Government of **Western Australia**
School Curriculum and Standards Authority

LITERATURE

ATAR course examination 2025

Marking key

Marking keys are an explicit statement about what the examining panel expect of candidates when they respond to particular examination items. They help ensure a consistent interpretation of the criteria that guide the awarding of marks.

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LITERATURE **2** **MARKING KEY**

Section One: Response – close reading **30% (25 Marks)**

Description	Marks
Reading/s of text The response presents:	
a detailed and sustained reading/s using appropriate reading strategies and/or reading practices.	7
a thorough and coherent reading/s using appropriate reading strategies and/or practices.	6
a sound reading using mostly appropriate reading strategies and/or practices.	5
a general reading that makes some use of appropriate reading strategies and/or practices.	4
an inconsistent reading that may impose reading strategies and/or practices inappropriately.	3
a vague reading that may make little use of reading strategies.	2
a limited reading showing little understanding of the text.	1
no evidence of this criterion.	0
Subtotal	**7**
Close textual analysis The response uses:	
detailed close textual analysis of language, text examples and/or generic conventions and reference to cultural contexts where appropriate throughout the response to develop and support the reading/s.	6
close textual analysis of language, text examples and/or generic conventions and reference to cultural contexts where appropriate throughout most of the response to support the reading/s.	5
close textual analysis of language, text examples, and/or generic conventions with some reference to cultural contexts where appropriate to largely develop the reading/s.	4
some textual analysis of relevant examples from the text that generally develop the reading/s.	3
little textual analysis of examples that do not always develop a reading.	2
limited evidence to support a reading.	1
no evidence of this criterion.	0
Subtotal	**6**
Linguistic, stylistic and critical terminology The response shows:	
a sophisticated and comprehensive use of linguistic, stylistic and/or critical terminology suited to the reading.	6
a comprehensive use of linguistic, stylistic and/or critical terminology appropriate to the reading.	5
a consistent use of linguistic, stylistic and/or critical terminology mostly related to the reading.	4
some use of linguistic, stylistic and/or critical terminology mostly related to the reading.	3
infrequent use of linguistic, stylistic and/or critical terminology not always appropriate to the reading.	2
limited and inaccurate use of linguistic, stylistic and/or critical terminology.	1
no evidence of this criterion.	0
Subtotal	**6**
Expression of ideas The response expresses ideas:	
in sophisticated language, style, and structure.	6
in controlled language, style and structure.	5
in mostly controlled language, style and structure.	4
in a generally clear way with deficiencies in language, style and structure which do not inhibit overall communication.	3
in a disjointed style, characterised by unclear language use and lack of structure.	2
that are difficult to follow because of unclear language use and lack of structure.	1
no evidence of this criterion.	0
Subtotal	**6**
Total	**25**

MARKING KEY **3** **LITERATURE**

Section Two: Extended response **70% (30 + 30 marks)**

Description	Marks
Engagement with the question The response demonstrates:	
a sophisticated and sustained engagement with all parts of the question.	6
a comprehensive engagement with all parts of the question.	5
a thorough engagement with all parts of the question.	4
a general engagement with most parts of the question.	3
a limited or simplistic engagement with the question.	2
little or no engagement with the question.	1
no evidence of this criterion.	0
Subtotal	**6**
Course concepts The response shows:	
a sophisticated understanding and application of the course concepts that are related to the question.	6
a well-informed understanding and application of the course concepts that are related to the question.	5
a sound understanding and application of the course concepts that are related to the question.	4
a general understanding and some application of the course concepts that are related to the question.	3
a vague understanding of the course concepts that are related to the question.	2
little or no understanding of the course concepts that are related to the question.	1
no evidence of this criterion.	0
Subtotal	**6**
Use of evidence The response uses:	
detailed textual analysis of text examples, language and/or generic conventions and reference to cultural contexts where appropriate throughout the response to develop and support the answer to the question.	6
textual analysis of text examples, language and/or generic conventions and reference to cultural contexts where appropriate throughout the response to develop and support the answer to the question.	5
textual analysis of text examples, language and/or generic conventions with some reference to cultural contexts where appropriate to largely develop the answer to the question.	4
some textual analysis of relevant examples from the text that generally develop the answer to the question.	3
some use of relevant examples in the answer to the question.	2
limited evidence to support an answer to the question.	1
no evidence of this criterion.	0
Subtotal	**6**
Linguistic, stylistic and critical terminology The response shows:	
a sophisticated and comprehensive use of linguistic, stylistic and/or critical terminology suited to the answer to the question.	6
a comprehensive use of linguistic, stylistic and/or critical terminology appropriate to the answer to the question.	5
a consistent use of linguistic, stylistic and/or critical terminology mostly related to the answer to the question.	4
some use of linguistic, stylistic and/or critical terminology mostly related to the answer to the question.	3
infrequent use of linguistic, stylistic and/or critical terminology not always appropriate to the answer to the question.	2
limited and inaccurate use of linguistic, stylistic and/or critical terminology.	1
no evidence of this criterion.	0
Subtotal	**6**
Expression of ideas The response expresses ideas:	
in sophisticated language, style and structure.	6
in controlled language, style and structure.	5
in mostly controlled language, style and structure.	4
in a generally clear way with deficiencies in language, style and structure which do not inhibit overall communication.	3
in a disjointed style, characterised by unclear language use and lack of structure.	2
that are difficult to follow because of unclear language use and lack of structure.	1
no evidence of this criterion.	0
Subtotal	**6**
Total	**30**

Section One: Close reading **30% (25 Marks)**

The focus in this section should be on the candidate's comprehension and close reading of the selected literary text. Candidates should be rewarded for a close attention to the text, and an analysis of the text based on generic conventions and language use pertaining to poetry, prose fiction or drama as applicable.

Markers are reminded that the suggestions in this section of the marking key are in no way exhaustive; nor should they be interpreted as the 'correct' or 'preferred' interpretations. Suggested readings of texts are not restrictive; some candidates might present close readings which focus on the ideas conveyed and explored in the text, the application of a reading practice such as a gender or psychological reading, or a more eclectic approach which might incorporate more than one appropriate close reading strategy. Some candidates might produce close readings that are individual or unexpected.

The ideas presented in this section of the marking key are merely a snapshot of potential ways of reading the texts.

The key criteria in assessing content are in meeting the targeted requirements of the question which is to demonstrate a close reading.

Close textual analysis
It is important for candidates to demonstrate a close analysis of the text and in doing so, to consider language, examples from the text and/or generic conventions and reference to cultural context. These elements of text and/or context need to support the reading/readings of the text.

Linguistic, stylistic and critical terminology
Candidates are to be rewarded for a sophisticated and comprehensive use of linguistic, stylistic and critical terminology. In doing so, candidates are to use linguistic terminology such as metaphor, stylistic terminology such as narrative approaches and intertextuality, and critical terminology such as identity and ideology.

Expression of ideas
Marks are specifically allocated for expression in the areas of:
- structure
- language use and style.

Markers, however, do need to take into account the fact that an examination script is a first draft written under time pressure.

Question One

Text A: *Citizens* by Daniel Keene

Reading/s of the text

The response presents a reading of the text using appropriate and relevant reading practices or strategies.

- Reading with a focus on the representation of aging may allow candidates to examine the characterisation of Tariq and Rasid, focusing on ideas surrounding youth, old age, hope and family.

- Candidates may consider the way binary oppositions are foregrounded in the play: the young and the old, the spoken and the unspoken, destruction and growth.

- Examining the text with an emphasis on the representation of hope and survival allows candidates to analyse how Rasid's actions and the olive tree serve as a counterbalance to the prevailing sense of fragility resulting from conflict. Rasid embodies the belief in a promising future despite the adversities faced, and his effort to protect the tree symbolises a commitment to nurturing something that will endure beyond their struggles.

- A contextual reading may consider the references to the 'high concrete wall' and 'rubble' as representative of political conflict or war. In this way, a candidate may examine the way the text represents ideas related to borders, division or displacement.

- Candidates may comment on how the text represents memory and longing. Rasid's reflection on the past, especially his thoughts about swimming in the sea represent his longing for happier times and the deep sadness that comes with this.

- Candidates may interpret the text as representative of intergenerational conflict. Rasid's reflections on his past and aspirations for Tariq's future illustrate the challenge of imparting wisdom and values amidst a changing world. Rasid's memories of the sea and his childhood underscore the contrast between generations and the challenges inherent in bridging this divide.

- An ecocritical reading that looks at man's connection and relationship with nature. Nature as a resource.

- Gender -.traditional gender roles of men as active, strong. Women as nurturers – wary.

Close textual analysis

The response uses close textual analysis of language, examples and/or generic conventions and reference to relevant cultural contexts to develop and support the reading.

- Candidates may focus on the dialogue and actions of Rasid compared to the silence of Tariq. In this way, Tariq's characterisation as someone who cannot or will not speak, may represent the concept of trauma and foreground the psychological impact of conflict within the text.

- In a similar vein, candidates may examine the way Tariq 'tries to lift the wheelbarrow' and 'struggles to keep it balanced' as representative of his desire to assume the mantle and burden of his aging grandfather's load.

- On stage, the 'high concrete wall' can be interpreted as a tool for foreshadowing unresolved conflicts and obstacles. Alongside this, the sparse and barren setting of 'rubble', 'pale earth and stone' with a 'vast clear sky' evokes a stark yet oppressive atmosphere.

- Candidates may interpret the young olive tree as a prop that symbolises hope and growth. In this way, candidates may relate the tree to Greek mythology, where olives were symbolic of peace and friendship, or the idiom to 'extend an olive branch'.

Linguistic, stylistic and critical terminology

The response uses language, stylistic and critical terminology and concepts suited to the reading.

- The scene is realist in style as dialogue is not heightened for effect but rather reflects everyday speech. Candidates may comment on the way the realist style focuses on the interior lives of characters and in this way, represents the psychological experience of conflict and displacement rather than the grand narrative arc of traditional war stories.

- The motif of water permeates the scene through references to the sea, swimming, drinking and thirst. Candidates may comment on the ways water is associated with the concepts of renewal, transformation and purification. In particular, candidates may comment on the way water is represented as precious given Rasid and Tariq share the water bottle and splash their face with 'a little water'.

- Candidates may recognise this scene as a vignette and consider how the moment depicted on stage represents broader ideas related to the human spirit, family, and perseverance. Rasid's initial statement, ('We'll stop.') can be contrasted with the concluding line ('Let's get moving') to symbolise the resilience of the human spirit and underscore Rasid's characterisation as a leader and mentor.

- In constructing their close reading of this text, candidates should ensure that they use language and concepts which are closely related to the genre of drama. Markers should get a clear sense that the candidate is discussing and analysing a play in particular.

Expression of ideas

The response expresses ideas clearly and cohesively in order to logically present the reading.

- In presenting their reading, candidates should adhere to the conventions of Standard Australian English, avoiding errors of spelling, punctuation and grammar to the extent possible in an examination situation. Errors in spelling in particular should not be harshly considered so long as the meaning is clear. Markers are reminded of the ‘first draft’ nature of examination responses.

- Candidates should not be penalised arbitrarily by counting errors. Instead, the standard of written expression should be considered for the effectiveness of the expression. Errors in spelling, punctuation and grammar, and deficiencies of structure which detract from meaning or ease of reading should be considered less favourably than those which are simply transcription errors.

- When considering expression of ideas, the fluency and voice of the candidate should be considered. A sense of ease or confidence in their writing should be rewarded. Candidates are welcome to write in the first person where it is appropriate to their response.

- The structure of a response should be considered with regard to the logical presentation of ideas. However, there is no requirement that a candidate must adhere to a rigid, pre-determined essay structure. Responses which are somewhat more free-flowing might still be considered favourably, with consideration to the appropriateness of the style and the way in which the response is communicated to the reader.

- Candidates should not be arbitrarily penalised for lacking a conclusion to their response. Instead, markers should consider whether there is an internal logic to the response and whether they have made their points clearly.

Text B: *Easter up the Gascoyne* by Caitlin Maling

Reading/s of the text

The response presents a reading of the text using appropriate and relevant reading practices or strategies.

- Candidates may read the poem as a representation of the Australian landscape as a vast, beautiful yet harsh environment. In this way, responses may examine the juxtaposition between beauty and decay, or the destructive clash of the manmade and nature.

- An ecocritical reading might examine the ecological changes and human impact on nature, such as the historical and environmental disruptions in the Gascoyne region due to human settlement. Additionally, the flood could be seen as nature's effort to erase human presence and symbolise its transformative power.

- A post-colonial reading would allow candidates to examine the issue of colonisation and assess how the poem portrays its lasting impacts on the land. It evokes colonial history, including the importation of foreign labour and non-native species, and highlights their disruptive effects, alongside the erasure of First Nations' peoples, culture and language as the Gascoyne region was appropriated for cattle farming.

- Candidates may examine the poem with a focus on binary oppositions or juxtaposition. For instance, images of destruction and renewal are paralleled which relates to the cycle of life, death and rebirth.

- Candidates may focus their reading on the symbolism of the persona's journey and desire to 'climb the rock' to view the landscape from its apex. From a post-colonial perspective, this action may be considered disrespectful to Indigenous Australians' culture and lore, and an act of appropriation or colonisation. On the other hand, candidates may consider this action to be emblematic of the human need for reflection and solitude: climbing is a means of overcoming challenges and seeing the world from a new vantage point.

- The poem can be interpreted as a representation of spirituality and the nature of existence. Candidates may consider the references to floods, the snake and scripture as religious symbols and comment on the way the poem represents the concept of resurrection.

Close textual analysis

The response uses close textual analysis of language, examples and/or generic conventions and reference to relevant cultural contexts to develop and support the reading.

- Candidates may examine the use of tense throughout the poem. The persona begins in the past tense (‘I crossed’), moves into the present (‘I keep driving’) and ends in future tense (‘I will’). This transition evokes a sense of the passing of time and contributes to persona’s confessional tone.

- The title’s reference to ‘Easter’ denotes the Christian festival that marks the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Candidates may draw parallels between the title and the reference to ‘the floods’ as symbolic of spiritual renewal or rebirth.

- The concluding sentence, ‘somewhere something is greening’, conveys an optimistic viewpoint that nature possesses the ability to regenerate despite the extensive damage caused by human and climatic activity.

- Candidates may examine the image of the pub circling the gum ‘like the innards of a kangaroo/ill-met with a road train’ as representative of colonisation. In a similar way, the ‘waterlogged cattle carcasses/floating like forgotten languages’ may represent the continued impact of white settlement on Indigenous land and culture, particularly the destructive influence of cattle farming on the environment.

- Candidates may discuss the return of the white ibis as a symbol of rejuvenation and the re-establishment of natural order. They may also address the cultural perception of the ibis, commonly referred to as the 'bin-chicken', within urban settings as being associated with waste and litter. However, in contrast, the poem's persona elevates the status of the ibis to that of a sacred figure, describing it as ‘with wings stark as a hieroglyph’.

Linguistic, stylistic and critical terminology

The response uses language, stylistic and critical terminology and concepts suited to the reading.

- Candidates may analyse the rhythm of the poem and consider how the use of enjambment creates a sense of continuity, reflecting the landscape's undulations and the movement of water.

- Verb choice throughout the poem, such as ‘cracked’, ‘writhing’ and ‘splays’, work alongside images of ‘waterlogged cattle carcasses’ and ‘the innards of a kangaroo’ to evoke an atmosphere of decay and destruction.

- A motif of language and communication is evident through references to ‘parchment’, ‘languages’, ‘hieroglyph’ and ‘ink’, which may represent the importance of sharing knowledge and in a metafictional sense, the importance of poetry as a sacred form of art.

- In constructing their close reading of this text, candidates should ensure that they use language and concepts which are closely related to the genre of poetry. Markers should get a clear sense that the candidate is discussing and analysing a poem in particular.

Expression of ideas

The response expresses ideas clearly and cohesively in order to logically present the reading.

- In presenting their reading, candidates should adhere to the conventions of Standard Australian English, avoiding errors of spelling, punctuation and grammar to the extent possible in an examination situation. Errors in spelling in particular should not be harshly considered so long as the meaning is clear. Markers are reminded of the ‘first draft’ nature of examination responses.

- Candidates should not be penalised arbitrarily by counting errors. Instead, the standard of written expression should be considered for the effectiveness of the expression. Errors in spelling, punctuation and grammar, and deficiencies of structure which detract from meaning or ease of reading should be considered less favourably than those which are simply transcription errors.

- When considering expression of ideas, the fluency and voice of the candidate should be considered. A sense of ease or confidence in their writing should be rewarded. Candidates are welcome to write in the first person where it is appropriate to their response.

- The structure of a response should be considered with regard to the logical presentation of ideas. However, there is no requirement that a candidate must adhere to a rigid, pre-determined essay structure. Responses which are somewhat more free-flowing might still be considered favourably, with consideration to the appropriateness of the style and the way in which the response is communicated to the reader.

- Candidates should not be arbitrarily penalised for lacking a conclusion to their response. Instead, markers should consider whether there is an internal logic to the response and whether they have made their points clearly.

Text C: *Bad Dreams* by Tessa Hadley

Reading/s of the text

The response presents a reading of the text using appropriate and relevant reading practices or strategies.

- Candidates may comment on the representation of dreams in the text. Dreams serve as a window into our unconscious desires and enable us to play out imagined realities. The protagonist dreams of reading an epilogue to her favourite book – something coming from outside herself, against her will, as a somewhat horrifying intrusion on her world.

- The text creates an uncanny atmosphere by unsettling the familiar. Candidates might explore how the narrative establishes a sense of eeriness and tension due to the disruptive nature of the nightmare. In this context, candidates could analyse the text through a genre-specific lens, considering its alignment with Gothic literature and psychological horror, as well as themes of concealment, fear, transgression, and entrapment.

- Candidates may offer a psychoanalytic reading which explores the subconscious fears and anxieties of the child, particularly her fear of growing up and the loss of childhood play and imagination. The intrusion of adult reality into an idealised world could symbolise the transition from childhood to adulthood, particularly in a world of gender norms.

- Candidates may offer a feminist reading and identify the child's horror at her awareness of the social expectations of domesticity, responsibility and conventionality imposed upon women. The way in which the childhood bedroom may represent a place of sanctuary or oppression, and in this way may be a comment on female coming of age.

- In a metafictional reading, the story raises questions about the nature of storytelling itself. The child, as a reader, encounters an unexpected addition to a beloved book, which challenges her understanding of fiction as something stable or universal. This could lead to a discussion about the ways stories are constructed, revised, and sometimes rewritten, even in our minds. Furthermore, candidates may consider the epilogue as metonymic of the reader’s own role in making meaning of literary texts.

Close textual analysis

The response uses close textual analysis of language, examples and/or generic conventions and reference to relevant cultural contexts to develop and support the reading.

- By considering the aesthetics of the text as generated by the language used, candidates may notice the way comfortable and uncomfortable imagery is constructed. The ‘cocoon’ of the child’s nightdress works alongside the metaphor of ‘the nest of sheets and blankets’ to evoke the comfort of the familiar – her bed and immediate surrounds. Contrastingly, the darkness is constructed as an oppressive force (‘pressing back against her efforts’) and the book, the source of her nightmare, is ‘pressing into her leg’.

- The precise details of the ‘rectangle of wool cloth’ and the fact the child ‘knew all these by heart’ characterise the child as exacting, and detail orientated. Furthermore, her unease surrounding her dream and her invention of the ‘Epilogue’ (‘a found thing, alien and unanticipated’) reveal her anxiety about the unfamiliar and lack of control (‘she couldn’t dispel the taint of it’).

- Candidates may analyse the contrast between the familiar and the unfamiliar. The child’s bedroom, symbolising safety and familiarity, is juxtaposed with the adventurous summers depicted in *Swallows and Amazons*, where the children are ‘pushing the threshold of safety into a thrilling unknown.’ Thus, these two settings may illustrate the tension between the protagonist’s desire to preserve the known and their inclination to explore the unknown.

Linguistic, stylistic and critical terminology

The response uses language, stylistic and critical terminology and concepts suited to the reading.

- The opening line conveys a sense of distortion or obscurity as the child 'woke in the dark'. The repeated mention of 'darkness' throughout the introductory paragraph can be interpreted as a motif representing the unknown and challenges to overcome. Although the child demonstrates the ability to navigate her surroundings and comprehend the 'implacable' darkness, the excerpt concludes with her inability to 'dispel the taint' of the Epilogue, which signifies an inconsequential life of domesticity.

- Stylistically, the close third-person narrator maintains the inherent omniscience of the third-person perspective while conveying the child's internal state in a subjective manner (‘wasn’t she just a girl, with everything ahead of her?’). This approach allows readers to form a close connection with the child and encourages them to empathise with her experiences.

- The reference to *Swallows and Amazons* highlights the child's interest in adventure and underscores ideas related to independence and freedom. The allusion also directs the reader's attention to the influence of storytelling and literature on our self-perception and comprehension of the world.

- In constructing their close reading of this text, candidates should ensure that they use language and concepts which are closely related to the genre of prose fiction. Markers should get a clear sense that the candidate is discussing and analysing an excerpt from a prose text in particular.

Expression of ideas

The response expresses ideas clearly and cohesively in order to logically present the reading.

- In presenting their reading, candidates should adhere to the conventions of Standard Australian English, avoiding errors of spelling, punctuation and grammar to the extent possible in an examination situation. Errors in spelling in particular should not be harshly considered so long as the meaning is clear. Markers are reminded of the ‘first draft’ nature of examination responses.

- Candidates should not be penalised arbitrarily by counting errors. Instead, the standard of written expression should be considered for the effectiveness of the expression. Errors in spelling, punctuation and grammar, and deficiencies of structure which detract from meaning or ease of reading should be considered less favourably than those which are simply transcription errors.

- When considering expression of ideas, the fluency and voice of the candidate should be considered. A sense of ease or confidence in their writing should be rewarded. Candidates are welcome to write in the first person where it is appropriate to their response.

- The structure of a response should be considered with regard to the logical presentation of ideas. However, there is no requirement that a candidate must adhere to a rigid, pre-determined essay structure. Responses which are somewhat more free-flowing might still be considered favourably, with consideration to the appropriateness of the style and the way in which the response is communicated to the reader.

- Candidates should not be arbitrarily penalised for lacking a conclusion to their response. Instead, markers should consider whether there is an internal logic to the response and whether they have made their points clearly.

Section Two: Extended response **70% (30 Marks each)**

The focus in this section should be on analytical and critical thinking skills in relation to the candidates' capacity to engage with the chosen question and apply syllabus knowledge to address the question with supporting text references. Answers should be marked on the quality of their content. Higher marks should be given to responses that are a developed argument, that sustain a point of view and use relevant and accurate evidence from texts to support points made.

- A key criterion in assessing content is engagement with the question rather than the reproduction of memorised information. It is important that candidates address all aspects of a question.

- The questions examine candidates' knowledge of syllabus concepts. Answers should be assessed according to the extent to which their comments about texts are used to support arguments in relation to the question.

- Higher marks should be awarded to candidates whose responses demonstrate skilful inclusion of textual interpretation, analytical comments, comparison, contrast, reflection, evaluation, or any other skills required by the chosen question in order to demonstrate knowledge of syllabus content.

- Answers might make use of personal experiences, values and responses to support or explain arguments.

- It is important that the majority of the answer refers to at least one text from the prescribed text lists. Other texts referred to must be clearly identified.

Course concepts
It is important that candidates demonstrate a detailed understanding of syllabus concepts as applied to the primary text(s) used to support their answer to the question. In particular, understanding of course concepts that are the key words of the question is to be demonstrated through supporting text references.

Use of evidence
It is important for candidates to use evidence from the text and/or cultural context to support the arguments they make. It is important that the use of supporting evidence and examples are strategic in that they support particular readings of the text and points made by the candidate, rather than unselected text detail and summary being provided for its own sake.

Linguistic, stylistic and critical terminology
Candidates are to be rewarded for a sophisticated and comprehensive use of linguistic, stylistic and critical terminology. In doing so, candidates are to use linguistic terminology such as metaphor, stylistic terminology such as narrative approaches and intertextuality, and critical terminology such as identity and ideology.

Expression of ideas
Marks are specifically allocated for expression in the areas of:
- argumentation
- structure
- language use and style.

Markers, however, do need to take into account the fact that an examination script is a first draft written under time pressure.

Question 2 **(30 marks)**

Evaluate how the use of generic conventions within at least one **poem** can be considered aesthetic and/or ideological.

- Candidates will demonstrate an understanding of generic conventions specific to poetry. Responses may comment on conventions specific to a poetic sub-genre such as an ode, elegy, sonnet, etc.

- The syllabus defines aesthetic as a sense of beauty or an appreciation of artistic expression. Ideology is defined as a system of attitudes, values, beliefs, and assumptions. Candidates should refer to one or both concepts. Responses may consider how the aesthetic and ideological aspects are interconnected.

- Candidates should evaluate how generic conventions in the poem(s) can be seen as aesthetic and/or ideological. This may involve assessing the effectiveness of one convention or judging whether a convention is more clearly ideological/aesthetic than another.

- Furthermore, candidates may base their evaluation on personal ideologies or standards of aesthetics, or they may assess the poet's use of conventions against a more formalised or established standard, such as an ideological reading practice or literary movement.

- In 'Leda and the Swan', W.B. Yeats utilises the conventions of a Petrarchan sonnet, along with imagery, synecdoche, and juxtaposition, to achieve both aesthetic and ideological effects. From an aesthetic perspective, the iambic pentameter drives the poem forward with intensity and rhythm, while the juxtaposition of grotesque and romantic imagery vividly portrays the erotic and unsettling encounter between the mortal Leda and the divine swan. Ideologically, the poem's imagery can be seen as representing the darker facets of human experience and serving as a metaphor for the violent realities of the Irish Civil War.

- Samuel Taylor Coleridge's 'Kubla Khan' utilises established conventions of the poetic genre, including assonance, alliteration, contrasting scansion in irregular and regular rhyme and meter, and a variety of sensory imagery that serves both aesthetic and ideological purposes. Aesthetically, Coleridge's poem creates a dreamlike quality, with its structural and auditory conventions enhancing the reader's visceral experience. Ideologically, the poem reflects the Romantic literary period, employing generic conventions to express political concerns regarding the erosion of human freedom through progress, abuse of power or wealth, and the commodification of nature.

- In 'Little Red Cap' Carol Ann Duffy uses monologue conventions like cadence, direct address, characterisation, first-person narrative, and poetic language to critique traditional gender roles and male dominance in literature. The poem features rich imagery, symbolism, and internal rhyme, offering a feminist retelling of the fairy tale. By giving voice to Little Red Cap, it shifts her from passive victim to active agent, emphasising the feminist critique and reclaiming a woman's voice in a male-dominated literary tradition.

Relevant syllabus content:

Unit 4: How genre, conventions and language contribute to interpretations of texts. Choice of language is related to ideological and aesthetic considerations.

Question 3 **(30 marks)**

Consider the ways structural choices contribute to the creative representation of familiar ideas in a **prose fiction** text.

- The syllabus defines text structure as the organisation of information. In prose fiction, these may include foreshadowing, epigraphs, linear or non-linear plots, extended metaphors, flashbacks, framing devices and the structural use of narrative point of view.

- Candidates are required to primarily reference the structure throughout their response.

- The question addresses the creative representation of familiar ideas. Candidates should consider what makes the idea recognisable and to which audience, as well as the reasons for representing the idea creatively. Creative representations may include those that blend or borrow conventions, are unexpected, highly imaginative, unique and so on.

- In *The Handmaid's Tale*, Atwood blends structural elements such as epigraphs and flashbacks, as well as the inclusion of 'Historical Notes', to effectively convey familiar ideas related to oppression, power, and storytelling. Atwood's fragmented, nonlinear structure mirrors Offred's disoriented state under Gilead's oppressive regime, creatively reimagining familiar dystopian themes of surveillance, control, and resistance.

- The novel *Life of Pi's* structural choices contribute to the creative representation of familiar, and long standing, ideas around existence, truth, hope, and survival. *Pi* uses a framing narrative, with an adult Pi relaying his story to an audience, interwoven with time shifts and differing perspectives. The structural choices, emblematic of the magic realism genre, serve as a creative representation of what we consider truth.

- Shelley's novel *Frankenstein* employs a frame narrative, or mise-en-abyme, as a structural feature, combined with an epistolary narrative to provide context. Through this approach, Shelley creatively conveys ideas commonly associated with the Science Fiction genre, such as uncertainty, confusion, and power. Additionally, by embedding the creature's voice within her text, Shelley's structural choice thoughtfully examines the subjugation of marginalised groups.

Relevant syllabus content:

Unit 3: The ways in which language, structural and stylistic choices communicate values and attitudes and shed new light on familiar ideas.

Question 4 **(30 marks)**

Analyse how language, including visual and sound elements, within a **drama** text represents people or events associated with a particular context.

- Candidates must analyse both visual and sound elements in their response. This encompasses visual language, including props, stagecraft, stage directions, costume, and lighting, as well as auditory language, such as dialogue, narration, music, and sound effects. It is essential that candidates address both categories of language in their response.

- The response should highlight how language in the text represents people or events tied to a specific context. Candidates may link characters or events in the text to real-world counterparts within that context or discuss them as metonymic of prevailing preoccupations or movements of that time and place. They may also analyse metaphorical or symbolic language and its role in depicting people or events within a context. Candidates who engage with the nuances of representation should be rewarded over those who merely describe or characterise people and events.

- The syllabus defines context as the environment where a text is created or received. Candidates may discuss people or events related to the production or reception of the text.

- In *The Glass Menagerie*, Williams employs stage directions, costuming, props, and music to depict the experiences, anxieties, and hopes of lower middle-class Americans in the late 1930s. First performed in 1944, this memory play portrays the Wingfield family struggling to come to terms with the reality of their lives and navigate the evolving socio-cultural landscape. The representation of the Wingfields reflects the condition of middle-class Americans who lost their individuality during the Great Depression and were captivated by the American Dream.

- In Ibsen's *A Doll House*, set design, props, costumes and stage directions as visual features, plus the auditory features of dialogue and sound effects, are used to represent the suffocation of the social expectations of the middle to upper classes in late 19th Century Europe and how these expectations stifled the freedoms and humanity of individuals.

- Many of Shakespeare's dramas utilise visual or auditory features that reflect contextual factors. For example, the storm in *The Tempest* is depicted visually and audibly through stage directions, character movements, sounds, and dialogue, and it can be associated with the British colonisation of the Americas in the 1600s, particularly the shipwreck of the Sea Venture in 1609 en route to Virginia. Similarly, in *Othello*, props like Desdemona's handkerchief, character movements such as Othello's fit, and Iago's soliloquies incorporate visual and sound elements to represent the values and attitudes of a Jacobean audience towards women and people of colour.

Relevant syllabus content:

Unit 3: The power of language to represent ideas, events and people in particular ways, understanding that language is a cultural medium and that its meanings may vary according to context.

Question 5 **(30 marks)**

Discuss how the representation of power within at least one literary text serves the interests of certain groups or individuals.

- Candidates may explore various representations of power in their texts such as groups, individuals, ideologies, places, conflicts and events.

- A 'group or individual' might be inside or outside the text. Some may consider interests beyond the text, like the author, the environmentalist movement, or a ruling monarch, while others will focus on characters within the text.

- The question prompts an analysis of how power portrayal serves specific groups or individuals. Candidates may explore how the text may oppress, silence, or marginalise others; identifying underlying social, political, ideological, behavioural, or cultural motivations. Power representation can serve interests consciously as an ideological tool or unconsciously by sustaining existing power structures. Stronger responses will explore these aspects thoroughly.

- In her novel *Beloved*, Toni Morrison represents the power of motherhood as a form of resistance against the dehumanising effects of slavery. Through the character Sethe, Morrison conveys power as the ability to endure and remember, while paying tribute to the sacrifices made by enslaved women. Sethe's narrative serves the interests of Black mothers and women both past and present, challenging readers to reflect on the ongoing struggles for justice and equality faced by this community.

- In much of her poetry, Oodgeroo Noonuccal illustrates the power dynamics between white Australia and Indigenous Australians, highlighting issues such as progress, land commodification, profit, and commercial gain. Her poems, including 'We Are Going', 'Time is Running Out', and 'Dark Unmarried Mothers', depict those in power as prioritising their own interests while simultaneously marginalising, silencing, or exploiting the Indigenous population. In doing so, her work aligns with and serves the interests of Indigenous activists who have historically pursued, and continue to advocate for, land rights and treaty recognition.

- Ibsen's play, *Hedda Gabler*, represents protagonist, Hedda, as trapped in a restrictive marriage within a patriarchal society that curtails her autonomy. Paradoxically, she has fewer opportunities for independence compared to Thea, whose lower societal status affords her the ability to leave an unhappy marriage. Hedda's endeavours to exert control through manipulation, destruction, and ultimately her own demise, represent her resistance against an oppressive system. In this way, the play serves the interests of the Feminist movement by prompting the audience to question the narrow definitions that determine a woman's role and perceived worth in society.

Relevant syllabus content:

Unit 4: How ideas, values and assumptions are conveyed, that is, how the ideas represented in a text are just one possible way of thinking about the world and may reflect a particular set of values and attitudes. Some literary texts reflect the system of attitudes, values, beliefs and assumptions (ideology) of powerful groups. In this way, literary texts may be used to 'naturalise' particular ways of thinking, to serve the purposes of these powerful groups, while marginalising the views of other less powerful groups.

Question 6 **(30 marks)**

Explain how your application of different reading strategies leads to complementary interpretations of a literary text.

- The focus of this question is that applying different reading strategies can result in 'complementary interpretations'. Candidates are asked to focus their application of reading strategies towards interpretations that resemble, inform, complement or relate to each other. For example, a candidate may apply a Feminist and Marxist reading of a text which lead to complementary interpretations of the text related to oppression and subjugation. Alternatively, an aesthetic reading may be seen as complementary with an ecocritical reading in the construction of striking and evocative landscapes. Candidates should be rewarded for engaging with this discriminator rather than simply outlining interpretations side by side.

- Candidates are advised to demonstrate their application of various reading strategies. Thorough applications of the chosen strategy should be rewarded. Responses that are less comprehensive may focus on singular or limited aspects of the text.

- An analysis of *M. Butterfly* through a gendered lens yields an interpretation centred on binary oppositions, potentially exploring how the play deconstructs the concept of gender identity. Alternatively, focusing on the representation of cultural identity can lead to a complementary interpretation that highlights Hwang's critique of Orientalist stereotypes and ideals, thus dismantling Orientalist mythology.

- A Marxist reading of Lucy Dougan's poem 'A Girl on a Rug with a Cat' highlights the invisibility of the worker by drawing attention to the overlooked labour behind domestic spaces and material objects, paralleling the broader issue of women's erasure in history and art. This interpretation complements a feminist reading, which explores how the girl's stillness and passive presence reflect the historical invisibility of women's experiences, particularly in domestic settings. Together, these perspectives emphasise how both economic and gendered structures render certain groups unseen, reinforcing intersecting systems of oppression.

Relevant syllabus content:

Unit 4: Exploring a range of critical interpretations produced by adopting a variety of reading strategies. Multiple readings of a text are possible.

Question 7 **(30 marks)**

Consider how the construction of conflict within at least one literary text enabled you to draw parallels with your own cultural experiences.

- Candidates are advised to centre their response on the 'construction' of conflict. Therefore, it is essential that they consider conventions when outlining this construction.

- The question assesses the nature of conflict within selected texts. Candidates are expected to identify and define the conflicts present, which may include interpersonal or intrapersonal conflicts, as well as social, emotional, cultural, environmental, or political conflicts.

- The essence of this question is that examining the construction of conflict in a text allows us to make connections or find similarities to our own cultural experiences. Candidates are required to focus their responses on their personal cultural experiences, such as growing up in rural Australia, being a young person, or experiences related to gender, sexuality, language, traditions, ethnicity and national identity. Therefore, candidates should be rewarded for precise and detailed comments in contrast to broad and generalised discussions.

- In Heinrich Boll's *The Lost Honour of Katharina Blum*, the conflict between 'The News' and the protagonist Katharina allows readers to draw parallels with the modern media landscape dominated by misinformation, fake news and surveillance capitalism. This situation illustrates the concept that whoever controls the information also controls the disinformation. The novel portrays the fragility of liberal democracy and represents the challenges to feminist politics then and today.

- The oeuvre of poet, William Blake, may be used to draw links to a modern capitalistic culture of economic and social progress and its impact on class, humanity and/or the environment. For example, his poem, 'The Human Abstract', can be seen to construct a conflict of duality within humanity; the ever-present battle of good and evil within us. Candidates may draw parallels to the rise in virtue signalling online and consider how the inaction of those in power or influence in society perpetuates poverty and atrocity.

- In *The Crucible*, Arthur Miller portrays conflict through scenes of mass hysteria, political persecution and moral dilemmas, highlighting the dangers of fear, societal pressure to conform, and the abuse of power. Candidates may relate this to their own experiences with scapegoating and the erosion of individual integrity in times of social unrest or political persecution. The play's themes of conformity, reputation, and collective responsibility resonate with many contemporary issues, such as the impact of social media, cancel culture and mob mentality.

Relevant syllabus content:

Unit 3: How readers are influenced to respond to their own and others' cultural experiences.

Question 8 **(30 marks)**

Reflect on the reasons why interpretations of a literary text may persist or change over the course of time.

- This question examines the relationship among text, reader, and context. Interpretations may endure over time due to ideological continuity, ingrained ways of thinking, or ongoing relevance to various individuals and situations. Conversely, interpretations may shift as a result of changing social or cultural norms, or the rise of new critical ideologies and literary theories.

- Candidates must reflect on the 'interpretations' of their chosen text, which may include their own perspectives or those of others. These interpretations can encompass discussions of ideas within the text, representations, values, attitudes, genre and conventions, and other related aspects. It is expected that within this reflection, candidates will reference the construction of their text.

- At the core of this question is the reasons why interpretations may either persist or change. Candidates should be rewarded for presenting explicit and well-justified reasoning that demonstrates a thorough understanding of the relationship between the text, the reader, and the context. Responses that resort to generalisations or sweeping statements should not be rewarded.

- Interpretations of T.S. Eliot's poem 'The Wasteland' often focus on personal fears, desires, fragmentation, juxtaposition, and allusion. Today, these interpretations remain relevant and have persisted over time. The poem's images of desert wastelands, broken landscapes, and political division echo current issues like the pandemic, climate change, and political conflicts. Furthermore, the rise of far-right ideologies today mirrors the European Fascism of Eliot's era.

- Interpretations of Euripides' *Medea* may persist or change over time dependent of how an audience receives Medea's reactions and behaviours as well as Jason's choices to remarry another woman. Ancient Greek audiences may have condemned Medea's character due to their own values towards marriage, femininity, the role of wife and mother. These ideas may persist with inherent, dogmatic ideologies still present around the expected behaviours of women, wives and mothers. Contrastingly, a modern audience may interpret the characters differently when they consider modern discourse around equality and infidelity, and while they may still be challenged by Medea's final choices, they may acknowledge how patriarchal societies can be seen to contribute to systemic violence.

- Candidates may reflect on the persistence of interpretations of Oscar Wilde's novel *The Picture of Dorian Gray* that relate to authenticity, self-acceptance and the tension between our personal and public self. These interpretations may persist over the course of time as they reflect universal human experiences, Given the advent of queer theory and reading practices, candidates may also reflect on the way contemporary interpretations of the novel have changed and may centre on the representation of homophobia and queer repression.

Relevant syllabus content:

Unit 4: How interpretations of texts vary over time.

Question 9 **(30 marks)**

Discuss the way representations of culture in at least one literary text can function to reshape values, attitudes and/or beliefs.

- The focus of this question is on how representations of culture within a text influence values, attitudes and/or beliefs. This implies that literary texts can have an ideological impact on their readers or audience. Effective responses will identify specific factors that cause the text to function in this way, rather than merely including the key term in their answer.

- In this question, 'representations of culture' may encompass references to the depiction of cultural groups, beliefs, attitudes, or values, as well as the portrayal of cultural spaces, places, and events. Candidates who engage with the nature of the construction of the representations should be rewarded over those who merely identify the representation.

- Candidates may discuss how representations in their text influence their own values, attitudes, or beliefs or those of a characterised reader or audience. Reward candidates who engage meaningfully with their own or an audience's values, attitudes or beliefs, and how they were reshaped.

- Representations of the pervasive nature of a patriarchal culture and the ways women navigate this may be explored in Caryl Churchill's drama, *Top Girls*. Candidates may comment of the drama's nonlinear narrative and structural choices, and the range of character depictions that encourage audiences to reshape their belief in a singular female experience and rather understand that there are many different ideas of a successful woman.

- Adiga's *The White Tiger* illustrates the transformation of Indian culture under Western influence, highlighting the necessity for a critical examination of India's social structure and entrenched hierarchy. The 'rooster coop' serves as a metaphor for the cycle of poverty and oppression that ensnares India's impoverished population. The protagonist, Balram, embodies the moral sacrifices required to break free from this cycle, though ultimately, he is unable to do so. Through his character, the narrative questions the belief in social mobility and the idea of solidarity among those at the lower levels of the social hierarchy.

- Representations of Australian suburban culture in Bruce Dawe's poetry may serve to challenge notions of cultural cringe that can characterise attitudes towards Australian literature and suburbia. For instance, in 'Life Cycle', Dawe imbues the suburban experience and cultural icons such as Australian Rules Football fanaticism with a deep spirituality and nobility that can alter attitudes and value judgements.

Relevant syllabus content:

Unit 3: How representations of culture support or challenge various ideologies. Representations may reinforce habitual ways of thinking about the world or they may challenge popular ways of thinking, and in doing so, reshape values, attitudes and beliefs.

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Text A Dot points 4, 8–9, 12–13 extracts from: Keene, D. (2008). Citizens in *The Serpent's Teeth*. Currency Press, pp. 3–5.

Text B Dot points 5, 7–11, and 13–14 extracts from: Maling, C. (2015). Easter up the Gascoyne in *Conversations I've Never had*. Fremantle Press, pp. 54–55.

Text C Dot points 6–10 extracts from: Hadley, T. (2018). *Bad Dreams and Other Stories*. Penguin Random House, pp. 113–116.

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