characters' values? How do they reflect or reject their society's values?

  In novels and stories, writers can actually tell you what a character is like. On film, character must be shown, not stated. This is often done through visual techniques such as:

- Appearance and costumes
- Body language -facial expressions. posture
- Possessions
- Lighting and camera angles
- Symbolism

Step Two: Compare the characters at the beginning and the end of the film
How does the character change throughout the story?
Do they learn a lesson?

Step Three: How do the characters relate to the themes of the text?

Themes

A theme refers to a recurring idea or message present in books and films. To analyze a film fully, you have to think about the themes present. Make a list of those themes for each text.

To do this:
- Identify what you mean when you use that theme. If your theme is 'love' what are you talking about? Love between parents and children? Between best friends? Marriage?

- What are the causes and consequences?
- What are the social and political factors that underlie the theme?
- What part has the individual played in the theme? What are the outcomes?
- Identify key scenes where this theme is obvious, and easily seen.
- Find quotes from those key scenes to support what you think on that theme – this relates directly back to how you identified that theme initially.
- Write down what you think the author's message is. No text will be discussing a theme in any great detail without the author trying to communicate their ideas. So take a guess at what those ideas are, as shown in the theme you are discussing.

Some recurring themes in VCE English texts are:

- Growing up – the loss of innocence, disillusionment, peer pressure, fitting in, identity and
  belonging, loss of childhood due to war or political change, pain and emo tional trauma
- Gender issues –the limitations placed on women by society and how they cope, the difficulties women experience because of their gender, problems for men because of the pressure to conform to social stereotypes, the relationships between men and women
- Love – the different types of love, effects of love, loss of love, the need for love
- Family –the importance of family, familial responsibilities, the breakdown of a family for a
  variety of reasons, conflicts within families, the importance of family in shaping identity
- Social and political injustice – poverty, discrimination, injustice and prejudice, the relationship between personal suffering and hardship and social/political injustices
- Racism and racial prejudice –the context of prejudice, discrimination, causes and solutions
- Wars and their impact –the nature of human suffering, the nature of power, the struggle for freedom, the trauma caused by war, guilt, survival

Be aware: Compile a list of themes and issues for your text. These words will prove essential in developing your response.

Linking characters and themes

When you are analyzing a text, there are certain events that you should focus on because they reveal information about both character and theme.

Some examples include:
1. Crisis points and turning points:
   a. *Character:* What do we learn about the characters from how they cope with the crisis? How do they change in response to the crisis or the turning point?
   b. *Theme:* Why have the crisis points/turning points arisen? Is it in response to society? Are any values reflected by the characters at the time of the change or crisis?
2. Reflection points:
   a. *Character:* What do the characters look back on later and realize? Why didn't they realize

it at the time of the event? What does their response tell us about the character now?
   b. *Theme:* What do we learn about issues or values? Are new values embraced or the need for change highlighted? Are certain values abandoned or re-enforced?
3. Relationships
   a. *Character:* What do we learn about the characters as they create or break a relationship? Which relationships break down and why? How do characters reveal themselves?
   b. *Theme:* What issues are raised due to the establishment or breakdown of the relationship?What issues arise for the characters, and what values are shown?
4. Journeys and quests
   a. *Character:* Which characters journey and grown throughout the text? What values are embraced and rejected?
   b. *Theme:* What values or ideas does the journey represent? What do you learn?

Part 2: Understanding the Prompt

The two topics enabled students to address the knowledge and skills as outlined in the study design. The choice between topics enabled students to develop a sustained discussion from the aspects of key knowledge for Outcome 1 in Units 3 and 4:
   • the ideas, characters and themes constructed by the author/director and presented in the selected text
   • the way the author/director uses structures, features and conventions to construct meaning
   • the ways in which authors/directors express or imply a point of view and values
   • the ways in which readers' interpretations of texts differ and why.

While some topics focused on more than one of the aspects of key knowledge (for example, *A Man for All Seasons* [i.], *Nineteen Eighty-Four* [ii.] or *Life of Pi* [i.]), most focused on a single aspect. There are subtle but discernible differences in the topic types and students would benefit from understanding these variations. All topics in this year's examination required student responses to address the full range of key knowledge and skills, and to be supported by detailed analysis and specific reference to the selected text. High-scoring responses did not rely entirely on the most obvious scenes from the texts. Their familiarity with the entire text and the discerning selection of scenes to support and explore ideas meant more individual responses that were thoughtful, moving beyond the most predictable and superficial discussions. The most successful responses recognised the conceptual ideas and implications of the topic and explored these, using detail from the text as illustration to support and develop this discussion. (2010 Examiner's Report)

Types of Prompt

(Questions from 2010 exam)

A Farewell to Arms
i. To what extent is love an escape from the horrors of war in *A Farewell to Arms*?
OR
ii. 'Although Frederic Henry retells the events many years later, there is still a strong sense of immediacy in the narration.' How is this achieved?

5. *Così*
i. 'Così is more than an entertaining comedy. It reveals the sadness of the lives of the characters.' Discuss.
OR
ii. What does Lewis learn by directing the play?

One simple variation is an issue based question or a character based question; love and horror as opposed to what a character learns. Interestingly enough, there were very few questions in the 2010 paper that were solely on character alone and the development of character.

There are a number of questions demanding an understanding of the form of a text and the features of its narration. We would have to be familiar with Hemingway's style to appreciate the 'immediacy of the narration'.

8. *Hard Times*
i. 'Because of Dickens' focus on highlighting urgent social problems, *Hard Times* is less engaging as a narrative.' Do you agree?
OR
ii. Who suffers most in *Hard Times*?

Here we have a focus on the narrative style. Even though Hard Times is not a 2011 text, the question points to a focus on the construction of a story and less on the actual story itself. At the same time we have to balance the social impact of the story with the degree to which the narrative is engaging. We would have to define what makes a narrative engaging.

The second question here is deceptively simple. Such questions require the utmost control. You have to establish the parameters of your response, define your concerns and take absolute control.

17. *On the Waterfront*
i. How important is family loyalty in the film?
OR
ii. Terry says to Charley: "I coulda been a contender. I coulda been somebody, instead of a bum. Which is what I am". Does the film support Terry's judgment of himself?

The first question here might at first glance appear limiting. Charley is the only 'family' Terry has. That is, of course, unless we define family as a community. The church can be a family, the community a family and the mob a family of sorts.

How does a film support something? Here we would need to look at the construction of the film, the director's intent and the shaping of scenes for a full and complete answer.

Don't simply take the prompt on face value. Examine it closely. Establish and define what you think it is asking.

Once you have completed your set of notes, you can start writing practice essays. The following structure is suitable for every text.

Introduction

The introduction is the Melways map reference to the rest of the text. It is the road map with the directions imprinted in it to show readers the way.

You need a contention. This is based on the prompt. Don't simply restate the prompt.

i. '*Così* is more than an entertaining comedy. It reveals the sadness of the lives of the characters.' Discuss.

Yes, I agree Cosi is more than . . . Imagine how bored the examiner is going to be after reading hundreds of essays that start like this.

1   Your contention can be based on an issue from your list.

Cosi challenges the audience's perception of mental illness.

At the moment, this contention is without terribly much form or relevance. You would have to establish that in your explanation and show how it is linked to the prompt.

2   A definition is another way to start. Look up a key word and utilize the elements in an opening.

A stage-play of a light and amusing character, with a happy conclusion to its plot. (oxford)

A comedy is normally constituted of light-hearted characters who resolve their differences happily.

This approach makes our contention immediately relevant and offers us one or two leads we can pursue.

3   The synonym trick is another way when all else fails.
More = further, new, added
Entertaining = engaging, amusing, witty, humorous
Comedy = jest, farce, charade, ridiculous situation
Reveal = divulges, discloses, tells
Sadness = sorrow, grief, misery, unhappiness
Lives = fortunes, existence
Characters = protagonists, inhabitants, inmates

Cosi adds dimension to the concept of an amusing farce by divulging the sorrow and grief behind the inmates lives.

or

The characters in Cosi confront a ridiculous situation which makes for engaging viewing but their

lives are also tainted with unhappiness.

Play around with the words. You will discover something you like. This approach means that you are relevant and on task. It's a quick way to start and it sounds original. You now have to back it up with substance.

The rest of the introduction is an explanation of what your contention means. If you have examined the prompt well then you know you have to include something about the 'ending'. The word 'more' is also a key indicator. Look for the word which is after the degree to which something is greater or lesser than something else.

Use your list of themes and issues to help build a comprehensive picture of what you think must be discussed. Provide definitions. Do not include examples yet.

Here is the opening to what the examiners thought was a high-scoring response to A Farewell to Arms.

A Farewell to Arms
To what extent is love an escape from the horrors of war in A Farewell to Arms?
In Ernest Hemingway's novel A Farewell To Arms, the love between his two protagonists Catherine Barkley and Frederic Henry begins as merely a shallow distraction and escape from the horrors of war, yet develops into mutual and devoted dependence, which is much more than a simple avoidance of the chaos and distraction around them. Love is shown to provide meaning in a hollow and empty world where nothing else inspires devotion, yet like all things in life – good, bad, innocent or deserving – love cannot last. The death of Catherine Barkley which occurs independently from the random destruction of war proves to Henry that war is only an extension of a cruel world, which refuses to preserve or protect anything in life, including true love.

Can you identify the overall argument? Count the issues generated.

Body paragraphs

Topic sentence: In your topic sentence state your argument. This will form the basis of the topic you explore in the rest of your paragraph

Evidence: State the example from the text that supports the topic sentence
Explanation: Explain how the example supports your argument

Linking sentence: Link the your argument to your contention; sum up your paragraph

Catherine and Henry's relationship, in its early stages, may be considered as only a shallow diversion and quick escape from the horrors of war.

The topic sentence here has picked up on the 'shallow distraction' suggested in the introduction.

Indeed Henry reflects that 'By God, I did not want to fall in love with her. I didn't want to fall in love with anyone'. Both Catherine and Henry initially consider their affair as 'a game, like bridge in which

you said things instead of playing cards'. However, it is in the hospital in Milan where the couple truly fall in love.

Here we have the evidence and salient quotes showing an awareness of the plot but also an intimacy with the actual text and dialogue.

In falling for Henry, Catherine may be seen to sacrifice her identity to Henry, telling him that, 'There isn't any me anymore, only you'. However, by marking Catherine's changes and progressions throughout the novel, we learn that she is not a submissive, subservient character, and it is in fact through her purposeful and meaningful devotion to Henry that her anti-heroism comes to life. Self-denial becomes self-transcendence as the love they have willed becomes authentic. Their initially escape from the war into each other, treated merely as a 'game', develops into mutual devotion and refuge from the dour, dark and difficult struggle of war around them.

The explanation that follows offers insights into Catherine's character. She is purposeful, devoted, not submissive or subservient.

Love provides purpose and meaning for the lovers, rendering the senseless misery and death of war to appear utterly 'vain'.

The linking line brings us back to the prompt. We have an insight into the nature of love and its role in war. The last line does not parrot the prompt but gives it definition.

Conclusion

The conclusion is not merely a restatement of your contention. It draws your explanatory comments together. The discoveries you have made in the course of your essay are now offered as final proof of the insights you have managed to discover. Thus, the quality fo your explanation will help you write your conclusion.

A Farewell To Arms, both anti-war novel and romantic drama, portrays the development of the passionate relationship between Catherine and Henry, which primarily began as a way for each of them to personally escape from the war. However, 'love' in the context of the entire novel, is demonstrated to be so much more than a simple distraction as it completely consumes the couple with the war seeming 'as far away as the football game of someone else's college'. Yet the death of Catherine illustrates the impermanence of all things, and that death – the basis of all life – is inevitable. The bravery of Catherine in the face of death replaces Henry's initial perception of courage as military accolade. The only kind of immortality that one can achieve is proven to be gained not true love but courage. It is certainly a poor substitute for victory over death gained through everlasting love or life, yet it is the only kind of immortality or religion a Hemingway hero can know, with the understanding of love's perpetual preeminence over war.

Quoting

1. Introduce your quotations

Always *introduce* your quotes. Any quote that lacks an introduction is called a floating quote. Never use floating quotes in your essay! They are confusing and disorienting. To introduce your quotes, make sure you explain *how* the quote supports your point.

> **Error –** In *The Masque of the Red Death,* the partygoers are depicted as frivolous and uncaring. "A thousand hale and light-hearted friends from among the knights and dames of his court."

This writer definitely needs to introduce this quote more clearly—setting up its context with in both the work from which she drew it and the argument that she is trying to create— and to more effectively integrate it into the flow of her writing.

> **Example —** The partygoers' lack of social conscience is clear from their description as "a thousand hale and light-hearted friends from among the knights and dames of his court."

2. **Integrate your quotations.** There are three main ways to do this:

Words or phrases can be quoted without quoting the entire sentence from which they were taken. In this case, the quoted words must fit into the grammar of your own sentence. Pick *only* the relevant parts. This is the best way to quote the text.

Example— Prince Prospero is positioned as the prince only for the rich; a "happy", "dauntless" and "sagacious" prince who believed that "the external world would take care of itself."

3. **Explain every quote**

Quotations are not self-evident! Furthermore, do not simply rephrase a quote. Look behind the words and answer the question, "What ideas or meanings do these words convey?" Explain how this piece of evidence is significant to the text as a whole:

- What does it show us about a character/event in this context?
- How does the character change?
- Is the author trying to comment on a bigger theme?
- Can we juxtapose this piece of evidence with another example in the text?
- Can we extend this example (it may be a motif; a recurring idea) by commenting on another example in the text

Example – The Masque of the Red Death is primarily a commentary on the follies of the wealthy. The Red Death is devastating the country, with thousands dying "by the half hour" but Prince Prospero's vanity and selfishness in believing that he and his kind can be spared death while the poor suffer is clear in his thought that "the external world could take care of itself. In the meantime it was folly to grieve or to think". This reveals that it is a luxury of the wealthy to assume that death is not something they need worry about, for they have been blessed.

VICTORIA UNIVERSITY 2011

CHANGE OF PREFERENCE 16-21 DECEMBER

DROP INTO VUHQ - CITY FLINDERS CAMPUS, ONLINE CHAT SERVICE & COURSE HOTLINE: 1300 VIC UNI

Friday 16	8:30AM - 5:30PM
Saturday 17	11:00AM - 4:00PM
Sunday 18	11:00AM - 4:00PM
Monday 19	8:30AM - 5:30PM
Tuesday 20	8:30AM - 5:30PM

GENERAL INFORMATION SESSIONS

Monday 19	4:00PM - 7:00PM
Tuesday 20	4:00PM - 7:00PM

Footscray Park Campus

Ballarat Road, Footscray

Melways Ref. Map 42 C2

CAMPUS TOURS

Footscray Park tours will operate after each information session.

vu.edu.au

VICTORIA UNIVERSITY

MELBOURNE AUSTRALIA

FACULTY OF ARTS, EDUCATION AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

OFFERS COURSES IN:

- Arts
- Education
- Sport
- Sport Management
- International Studies
- Psychology
- Professional Writing
- Public Relations
- Sociology
- Social Work
- Creative Arts
- Communication
- Exercise Science
- Human Movement
- Recreation Management
- Interactive Media
- Sport Coaching
- Youth Work
- Youth Work and Sport Recreation Management

VICTORIA UNIVERSITY
MELBOURNE AUSTRALIA