



LITERATURE

ATAR course examination 2021

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.

Section One: Response – Close reading

30% (25 Marks)

Description	Marks
Reading/s of text	
The response presents:	
an insightful and coherent reading/s using appropriate reading strategies and/or reading practices.	7
an informed 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 imposing reading strategies and/or practices inappropriately.	3
a vague reading with 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 critical terminology suited to the reading.	6
a comprehensive use of linguistic, stylistic and critical terminology appropriate to the reading.	5
a consistent use of linguistic, stylistic and critical terminology mostly related to the reading.	4
some use of linguistic, stylistic and critical terminology mostly related to the reading.	3
infrequent use of linguistic, stylistic and critical terminology not always appropriate to the reading.	2
limited and inaccurate use of linguistic, stylistic and 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 largely clear way, but not always coherently structured.	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

Section Two: Extended response

70% (30 + 30 marks)

Description	Marks
Engagement with the question	
The response demonstrates:	
a sophisticated and critical engagement with all parts of the question.	6
a comprehensive and detailed engagement with all parts of the question.	5
a purposeful 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.	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.	5
textual analysis of text examples, language and/or generic conventions with some reference to cultural contexts where appropriate to largely develop the answer.	4
some textual analysis of relevant examples from the text that generally develop the answer.	3
some use of relevant examples in the answer.	2
limited evidence to support an answer.	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 critical terminology suited to the answer.	6
a comprehensive use of linguistic, stylistic and critical terminology appropriate to the answer.	5
a consistent use of linguistic, stylistic and critical terminology mostly related to the answer.	4
some use of linguistic, stylistic and critical terminology mostly related to the answer.	3
infrequent use of linguistic, stylistic and critical terminology not always appropriate to the answer.	2
limited and inaccurate use of linguistic, stylistic and 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 largely clear way, but not always coherently structured.	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. 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.

Content

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

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: 'In Defense of Our Overgrown Garden', by Matthea Harvey****Reading/s of the text**

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

- An eco-critical reading may consider the way that the natural and organic is privileged over the planned and tamed.

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'Mrs Jones' could be read as a representative of those who wish for order and formality in their worlds while the persona represents those who are happier when nature is left to run free.

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- The apples which break through the glass roof of a greenhouse, the rain barrel overflowing to create a small swamp, and the birds having a 'struggle' with the netting prompts the reader to question why we try to control nature when it is clearly a powerful (and beautiful) force.

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- The concentration on the minutiae of the persona's day could be interpreted as an entreaty to slow down and appreciate what we have in front of us, to pay close attention to the beauty which surrounds us.
- Candidates may make an aesthetic reading of the text, focusing on the way that language and conventions are used to stimulate the senses and create a pleasurable reading experience.

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 comment on the way that this poem is read in a context where appreciating our natural world has become aspirational rather than normalised. It may be considered noteworthy that there is a lack of technology present in the poem.
- Conversely, candidates may suggest that the lack of punctuation and 'incorrect' sentence structure points to the way that technology use has changed the way we communicate with each other. The poem appears to be a direct communication with a partner but it is not clear whether this takes the form of a handwritten letter, email, or perhaps even a recording.
- The epistolary form is revealed at the end when the persona writes 'To close I'm sorry there won't be any salad and I love you'. The rather formal 'To close' creates a sense that the persona has suddenly remembered that they were writing to someone else, ending their reflections on their garden. In this way, candidates might read the poem as really being a personal reflection and that the inclusion of the recipient in their musings is almost an afterthought.
- The title's use of 'Our' to describe the garden, and the final words of 'I love you' denote a relationship between the persona and the recipient of this poem. The rich descriptions of the garden could be interpreted as mirroring their relationship: dynamic, organic, beautiful in being haphazard.
- The humour of there not being any salad (maybe because the lettuces have been bombarded by apples), makes a return or connection to the opening statement creating perspective.

Linguistic, stylistic and critical terminology

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

- The poem begins as if it is a narrative ('Last night the apple trees shook...') but quickly becomes wandering and unfocused. The persona's communication with the recipient swiftly becomes free-flowing and organic, mirroring the garden which also seems to have begun in a planned way before being allowed to grow naturally.
- Candidates may comment that poetry allows writers to express themselves in personal and flexible ways. The writer of this poem is unconstrained by language rules, perhaps in the same way some gardeners may choose to ignore conventions by planting what they want, where they want.
- The use of an epistolary form for the poem could be connected to other literary texts of various genres. Candidates may comment on the way that texts written in this form often appear to be directed at a recipient but upon analysis are revealed to be much more personally reflective.
- 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.
- Candidates should not be penalised arbitrarily by counting errors. Instead, the standard of written expression should be considered in light of the effectiveness of the expression. Errors in spelling, punctuation and grammar, and deficiencies of structure that detract from meaning or ease of reading should be considered less favourably than those that 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.
- 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.

Text B: Extract from *Home*, by Larissa Behrendt**Reading/s of the text**

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

- The prejudice with which the narrator is treated is made more powerful through the way the text characterises her as an 'everywoman' – she is well-dressed, has what might be considered an anglicised name (Candy, or Candice), and no description of her physical attributes is given. She notes very 'ordinary' things and thoughts, such as buying postcards (and wishing for more 'naff' choices to send to her friend), travelling with her dad who, perhaps in good humour, chastises her for spending money on trinkets, and it is mentioned that she is from Sydney.
- Candidates might comment on the way that the reader could be lulled into assuming this is a white woman, and note that this reader-bias is then challenged when it is suggested that they've made incorrect assumptions just like the woman at the post office.
- The beauty of the landscape and the country area is contrasted with the more utilitarian conversation had between the woman and the narrator, perhaps suggestive of the peace of the environment vs. the judgement of people.
- Candidates may comment on the way the paragraphs are ordered to emulate the movement 'inward' of the narrator. In a literal sense, the narrator is venturing 'inside' the post office, but candidates may also comment on the way her journey into the post office represents a journey into understanding our nation's history.
- Candidates may comment on the narrator's appreciation of the town's 'publications' and 'old newspaper articles' and her desire to share this history with her 'best friend Kate'. By reflecting on urbanised and city-centric Australian culture, some candidates may celebrate the narrator's appreciation of rural history and the desire to share this.
- An aesthetic reading may focus on the way that the country town is represented through engaging and pleasing imagery whereas the conversation with the woman in the post office is curt, dialogue-focused and lacking in rich description.

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.

- The imagery constructed through evocative use of colours, temperature and textures creates a sense of beauty and the narrator comments on how much she enjoys the heat. There is a sense of natural affinity with this place as it 'embraced my face' and gave 'the feeling of warmth on my skin' contrasting the 'controlled too-frigid temperatures' in the car.
- A reading focused on the aesthetics of the text as generated by the language used may notice the way that both pleasurable and uncomfortable imagery is constructed. For example, the narrator comments that the heat is 'aggressive' and 'stifling' but that she enjoys the way it clings to her and that it 'embrac[es] her face'. There are many opposing uses of language in the extract, perhaps demonstrating that our responses and observations are not always clear-cut or obvious.
- Structurally, candidates may draw parallels between the opening and ending line. 'The meeting of two rivers' could be interpreted as a representation of White Australian and Indigenous cultures, more broadly, when paralleled with the interaction at the end.

- From a cultural identity perspective, candidates may comment on the ways the passage draws attention to the continued division that exists between Indigenous Australians and the wider community, potentially making links to movements such as Black Lives Matter and Change the Date.
- The text provides few hints to the narrator's heritage, other than mentioning 'the old language'. However, this is equivocal and could refer to any number of ethnic backgrounds. It is not until the final sentences of the passage where the reader is given hints at the author's indigenous family ties and the way that this makes an impact on the way she is treated. The woman in the post office makes casual, friendly conversation with no sense of hurry; once she hears that the narrator's family live just outside of the town, her facial expression becomes judgemental and she works with 'renewed efficiency' so that the narrator will leave the shop quickly.
- Some candidates may lack the cultural knowledge to connect the narrator's family living 'just outside' the town to indicating that they live in an Indigenous community. They may instead consider the rejection of the woman in the post office in a more generalised way (perhaps in terms of the narrator's family being 'from the wrong side of the tracks'). Those taking this position should not be arbitrarily penalised providing that their reading of the text is otherwise logical and well-reasoned.
- Candidates may observe that the narrator initially refers to the town as 'our town' but that there seems a widening distance, particularly when speaking to the woman in the post office, between her and a connection to this place. Their dialogue suggests that she is an outsider 'I guess you can pick a tourist' and that the woman (perhaps as representative of non-Indigenous Australians) has taken ownership of the place 'Are you staying a while or driving through?' From the woman's perspective, there seems only two options: to drive through or to stay just for 'a while'.

Linguistic, stylistic and critical terminology

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

- Candidates may comment on the observant and reflective voice of the narrator: the reader is invited to see her world in a nuanced and detailed way, and hence trusts the narrator's observation of the woman's reaction at the end of the extract.
- Conversely, candidates might discuss the way that the narrator could be considered unreliable: we see the events from her first person perspective. The narrator tells us that she 'suddenly feel[s] conscious of my suit and my leather shoes' when the woman in the post office remarks that she is from Sydney. Some candidates may suggest that the narrator's observation of the woman's reaction to her family could be influenced by her own assumptions or feelings of being out of place.
- The text sets up the small country town and its inhabitants as being anachronistic and small-minded, perhaps playing into stereotypes of Australian rural towns or, arguably, illuminating such attitudes that still exist in Australia broadly. The postcard the narrator writes on is 'sun-scorched and fading' and the publications of the local Historical Society are 'photocopies stapled together'. The woman in the post office is 'homely' and 'winklefaced'. These descriptions, and others, work together to construct a setting which feels dated and lacking in more modern, sophisticated ideals.
- Candidates may comment on the way that their own attitudes or assumptions about the narrator have been subverted by the text. We are invited to make our own judgement of

who this character is (she is sophisticated, educated, from Sydney, has money to spend 'at every stop', and is traveling in a 'large sleek car') which is then possibly challenged when further implied details about the narrator are revealed at the end of the extract. Candidates may reflect on the way that prose fiction can encourage us to identify our own unconscious assumptions.

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

Text C: Extract from *Bartleby*, by Julian Hobba**Reading/s of the text**

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

- The text invites a reading which foregrounds binary oppositions: the old and the young, the bureaucratic and the instinctive, the modern and the dated.
- A gendered reading of the text may focus on the way that assumptions about gender roles could influence our interpretation of the text. Analysis of how OLD LAWYER and YOUNG LAWYER could be portrayed in various gender combinations could be supported by considerations of social and cultural expectations of them.
- Candidates may comment on the ways the passage represents bureaucracy. OLD LAWYER is aware of the bureaucratic systems that surround him (red tape) but is unable to adapt competently to this. YOUNG LAWYER is represented as someone who has internalised bureaucracy. Candidates may consider the way YOUNG LAWYER's bureaucratic success has rendered him inept at engaging in casual social interactions.
- Candidates may consider the way that the setting of 'Today' is represented in this text. Despite the text being seven years old, the representations of office behaviours and intergenerational interactions remain current. Candidates may reflect on whether a setting which is marked only as 'Today' will retain the same meaning in the future, and how this text may be read by audiences years hence.

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.

- The way that the old lawyer frequently lapses into talking to himself constructs him as a rather doddering and stereotypical older worker. It seems that his age (and perhaps what can be assumed to be his years of experience) are not valued in the modern law firm. Candidates may connect this to discussions around ageism and the lack of value placed on older workers today.
- YOUNG LAWYER's behaviour and dialogue may be interpreted as constructing him as uncaring and rude towards his older colleague. The presentation of this character, particularly through stage directions such as [*He doesn't look up from his computer screen*] and [*... puts his hand up to stop him speaking ...*] play into stereotypes of 'Generation Me' as being patronising and lacking in patience for those older than them.
- The text starkly contrasts the old and young lawyer. The attitude of YOUNG LAWYER is condescending, particularly when offering (and then going ahead) to print off the instructions 'again'. The multitude of instructions already on the wall (enough to seemingly instruct how to construct a rocket) hints that this attitude has been ongoing and that YOUNG LAWYER has had a frustrating time trying to re-educate the old lawyer in more modern methods.
- Candidates may also comment on the inherent negative attitudes towards different generations that underpin this extract. They may notice that both OLD LAWYER and YOUNG LAWYER are portrayed in unflattering ways. Candidates might make links to current debates about older people not being able to secure employment, or to stereotypes of older people not being adept with technology. However, they might counter this with the negative portrayal of youth in this text, noting YOUNG LAWYER's rudeness and

condescension, and that they seem oblivious to the kind-hearted gesture that OLD LAWYER is trying to make.

Linguistic, stylistic and critical terminology

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

- Candidates may notice OLD LAWYER's preoccupation with the word 'ship'. While on the surface this may appear to be mere ramblings, some may comment on the underlying examination of discourse present in his dialogue: the way language evolves over time and the degree to which people evolve or do not evolve with it. The intertextual reference to 'Captain Ahab' works to support this.
- The repetition of the direction 'typing' and 'types, types, types' with the use of ellipses before repeating again, conveys pathos in the text. There is humour in this, but also a sense of sadness as OLD LAWYER waits patiently to ask YOUNG LAWYER to spend Christmas with him.
- Candidates may notice the way that props are used in constructing the contrasting representations of both lawyers (such as the coffee cup and the radio).
- YOUNG LAWYER and OLD LAWYER are engaged in a duologue and are ostensibly the only two characters on stage in this scene. However, despite their proximity to each other, they are often portrayed as not really interacting with each other. OLD LAWYER frequently lapses into personal musings; YOUNG LAWYER is often talking on the phone to someone off-stage, or is focused completely on his computer screen.
- Candidates may comment on the way that tone is created through the use of particular language. YOUNG LAWYER, in the manner of a parent or other authority figure, bluntly asks 'Are you finished?' This can be contrasted with the manner in which OLD LAWYER speaks, often verbosely as if to play into stereotypes of a rambling older person 'It's all a bit labyrinthine' and making references to Churchill.
- The use of *[pause]*, *[beat]* and *[silence]* works to emphasise the generational divide between the two characters. These gaps allow for humour and pathos to be constructed by the text, for example the implied judgement of 'Ben. He faxed it. *[Beat]*'.
- 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.
- Candidates should not be penalised arbitrarily by counting errors. Instead, the standard of written expression should be considered in light of the effectiveness of the expression. Errors in spelling, punctuation and grammar, and deficiencies of structure that detract from meaning or ease of reading should be considered less favourably than those that 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.
- 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.

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.

Demonstration of 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

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 2

(30 marks)

With reference to at least one literary text, discuss the value of literature as a social record.

- In addressing this question, candidates should make clear how they have interpreted 'a social record'. They may consider this to mean that literature can document history (to varying degrees of objectivity) or reflect the zeitgeist. It could be discussed as meaning a 'snapshot' of a historical, social or cultural moment, or a reflection or representation of society at a given moment in time from varying perspectives.
- The question allows for candidates to share their personal response to the suggested value so markers need to allow for responses which may discuss the lack of value that literature has as a social record. In doing so, candidates could suggest that the subjectivity inherent in fictional works means that literature should not be considered in this way. They may argue that literature has more aesthetic appeal than value as a comment on society.
- Candidates may consider the way that contemporary responses to literature can reflect what is going on at a particular time and place, giving readers an insight into the preoccupations of a society. For example, public outcry against the conclusion of Ibsen's *A Doll's House* demonstrates the acceptable family roles in his society. Similarly the allegorical nature of Miller's *The Crucible* reflects the over-reaction and paranoia of the Salem Witch Trials while using this tragedy to highlight the echoes of this event in the McCarthy Trials.
- Candidates may discuss the way that literature, such as Davis's *No Sugar* and Eliot's poetry can reflect the way that social structures and accepted ways of thinking were changing at a particular time.
- It would also be appropriate for candidates to consider how a particular text operates as a fictive social record. For example, it is revealed at the resolution of Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale* that Offred had recorded her experiences on cassette tapes, which were found by historians following the collapse of Gilead. In this way, the entire text functions as a social record: a way of preserving the experiences of handmaids in the oppressive Gileadean regime. A layer of complexity is added when the reader learns the text has been arranged and the record itself reshaped by sociologists.

Relevant syllabus content:

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

Unit 4: how specific literary elements and forms shape meaning and influence responses. Genres may have social, ideological and aesthetic functions. Writers may blend and borrow conventions from other genres to appeal to particular audiences.

Unit 4: how interpretations of texts vary over time.

Question 3

(30 marks)

Examine the way that at least one literary text has conveyed the beauty, joy and/or hope of a particular event or time.

- The question invites reflection on the beauty, joy and/or hope that *is* communicated by a text. Candidates should not be focused on how this isn't communicated, or how there is a lack of said beauty, joy and/or hope.
- The instruction to look at a particular event or time can be interpreted as being a specific event (for example, the persona's pregnancy in Plath's poem 'You're') or somewhat more broadly as a particular type of event (such as a wedding or walking along a street). Similarly, candidates may make specific reference to an era (for example, the Civil Rights Movement) or they may look to a period, such as the turn of the century, or the Enlightenment.
- Candidates are instructed to 'examine the way'. This requires in-depth analysis of how their chosen text achieves this outcome. Candidates who can connect literary conventions and stylistic techniques to communicating meaning to the reader should be rewarded.
- Candidates who focus on describing what a text is about, such as the plot of a drama or prose text, or the content of a poem, are unlikely to be rewarded as highly as one who engages with the instruction in the question to 'examine'.
- Responses need to focus on the beauty, joy and/or hope of a particular event or time rather than looking at the aesthetics of the text more broadly. Candidates who are able to see the complexity of beauty, joy and/or hope may be rewarded. For example, in 'Woman to Man', Judith Wright ruminates on the imminent birth of a child as being infused with hope but communicates that this is also a time of uncertainty.

In Davis's *No Sugar*, the Indigenous characters are undeniably marginalised by Euro-centric structures and policies; however, the way that Joe returns and distributes symbols of Indigenous recognition suggests there is hope in our future if we can acknowledge our uncomfortable past and work towards Reconciliation.

Jones' *Sixty Lights* captures the beauty of India during British colonisation. When the protagonist, Lucy Strange, finds herself married in India, she revels in the rich world around her. She admires the dark eyeliner of women in the markets and the colourful arrays of spices. Although Lucy is in a less than ideal situation, far away from home and in a time that is politically problematic, the text offers a romantic appreciation of beauty and admiration for Indian culture.

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.

Unit 3: the impact of the use of literary conventions and stylistic techniques.

Unit 4: how specific literary elements and forms shape meaning and influence responses. Genres may have social, ideological and aesthetic functions. Writers may blend and borrow conventions from other genres to appeal to particular audiences.

Question 4

(30 marks)

Consider how the ideological perspective conveyed within a literary text can perpetuate or challenge specific aspects of Australian cultural identity.

- The word 'perpetuate' may be interpreted to suggest that the aspects of cultural identity are not necessarily positives ones. While this nuanced reading of the word can be rewarded, students should not be penalised if they interpret this word as synonymous with 'reinforces'.
- The phrase 'ideological perspective' refers to the 'attitudes beliefs and assumptions' offered by a text as a whole (shaped by the perspective of the author) or the perspective conveyed by a character or group within the text. Stronger responses will articulate specific ideological perspectives constructed by their chosen text.
- Cultural identity refers to the sensation of belonging to a particular culture and the behaviours, indicators, values or attitudes that accompany this. In a similar way, cultural identity can become a powerful marginalising force for individuals who are unable to subscribe.
- Careful consideration of the limitations of the question is required. Candidates who conflate the terms 'perpetuate' and 'challenge' may offer a contradicting argument.
- Malouf's *Remembering Babylon* can be interpreted as challenging the ideology that Australia was founded by brave and intrepid colonial settlers. Instead, the text offers the perspective that Australia's early settlers were fearful, insecure and felt overpowered by the landscape and isolation they encountered.
- Harwood's 'Australia 1970' conveys an ideological perspective which, rather than allowing Australians to feel proud of our natural landscape and wildlife as representative of our own fighting spirit and uniqueness, suggests that it must fight *against* us to ensure its own survival.
- Enright's *Blackrock* challenges the Australian cultural identity as being one of egalitarianism and valorous mateship, highlighting through characters such as Ricko and Jarred that unquestioned adherence to these cultural norms can lead to toxic masculinity and a dangerous 'code of silence'.

Relevant syllabus content:

Unit 3: the ways in which authors represent Australian culture, place and identity both to Australians and the wider world.

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.

Question 5

(30 marks)

Discuss the way that the ideals or viewpoints conveyed within a literary text drawn from a different time reflect social and/or cultural movements.

- In responding to this question, candidates may choose to focus on a prescribed text which was written in a different time, or one that may be written contemporaneously but draws on events, settings or characters from a different time. Each approach is a valid way of interpreting this question. However, candidates who choose a text that is focused on the present time would not be engaging with the requirements of the question.
- Candidates should make clear which social and/or cultural movement(s) they are discussing. Stronger responses will be able to choose a specific movement (such as Romanticism) and demonstrate sound knowledge of it. Candidates who write more broadly about social or cultural norms (such as the place of woman in the workforce) would not be rewarded to the same extent. However, candidates may interpret 'movements' to indicate 'changes', and may successfully interrogate broader social or cultural shifts such as those which occurred post-war or as technology advances.
- Candidates should demonstrate deep understanding of the way that the text conveys the ideals or viewpoints they are focused upon. This may be through conventions such as plot structure, point of view, setting or characterisation (for example the manner in which Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*'s Daisy and Gatsby represent the ideals of the 'Nouveau Riche' and the hedonism of the 1920s Jazz Age of America). Other genres may convey the ideals or viewpoints through language, visual elements such as props, or lighting and soundscape.
- Texts such as Davis's *No Sugar* drew on events from Western Australia's past to convey viewpoints which reflected the contemporary Indigenous land rights (Native Title) and the Mabo movements. However, readers today can also consider the way that this text from our own past may reflect current movements such as Black Lives Matter and Reconciliation.
- Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale* similarly drew on events from its own context to speculate on how cultural shifts towards conservative ideologies could potentially result in damaging social structures becoming normalised. It too has gained a new sense of currency in the #MeToo movement and the social movement towards cancel culture.
- Romantics such as Keats used language devices and structures to convey the ideals of this movement, privileging aesthetic appreciation and playfulness in their poetry.

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

Unit 4: the ways in which ideological perspectives are conveyed through texts drawn from other times and cultures, and how these perspectives may be reviewed by a contemporary Australian audience.

Question 6

(30 marks)

Drawing on at least one literary text, discuss the ways that discourse can become a means of empowerment.

- Discourse refers to the economy of language associated with a particular concept or group. It can become a powerful force of inclusion (and exclusion) and can reflect dominant ideologies.
- This question is intentionally broad in its use of the term 'empowerment'. Candidates may naturally assume empowerment is a positive notion. However, it is equally valid, and perhaps more nuanced, to consider how discourse continues to empower dominant groups of society at the expense of others.
- For example, Iago's frequent use of racial discourse and the language of discrimination in *Othello* empowers him as it works to diminish Othello's noble standing and reintroduces many of the fears and prejudices Venetian society held. Participating in a racial discourse aligns Iago with power structures which are conveyed as existing within his society.
- Dawe's use of consumerist discourse in 'Enter Without So Much As Knocking' empowers the persona in a more abstract and nuanced way as he becomes aware of the ways modern life disempowers the 'everyman.'
- Friel's *Translations* highlights the way that discourse, in this case the use of the language of the oppressor, is both a means of empowerment and disempowerment. Characters such as Maire understand that if they are to function and flourish in British-ruled Ireland that they will need to learn the language of those in power. Others, such as Hugh, refuse to do so and find themselves disempowered.
- In Böll's *The Lost Honour of Katharina Blum*, an ostensibly 'truthful' or unbiased discourse is employed by the narrator as a way of elevating their depiction of events as being trustworthy (as opposed to the sensationalist, journalistic discourse employed by 'The News'). The language of the narrator is deliberately economical and distanced, providing it with a sense of authority.

Relevant syllabus content:

Unit 3: how representations vary according to the discourse. Different groups of people use different terms to represent their ideas about the world and these different discourses (ways or thinking and speaking) offer particular representations of the world.

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

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 7

(30 marks)

With reference to at least one literary text, explain how textual representations draw attention to the gaps and/or silences within a nation's history.

- This question requires candidates to identify specific representations or 'versions of reality' offered by their chosen text while connecting them to moments in a nation's history that may not be entirely explained, reconciled, or exposed. The phrase 'gaps and/or silences' is intentionally broad and could refer to the literal silencing of individuals or the historical tendency to 'gloss over' or ignore uncomfortable sociocultural moments.
- In addressing this question, candidates need to focus on textual representations. This could include representations of settings or places, events, people or characters, social structures, and so on. They are instructed to 'explain how', indicating that they should delve deeply into the language and generic conventions used within the text to construct these representations.
- Candidates should be clear about which particular nation's history they are focusing on in order to directly engage with the question.
- Candidates could explore the way Astley's *It's Raining in Mango* constructs a confronting and mournful representation of the generational impact of genocide on Indigenous Australian culture, or the way that Davis constructs a representation of corrupt white politicians who silenced and overpowered the Indigenous owners of the land in 1930s Western Australia in *No Sugar*.
- Miller's *The Crucible* draws attention to a significant gap in American history following the needless execution of women (and men) accused of witchcraft. The victims in the text are purposefully ignored and disregarded and once the hysteria in the town dies down, no accountability is demanded of the Puritan leaders. Instead, Miller suggests that history and culture has a worrying tendency to 'move on' and repeat the things it chooses to ignore or silence. This is seen through the resemblances between the text's events and the McCarthy Trials occurring at the time the text was produced.
- Blake's use of language and poetic devices in his *Songs of Experience* and *Songs of Innocence* poems often draw attention to under-represented segments of late 18th Century English society, such as children and the poor. Harwood's use of metaphor and allusion in her poetry often serve to illuminate the drudgery and lack of satisfaction felt by women in motherhood, a view largely silenced in Australia at the time of her writing.

Relevant syllabus content:

Unit 3: the impact of the use of literary conventions and stylistic techniques.

Unit 3: the ways in which representations of the past allow a nation or culture to recognise itself.

Unit 4: how specific literary elements and forms shape meaning and influence responses. Genres may have social, ideological and aesthetic functions. Writers may blend and borrow conventions from other genres to appeal to particular audiences.

Question 8

(30 marks)

Consider how the application of a reading practice has revealed unexpected ideas in at least one literary text you have studied.

- A key discriminator in responding to this question will be a candidate's ability to engage with 'unexpected' ideas. Candidates will need to articulate what made the idea unexpected in the context of the text they have chosen. In doing so, they may first acknowledge what they consider to be expected.
- Markers should be cautious of assigning value to what a candidate has suggested is 'unexpected' – what is unexpected for one person is not necessarily unexpected for another. However, candidates who are able to clarify what made it unexpected for them should be rewarded. For example, a candidate who is reading Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale* from a feminist perspective may find it 'unexpected' to see that the marginalisation of the women of Gilead is not experienced in the same way for all. They may consider the way that Serena Joy is constructed as an antagonistic character who perpetuates the structures that subjugate Offred. However, she too could be seen as being marginalised due to her inability to reproduce, and that she is also forced to endure hardships and humiliations.
- Candidates are not required to assign labels to reading practices. They may describe approaches to interpreting texts without necessarily drawing from 'traditional' or named practices. It is acceptable for a candidate to refer to broad practices, such as reading with a focus on context or adopting a personal response. Equally, the application of a critical lens could be appropriate. This question does not require candidates to adopt an overly theoretical approach by focusing on a different lens in each paragraph of their response.
- A resistant reading of Charlotte Bronte's *Jane Eyre* could reveal the unexpected idea that Jane Eyre is not actually a likeable or noble heroine. It is expected that readers find Jane to be an active character who resists many of the social conventions and class structures of the Victorian Era. However, a resistant reading would call into question the way she assumes Rochester is truthful in his reasons for keeping Bertha Mason locked away and she all too willingly agrees that she is a 'madwoman'. Jane returns to marry Rochester (a perceived excusal of his conduct) and Bertha is not mentioned again despite the cruel existence and tragic death she experienced. This divergent reading of a 'classic' text may be thought of as 'unexpected'.
- A candidate could discuss the way that reading Shakespeare's *Hamlet* with a focus on the way that it adheres to ideals of the 'Great Chain of Being' leads us to support Hamlet's pursuit of retribution and vengeance. However, taking a different approach and deconstructing Hamlet as a character can lead us to the perhaps unexpected realisation that he is in fact childish, petty and unfairly treats the women in his life who have done him no wrong.

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 9

(30 marks)

Explain how the construction of imagery has enriched your understanding of a human experience. In your response, make primary reference to at least one poetry text.

- In responding to this question, candidates should discuss the way that imagery is constructed through the application of generic techniques. Those who are able to coherently explain imagery *as the result* of techniques should be rewarded.
- The interpretation of imagery should not be limited to only the visual. Imagery may refer to the way that any of our senses (sight, touch, hearing, taste and smell) are evoked.
- The word 'enriched' is key here. Reward candidates who are able to extrapolate on this term and consider the varied ways their understanding of a human experience has been enhanced by imagery.
- This question requires candidates to consider their personal understanding of a particular human experience in formulating their response, rather than broadly referring to *the* human experience. A candidate could acknowledge how the construction of imagery triggers their own memory, promotes a visceral response or encourages them to think about an experience in a more complex way that remains with them long after reading the poem.
- Some examples of 'a human experience' could be the experience of being part of a family; the sparking of the imagination; developing and cultivating friendship, success, or mortality; living through or observing childhood; or feeling constraint or freedom. Candidates may also interpret 'a human experience' to be a specific event or undertaking. Either of these approaches is valid.
- It is important for candidates to engage personally with this question. They may consider how their pre-existing understanding of a specific human experience is influenced by their contemporary context, and in turn the ways this understanding is enriched by reading poetry. For example, candidates may consider the way that inclusion of varied sensory imagery in Keats' 'To Autumn' reminds us that a slow, considered contemplation on nature can be a rewarding experience.
- The persona in Harwood's 'Suburban Sonnet' practices 'a fugue' as the 'children chatter, then scream, then fight', an example of aural imagery which constructs the home as cacophonous with escalating sounds and discordant piano playing. This is accompanied by visual imagery as a 'pot boils over' and the visceral sensation of a 'wave of nausea'. The layered imagery in this poem works to offer an understanding of domestic life and the routine monotony of motherhood and childrearing.

Relevant syllabus content:**Unit 3:** the impact of the use of literary conventions and stylistic techniques.**Unit 4:** how specific literary elements and forms shape meaning and influence responses.

Question 10

(30 marks)

Examine how the distinctive manipulation of narrative structure in at least one prose text has contributed to the meaning that you have made.

- In addressing this question, candidates need to engage with the word 'distinctive'. This may include narrative structure which is particularly noteworthy in its difference or the way that it is outside of the 'norm' or readers' expectations; however, it may also include a particularly strong adherence to a 'distinctive' style that is expected from a genre.
- Candidates must connect the narrative structure to the meaning that is made.
- The 'manipulation of narrative structure' may include the organisation of chapters, the use of headings, subheadings and titles, the plot (linear, cyclical, hybrid), foreshadowing and flash-forwards, the blending of form or style, and so on.
- Candidates may consider the ways a writer's manipulation of narrative structure contributes to meaning in an overt or subtle way. For example, in Böll's *The Lost Honour of Katharina Blum*, the structure departs from that of the traditional representational novel in favour of a quasi-journalistic style of writing. Structurally, the inclusion of 'source material' and the slow, at times contradictory, revealing of 'facts' parodies the alleged objectivity of journalistic ethics. In contrast, the three discreet parts and epilogue of McEwan's *Atonement* more subtly reflect the movements in time and space between the different characters, and the way that memories and interpretations can be unreliable and fragmentary.
- Candidates could comment on the deliberate arrangement of chapters into 'Day' and 'Night' to reflect the domination and control endured by Offred in Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale*. The daytime chapters are rigid and restrained whereas readers are drawn into Offred's rich memory and internal life in the nighttime chapters. This contributes to the meaning of the text as Offred finds ways to stay active and resistant in her nightmarish reality in Gilead. Additionally, the 'Historical Notes' resolution of the text is a distinctive manipulation of the genre as it offers an abrupt and somewhat satirical change in style, offering both hope (in that Gilead did indeed fall) and dismay (Offred's voice continues to be taken from her).
- The narrative structure of Winton's *The Turning*, taking us on a journey through various parts of several characters' lives, contributes to showing readers how our adult behaviours and attitudes may be considered to be the result of both nature and nurture. The experiences of our lives each influence the person we become.

Relevant syllabus content:

Unit 3: the impact of the use of literary conventions and stylist techniques.

Unit 4: how specific literary elements and forms shape meaning and influence responses.

Question 11

(30 marks)

With reference to at least one drama text, discuss the way that the audience has been drawn into the action on stage through the stimulation of their senses.

- In responding to this question, candidates should consider the way that drama is a sensory experience. Simply discussing the dialogue as stimulating their aural sense would be a limited engagement with this question. However, they may successfully consider the way that stage directions instruct dialogue to be delivered in a particular way, and how this draws them in to the action on stage.
- Similarly, candidates who simplistically discuss what they see actors doing as stimulating their visual sense would not be rewarded to the same extent as a student who comments on the use of colour, specific props and lighting as doing so. For example, the climactic scene of Williams' *A Streetcar Named Desire* draws the audience into the scene through aural stimulus as 'cries of the jungle are heard', and through stimulating us visually as 'animal images' appear on the walls. The persistent sound of a streetcar and its headlights are portrayed as Stanley towers over Blanche and snarls, 'We've had this date from the beginning.' These stimuli become an assault on our senses, causing discomfort and anguish that connect us to Blanche.
- Candidates may appropriately consider that becoming physically involved in a drama's action through the breaking of the fourth wall, such as in Williams' *The Glass Menagerie*, a perambulatory structure such as in Davis's *No Sugar*, or due to the specific placement of the audience such as in Shaffer's *Equus*, is a stimulation of their senses.
- Shakespearean texts could be considered here, with soliloquies and asides (for example Puck's final monologue at the end of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*) perhaps being considered as a way that the audience's senses are stimulated both aurally and visually. However, as noted above, this must be discussed as more than simply hearing or seeing a character speak.
- Reward candidates who consider the role of the audience in this question. Candidates may comment on the way a drama text is constructed to appeal to a specific audience and this may or may not stimulate others.
- Candidates should focus on the text as prescribed by the syllabus and therefore comment on how it implies sensory stimulation (such as through stage directions or specific set design). They should not rely on specific productions, such as The Royal Shakespeare Company's individual interpretations of the text.

Relevant syllabus content:**Unit 3:** the impact of the use of literary conventions and stylistic techniques**Unit 4:** how specific literary elements and forms shape meaning and influence responses

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- Question 1 Text A** Dot point 1 (sentence 2), dot point 2 & dot points 4–6 adapted from: Harvey, M. (2000). *In defense of our overgrown garden* [Poem]. Retrieved May, 2021, from <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/51616/in-defense-of-our-overgrown-garden>
Quotes from: Harvey, M. (2000). *In defense of our overgrown garden* [Poem]. Retrieved May, 2021, from <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/51616/in-defense-of-our-overgrown-garden>
- Question 1 Text B** Quotes from: Behrendt, L. (2004). *Home*. University of Queensland Press, pp. 3–5.
- Question 1 Text C** Quotes from: Hobba, J. (2015). *Bartleby* [Playscript]. Playlab, pp. 9–12.

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