



# **Music Written Examination Student Samples**

## **(Improving Student Performance Workshop)**

### **For teachers of Music ATAR and General 11 and 12**

#### **2018**



## Seminar description

This workshop will focus on developing an understanding of standards for marking written tasks. Teachers will review sample responses from the 2017 ATAR Music written examination (all contexts), with the marking key, using the following question types:

1. composition and arrangement
2. short answer questions in cultural and historical perspectives
3. extended paragraph responses in cultural and historical perspectives.

These standards can then be applied to school assessment tasks.



## Activities for the session

- Today's session
- Welcome and introductions
- What is the link between examinations and school tasks
- Examination samples
  - Discuss sample
  - Mark (individually or in pairs)
  - Moderate
- Other discussion points



## How can examination marking inform the marking of school tasks?

Marking keys:  
can often be  
adapted for  
school tasks

Examination  
questions:  
make great  
examples for  
school tasks

Standards:  
helps us work  
towards a  
common marking  
standard



## Examination samples

- Questions that have been selected to work with today: where marking can be subjective
  - Q12 Composition: all three contexts
  - Q8 Short answer: CON
  - Q9 Extended paragraph: Jazz and WAM
- Past examinations on the Authority [extranet](https://senior-secondary.scsa.wa.edu.au/extranet)  
<https://senior-secondary.scsa.wa.edu.au/extranet/login>



## The samples

- Description of the question type
  - What do good responses look like?
  - Traps to avoid or common problems
  - School tasks – would you use exactly the same question or would you modify into a different task?
- This question
  - specific instructions
  - marks breakdown



## Composition – WAM

- Rhythmic word setting and melody writing
  - What do good responses look like?
    - Rhythm: natural to speak, repetitive with some variety, emphasise important syllables
    - Melody: obvious harmonic outline regardless of whether it's asked for, shape/contour, mix of steps/leaps, repetition with variation
  - Traps to avoid or common problems
    - Avoid peppering composition with random note values, avoid awkward leaps of successive large leaps, formless meanderings



## Composition – WAM

- Rhythmic word setting and melody writing
  - School tasks – would you use exactly the same question or would you modify into a different task?
    - Highly appropriate school task
    - Could be extended – harmonise the melody, write piano accompaniment quartet arrangement
- This question
  - specific instructions
  - marking key





## Composition – WAM

- Mark the first sample (WAM COMP 1)
  - By yourself (3 mins)
  - Moderate with a partner (2 mins)
  - Feedback to group
  - Mark for this sample: 19/24
  - Question mean: 14.47/24



## Composition – WAM

- Mark the first sample (WAM COMP 1)
- What the examination markers said:
  - Many moved out of the accepted range for their nominated voice type.
  - Lack of harmonic progression meant many found melodic contour and climax difficult to produce.



## Composition – WAM

- Mark the second sample (WAM COMP 2)
  - With a partner (3 mins)
  - Swap to another partner (2 mins)
  - Feedback to group
  - Mark for this sample: 14/24



## Composition – WAM

- Mark the final sample (WAM COMP 3)
  - On your own (2 mins)
  - Volunteer shares marks with the group
  - Mark for this sample: 10/24



## Composition – Jazz

- Melody writing and arrangement
  - What do good responses look like?
    - Melody is musical, relates to harmony, accompaniment parts are cohesive but not homorhythmic
  - Traps to avoid or common problems
    - Expressive devices logical (not peppered), voice leading not considered (especially in the piano and trombone parts)



## Composition – Jazz

- Melody writing and arrangement
  - School tasks – would you use exactly the same question or would you modify into a different task?
    - Highly appropriate school task
    - Could be extended – students create the harmonic progression; write a series of alternate piano parts/bass parts, etc.; extend to three horns
- This question
  - specific instructions
  - marking key



## Composition – Jazz

- Mark the first sample (JAZZ COMP 1)
  - By yourself (3 mins)
  - Moderate with a partner (2 mins)
  - Feedback to group
  - Mark for this sample: 20/23
  - Question mean: 11.74/23



## Composition – Jazz

- Mark the first sample (JAZZ COMP 1)
- What the examination markers said:
  - Generally effective, but many failed to complete the question and accidentals were often omitted over the  $G^7$  and  $F^{\text{min}7}$  (in key of  $Bb$ ) harmonies





## Composition – Jazz

- Mark the final sample (JAZZ COMP 2)
  - With a partner (3 mins)
  - Swap to another partner (2 mins)
  - Feedback to group
  - Mark for this sample: 12/23



## Composition – CON

- Melody writing and arrangement
  - What do good responses look like?
    - Flute melody is musical, relates to harmony, accompaniment parts are cohesive but not homorhythmic
  - Traps to avoid or common problems
    - Expressive devices logical (not peppered), bass too arpeggiated, drum not based on a single pattern, rhythm guitar written as though a piano



## Composition – CON

- Melody writing and arrangement
  - School tasks – would you use exactly the same question or would you modify into a different task?
    - Highly appropriate school task
    - Could be extended – students create the harmonic progression; writes a series of alternative piano parts/bass parts, etc.; convert to a vocal song by adding lyrics
- This question
  - specific instructions
  - marking key



## Composition – CON

- Mark the first sample (CON COMP 1)
  - By yourself (3 mins)
  - Moderate with a partner (2 mins)
  - Feedback to group
  - Mark for this sample: 14/24
  - Question mean: 12.10/24



## Composition – CON

- Mark the first sample (CON COMP 1)
- What the examination markers said:
  - Some melodies not related to the progression fully, often missing an accidental
  - Few students wrote two appropriate and varied drum fills, walking bass not well done
  - Many rhythm guitar parts were merely crotchets



## Composition – CON

- Mark the second sample (CON COMP 2)
  - With a partner (3 mins)
  - Swap to another partner (2 mins)
  - Feedback to group
  - Mark for this sample: 14/24



## Composition – CON

- Mark the final sample (CON COMP 3)
  - On your own (2 mins)
  - Volunteer shares marks with the group
  - Mark for this sample: 17/24



## Short response – CON

- Short response – compulsory area
  - What do good responses look like?
    - Carefully address the question, be specific, use good musical language
  - Traps to avoid or common problems
    - Gaps in the knowledge of the designated works, regurgitating a fact about the work in the wrong context, uncertainty on key terms (especially compositional devices, rhythmic devices, texture)





## Short response – CON

- Short response – compulsory area
  - School tasks – would you use exactly the same question or would you modify into a different task?
    - Use past examinations as a source of question types that can be adapted, avoid directly copying as they are freely available on the web. Map the syllabus content – a checklist of which dot points you have used in Cultural and Historical Analysis assessments – cover the full scope across the year
- This question
  - specific instructions
  - marking key



## Short response – CON

- Mark the first sample (CON SR 1)
  - By yourself (3 mins)
  - Moderate with a partner (2 mins)
  - Feedback to group
  - Mark for this sample: 20/22
  - Question mean: 11.18/22



## Short response – CON

- Mark the first sample (CON SR 1)
- What the examination markers said:
  - Many found the sections of the work problematic
  - Comparison of two sections was poor
  - Inappropriate musical language, e.g. describing melody as *smooth* or *rough* rather than describing range and contour



## Short response – CON

- Mark the second sample (CON SR 2)
  - With a partner (3 mins)
  - Swap to another partner (2 mins)
  - Feedback to group
  - Mark for this sample: 17/22



## Extended paragraphs – Jazz

- Extended paragraph responses
  - What do good responses look like?
    - Keep responses short and without any introduction, do not restate the question even in part. This question suits a table or bullet-point response
  - Traps to avoid or common problems
    - Writing a formal essay-style response, even more brief than the *extended response* from the earlier version of the syllabus that could be 2–2.5 pages in length. Discourage the strategic 25% penalty (planning to write on the compulsory genre in Part C) if students discuss it



## Extended paragraphs – Jazz

- Extended paragraph responses
  - School tasks – would you use exactly the same question or would you modify into a different task?
    - Create a bank of questions (and marking keys) from past examinations. Many of the questions are quite generic, but still avoid using past examination questions verbatim (just the suggestion of disadvantage is enough for it to be a problem)
- This question
  - specific instructions
  - marking key



## Extended paragraphs – Jazz

- Mark the first sample (JAZZ EP 1a)
  - By yourself (3 mins)
  - Moderate with a partner (2 mins)
  - Feedback to group
  - Mark for this sample: 9/16
    - Remember the mark is for both parts (a) and (b)
  - Question mean: 8.02/16



## Extended paragraphs – Jazz

- Mark the first sample (JAZZ EP 1a)
- What the examination markers said:
  - Lengthy responses with introductions generally a disadvantage
  - Must substantiate response with specific references to designated works
  - Part (a) many described features without *comparing*. Some provided more than two examples, but received no additional marks
  - Part (b) many discussed context, but did not link with musical developments and composers





## Extended paragraphs – Jazz

- Mark the other samples (2a and 3a)
  - On your own/partner (2 mins)
  - Volunteer shares marks with the group
  - Mark for this sample:
    - Sample 2: 8/16
    - Sample 3: 5/16



## Extended paragraphs – WAM

- Extended paragraph responses
  - What do good responses look like?
    - Keep responses short and without any introduction, do not restate the question even in part. This question suits a table or bullet-point response
  - Traps to avoid or common problems
    - Writing a formal essay-style response, even more brief than the *extended response* from the earlier version of the syllabus that could be 2–2.5 pages in length. Discourage the strategic 25% penalty (planning to write on the compulsory genre in Part C) if students discuss it



## Extended paragraphs – WAM

- Extended paragraph responses
  - School tasks – would you use exactly the same question or would you modify into a different task?
    - Create a bank of questions (and marking keys) from past examinations. Many of the questions are quite generic, but still avoid using past examination questions verbatim (just the suggestion of disadvantage is enough for it to be a problem)
- This question
  - specific instructions
  - marking key



## Extended paragraphs – WAM

- Mark the **SECOND** sample (WAM EP 1b)
  - By yourself (3 mins)
  - Moderate with a partner (2 mins)
  - Feedback to the group
  - Mark for this sample: 16/16
  - Question mean: 8.81/16
  - What the examination markers said: as per Jazz



## Extended paragraphs – WAM

- Mark the other samples (2b and 4b)
  - On your own/partner (2 mins)
  - Volunteer shares marks with the group
  - Mark for this sample:
    - Sample 2: 11/16
    - Sample 4: 7/16



## Extended paragraphs – WAM

- An interesting case (WAM EP 3a)
  - Mark for this sample: 3/16
    - Note this candidate did not attempt part (b) so they were awarded 3/8 for their attempt of 9(a). Not a bad return for minimal effort: remind your students to attempt all questions



## Other discussion points

- Improving student performance
  - Syllabus and structure
  - Support materials on Extranet: work samples, grade descriptors, past examinations. Coming soon: glossary
  - Are you confident in developing quality assessment tasks?
  - Are you confident in developing quality assessment marking keys?
  - Are you confident in using the grade descriptors?



# Thanks for attending

- Evaluation form
- Take the samples with you
- Exchange contact details
- See you at Consensus Moderation





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