

Advice for candidates

- Write concise, specific answers. There is no need for pages of writing in any section of the examination. A higher weighting is not necessarily a requirement for more pages. Think more, write less, write better.
- Address the question. This is the fundamental component of *any* examination response, yet it is the most common mistake made. With every response that you choose, unpack the question and make sure your answer addresses it by planning your ideas and then evaluating them against the question before writing.
- For Section Two of the examination, where you are required to write about studied texts, you should study a number of texts and choose to write about text(s) that is/are most relevant to the question you are answering. Coming to the examination with only one text in mind, only one text studied, is not a good idea. The questions for this section are specific and complex, and it is not possible to use just any text to answer the question. Some candidates this year tried in vain to answer a question with a text that simply wasn't appropriate.
- Revise concepts and language, not just texts. Revising for English is not simply a matter of knowing the narrative or argument of studied texts. You must look closely at the textual elements and understand the various concepts that your texts engage with. Your study notes for each text should cover the syllabus content. You might even use that document to cross reference your notes so that you know you have understood the text in relation to the main syllabus concepts.
- Practise composition skills. Just like playing a sport, writing demands that you use various skills to be able to 'play the game'. If athletes don't practise skills, perform drills and train, they will struggle to play well when it comes to the big game. Watching the sport from the sidelines won't be enough. Completing the Composing section of the examination is just like that big game. Reading others' works or watching characters come to life on screen is not enough preparation. Practise the elements of composition across various forms and genres, and remember also to do this in timed conditions.

Advice for teachers

- Teachers are advised that neither a sample examination, nor the last examination held, provide a mandated format for any future examination. Later examinations can, and should explore other variations possible in relation to text choice and section structure within compliance to the design brief in the syllabus. Teachers are reminded that commercial sample examinations are not to be taken as representative or predictors of the ATAR course examination.
- Text selection. With the close assessment of studied texts in the Responding section, it is apparent that some texts that have been popular for study in the past are not useful for the requirements of this section. Teachers are encouraged to look carefully at the texts in their teaching program and consider that students are now required to have an understanding of a range of concepts, as well as a closer comprehension of compositional elements of the text. Teachers might also consider to balance the range of texts chosen for study so that some at least, are uplifting.
- Metalanguage. Teaching students to be in control of the metalanguage of this course empowers them. Being able to allocate a name to the features they observe creates greater confidence in close reading tasks, and it also allows students to write more concisely and focus on the effect of certain textual features rather than description.
- Close reading skills. It is important to consider that the emphasis of Section One is on comprehending text. This explains the specific targeting of skills in questions or the restriction to one element/technique/device in this examination. The emphasis on the reader is lessened, with questions targeting specific textual or language devices in more detail.
- Composing skills. It appears that composing still needs to find a comfortable place within the Senior Secondary English disciplinary space. It is an area teachers must

candidates needed to be aware that not all texts will help them to respond to questions. In fact, some texts chosen made the question very difficult to answer.

Section Three: Composing

Attempted by 11236 candidates

Mean 17.70(/30)

Max 30.00

Min 0.00

This section offered candidates a range of stimuli and the opportunity to write in various forms. Many candidates chose Question 12, but controlled, persuasive responses were rare.

The subject matter of imaginative writing needs careful consideration. A number of candidates seemed to believe that for responses to be effective, they needed to address topics of a grave and dire nature, use language that is contextually inappropriate and depict human relationships simplistically and sensationally. The graphic nature of so many responses appears to have been an attempt at originality. A noticeable problem for many candidates in this section was time management. With so many writing overly long responses in Section Two, many were left short of time in this section of the examination. Candidates needed to have time to develop ideas and structure, as well as finesse their expression in this section of the examination. Careful planning and editing can make an important difference to responses, as can explicit knowledge and revision of compositional elements and language devices.