![Government of Western Australia — School Curriculum and Standards Authority]
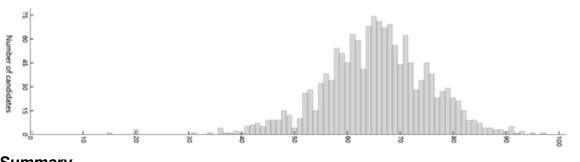
Summary report of the 2024 ATAR course examination report:
Literature

Year	Number who sat	Number of absentees
2024	1484	10
2023	1552	14
2022	1496	21
2021	1587	19

The number of candidates sitting and the number attempting each section of the examination can differ because of non-attempts across sections of the examination.

Examination score distribution

Summary
Attempted by 1482 candidates   Mean 65.31%   Max 97.08%   Min 0.00%

Section means were:
Section One: Response - Close reading   Mean 65.16%
Attempted by 1477 candidates   Mean 19.55(/30)   Max 30.00   Min 0.00
Section Two: Extended response   Mean 65.38%
Attempted by 1482 candidates   Mean 45.76(/70)   Max 68.83   Min 0.00

General comments
For Section Two of the examination, there was a reduction in the number of choices offered (from 10 to 8), and the genre-specific questions were placed at the beginning of the options rather than at the end. The examining panel was also careful to ensure that these changes did not lead to any significant reduction in the breadth of questions regarding the syllabus.

Questions were designed to offer candidates a wide range of opportunities to showcase their understanding of the course in this year's examination paper, with discriminators designed to match syllabus concepts. However, questions that were geared toward personal response were problematic for many candidates who struggled to connect with confidence or authenticity to situations in texts on the prescribed list that largely present marginal experiences.

Despite the crafting of questions to align closely to syllabus language and to emulate the style of question construction from previous years, many candidates overlooked the need to connect directly and clearly to the question asked.

Handwriting has become of critical concern in marking the Literature ATAR course examination.

Advice for candidates
- Use your time carefully so that you can make informed decisions about which questions to answer. It may be that you need to adjust your choice of which Section One text you use when you see the Section Two questions.
- Write clearly and concisely. You do not need to write 10 pages for an answer. Being concise is a valuable skill.
- Ensure you are using the language of the course and choosing the genre of text that is relevant to the question. Use course metalanguage purposefully and discerningly.
- Do not include essay titles or epigraphs. These take up your time and earn you no marks.
- Illegible handwriting can cost you marks. It is your responsibility to write clearly and legibly. Excessive use of asterisks to other locations in your examination booklet and writing which travels up and across margins is very difficult to read and follow.

Advice for teachers
- Spend time using previous examinations to break down keywords and phrases with students and to consider how they might (or might not) work with the texts your class has studied. In doing so, remind students that they will need to take this sort of active approach in the examination – not all questions will suit their studied texts.
- Make it very clear that memorising and reproducing previous responses has very little benefit.
- Broad terminology continues to be used in favour of more specific, meaningful terms. Encourage your students to learn and apply metalanguage to enhance their answers and showcase their understanding.
- Consider auditing the texts used in your Literature class. Answers drawing on less frequently studied texts often stand out and provide students with an opportunity to address questions in interesting and innovative ways. Make a point of considering how the texts you are using relate to current events, ways of thinking and shifts in the cultural zeitgeist. Many students lack cultural capital; helping them to build it will enable them to construct more meaningful answers.

Comments on specific sections and questions

Section One: Response - Close reading (25 Marks)
The texts in this section presented an opportunity to apply a range of reading lenses and strategies as well as presenting generic features that could add to the reading. The choice of providing minimal contextual information was deliberate so that candidates would not be basing their reading of the text on a context for which they had very little understanding or evidence.

All three texts, despite their different generic, contextual and aesthetic features, had a common focus on age and generational difference, which created a balance and equality of choice for candidates. Use of terminology was often an issue in this section. A common problem was the listing of metalanguage in the introduction and sometimes in the concluding and opening sentences of paragraphs, but without it being used in the analysis. There was an authenticity to answers for Section One that was lacking in Section Two.

Candidates frequently recalled texts, which is not a reading. The 'thematic reading' was a new inclusion that tended to limit answers and prevented rich discussions that a clearer reading lens would provide. Too many candidates included unnecessary epigraphs or titles to their answers. Rather than analysis of texts and their construction, many answers merely listed ideas and moved on without consolidation or provided a forced, incoherent or flawed reading with limited connection to the text or to clear evidence. This led to inappropriate conclusions being drawn.

Stronger candidates wrote well-structured answers with clear readings and were able to articulate their ideas about the texts through evidence and analysis in an effective manner.

The Prose fiction text attracted the least number of candidates but produced the highest mean. The full range of marks were awarded for each genre.

Text A (Drama)

Attempted by 530 candidates	Mean 16.50(/25)	Max 25	Min 0
Reading/s of text	Mean 4.46 (/7)	Max 7	Min 0
Close textual analysis	Mean 4.03 (/6)	Max 6	Min 0
Linguistic, stylistic and critical terminology	Mean 3.88 (/6)	Max 6	Min 0
Expression of ideas	Mean 4.13 (/6)	Max 6	Min 0

The clear stage directions and set design made this presentational theatre piece relevant and accessible. The title *Brainstorm* was connected well to ideas of an 'invisible storm' within the minds of characters or with the online world, in contrast with, or juxtaposed to, the apparent calmness of the outside world or characters' (including the audience) disconnection with their world. Candidates were preoccupied with the characters' use of mobile phones, despite the drama text offering many other opportunities to discuss stylistic elements and dramatic conventions. Consideration of the sensory experience that is drama would have elevated the readings offered. Most candidates connected with the presentational elements of the text and read the audience as a character in the scene. Stronger answers reflected on the nuanced relationship between teenagers and the audience and the stereotypes that were reinforced and/or subverted within the text. Candidates did not necessarily note the irony of the speaker *Gracie* being the oldest teenager and the voice for the group while she actively targets the adult audience. The familiarity of social media platforms and teenage stereotypes led to some verbose and overly simplified interpretations without strong technical analysis or evidence. Candidates who had a clear reading strategy with rigorous explanation of evidence and linguistic, stylistic and critical terminology connected to dialogue, set design, proxemics, breaking the fourth wall, or use of scientific discourse/jargon, were able to analyse and evaluate the aesthetic qualities of the text as a particular example of its genre. They could draw on the ideological functions within the text and the cultural revelations that it creates. Many candidates looked at the 'note on the play' and attempted to weave the staging of the play and its significance to their reading of the rest of the text. To this end, there was a range of comments on the plainness of the furniture; however, the most commented on properties were the hanging cables, plugs, adaptors and the wardrobes that transform into screens to the audience.

Text B (Poetry)

Attempted by 541 candidates	Mean 15.83(/25)	Max 25	Min 0
Reading/s of text	Mean 4.27 (/7)	Max 7	Min 0
Close textual analysis	Mean 3.89 (/6)	Max 6	Min 0
Linguistic, stylistic and critical terminology	Mean 3.69 (/6)	Max 6	Min 0
Expression of ideas	Mean 3 98 (/6)	Max 6	Min 0

The Jaguar was approached well by many candidates. Most candidates responded to the concept of aging within the text with a range of either empathetic or disdainful, angry interpretations of the father. Candidates needed to consider the intimacy within the relationship of the parent and child presented within the poem, the emotional range connected to the portrait of illness and the charged moments before and after death in the elegy by the child within the poem. Instead, many answers focused on gender

representations with a very small number addressing an alternative, such as Marxist reading. Some candidates saw the title and thus the car as a metaphor for the wilderness or nature that led to some imposed readings that were difficult to support. These candidates saw the father as representing humanity's destructive relationship with nature. There were several candidates who analysed the structural, stylistic and aural elements of the poem at a sophisticated level. Better answers engaged with critical theory and poetic terms largely connected to the car's transformation from gleaming to 'peeled and cracked' at the hands of the father and its eventual death, as a motif of destruction and violence throughout the poem. Some candidates engaged with the text without mentioning poetic techniques.

Text C (Prose Fiction)

Attempted by 406 candidates	Mean 16.62(/25)	Max 24.5	Min 0
Reading/s of text	Mean 4.56 (/7)	Max 7	Min 0
Close textual analysis	Mean 4.08 (/6)	Max 6	Min 0
Linguistic, stylistic and critical terminology	Mean 3.80 (/6)	Max 6	Min 0
Expression of ideas	Mean 4.18 (/6)	Max 6	Min 0

Many candidates responded to the gender, class and cultural context of *The Island of Sea Women*. The text offered a strong sense of place, but many candidates were preoccupied with the notion of patriarchy in a text that didn't invite it. Stronger answers on gender focused on the relationship between the old woman and the natural world that is in stark contrast to a patriarchal capitalist world centred around growth and industrialisation. These responses discussed the inevitable end of this way of life and the shifting ideologies and attitudes between the generations implied by the text. The text allowed for a rich discussion of character and setting that assisted candidates who usually ignore these key narrative features to engage with genre. While there was discussion of prose conventions, many candidates needed to draw on how the author's construction of setting, use of narrative point of view or development of characterisation were integral to the development of the reading. Some answers focused solely on syntax and diction over the reading of the entire text as a cultural representation. Some answers assumed the tourists to be Westerners which shaped the entire interpretation around resistance to Eurocentric attitudes rather than how the text works to shape the cultural interpretation of the women of the island who have defined and sustained their culture.

Section Two: Extended response (30 Marks)
There were many prepared answers in this section. Many candidates forgot or ignored key parts of a question. A key discriminator for this section were candidates who unpacked the entire question and selected suitable texts and pertinent evidence to support their arguments. Many candidates, however, only referred to a keyword from the question in the final sentence of their answer instead of developing argument around it throughout the answer. Engagement with the question was the criterion where candidates most underperformed. There was a marked improvement in personal response questions, with writing in the first person an important first step, as required of responses to Questions 6, 7 and 9. Misspelling of some key content and concepts that are core to the Literature course was concerning. A handful of candidates did not comply with the requirement of instructions to the genre-specific questions and were issued penalties. Candidates were rewarded when they engaged with the key terms and discriminators in the examination question.

Most candidates were able to develop their answers with a range of text examples. However, those who used their evidence to support a clear argument were most successful. Most evidence was effectively integrated and it was pleasing to note the fluency with which most textual examples were included. Candidates engaged less frequently with the linguistic

and stylistic terminology of their selected genre and wrote more generally about the texts, rather than discussing elements of authorial construction. Critical terminology was used successfully and some candidates offered sophisticated critical analysis and discussion of literary theory.