

VCE EAL Exam – Meet the Assessors



Thank you for joining us for this online event.
The session will begin at 4.00pm and end at 5.30pm (Australian Daylight Savings Time).
This session will be recorded.

During the session:

- We are in the webinar format of Zoom so your microphone and camera will be off throughout the event.
- Use the Q&A function to post questions throughout the presentation
- Use the chat function for technical difficulties
- Please email victesol@victesol.vic.edu.au for general inquiries or for assistance during the webinar.

Meet the Assessors 2021

Our purpose this evening:

- Feedback on 2020 examination
- Targeted preparation for 2021 – what's important for both teachers and students.

Resources from the VCAA Website

- The 2020 exam paper and exam report
- Papers and Reports for past exams
- Sample paper and criteria for 2021
- Examination specifications
- Assessment descriptors
- Text list for 2021 and 2022
- Study Designs and course advice
- Support materials, including Implementation Briefing Materials and a Unit 3 Sample Course Plan.

Northern Hemisphere Exam

<https://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Pages/vce/nht/resources.aspx>

Questions/Tasks

These are designed to:

- Provide an entry point for all students.
- Enable a range of responses.
- Allow for discrimination between responses by assessors.
- Section B - be comparable across the text list.

Section A – Listening and responding 2020

Two texts with brief background information provided.

1. A conversation between a brother and sister about going shopping.
2. An interview between a café manager and an applicant for a part-time job.

General features of tasks

- Tasks differed from each other in content, context and tone
- Use of paralinguistic features- laughing, sighing, different types of utterances (questions, exclamations etc), tone of voice, emphasis
- Mix of task (question) types – easy, medium and challenging questions
- Focus on close listening skills for comprehension, tone and delivery
- Students needed to consider literal and implied meanings

Question formats included

- Direct question, e.g. Why does...
How does ... Which piece of....
What does.....
- **Identifying** examples of language or delivery.
- **Supporting** response with language or delivery evidence
- Identifying or **explaining or giving reasons** based on dialogue interaction.
- Identifying meaning across sections of the text, e.g. **describing** a change of opinion

2020 Strengths in responses

- Reflected clear teaching of key knowledge and skills.
- Familiarity with question types and the sample and past examinations.
- Good use of note-taking space.
- Precision and conciseness – minimal extraneous information.

2020 Weaknesses in responses

- Incorrectly identifying tone and delivery.
- Not reading/listening carefully to questions, e.g.
 - Text 2: 2c. – distinguishing between Taylor wanting a job and 2b. Taylor wanting to work in one of Leigh's cafes.
 - Text 2: 2d. – pinpoint where in the text to focus: *'Leigh's opinion of Taylor changes **when Taylor asks him questions.**'*
- Giving more answers than the question asked for – VCAA policy re this type of response.

Weaknesses in responses continued ...

Lack of accuracy due to limited language skills e.g. 2d.: *'Leigh uses a smoothly voice to show he is satisfied with Taylor.'* Responses need to be meaningful.

Responses not focussed on the correct character, e.g. 1b and e.

Responses which are too general or the attempt to re-word resulted in loss the meaning eg to describe **delivery** as *'emphasis'* or *'pace'* (by itself) or *'tone'* as *'happy tone'* or *'sad tone'*.

Study Design – key knowledge

- **understanding ideas** in spoken texts
- the ways **structure, language and delivery of spoken** texts are affected by the context in which they are presented.
- the **conventions of spoken texts** including intonation, stress, rhythm, pitch, timing, volume, gesture and eye contact
- the **conventions** of spelling, punctuation and syntax of Standard Australian English.

Study Design – key skills

- identify, record and organise the **literal and inferred meaning** in spoken texts
- use **contextual information** to support understanding of the text
- **identify and explain relationship** between speaker and audience, purpose of the spoken text, speaker's views and attitudes and how these affect the **structure, language and delivery** of the spoken text
- **use references to the text** to demonstrate understanding of the spoken text.
- use written and visual material, where available, **to support understanding** of the spoken text.

Preparing for Section A 2021

- Don't underestimate the complexity of the task.
- Develop critical listening skills both in and outside the classroom by exposure to a wide variety of texts and voices.
- Use areas of interest – sports, current affairs, documentaries, interviews, radio, podcasts....
- Pay attention to the added effect of emphasis, pauses, sighs, hesitation, changes in pace and volume
- Learn to recognise tonal shifts in discussions
- Wider vocabulary will always be an advantage – best way to achieve this is through plenty of exposure to a variety of situations, formal and informal, in and out of class.
- Learn the difference between describing feelings and the evidence of the feelings, e.g. She feels.....because (evidence).

- Two reasons/examples need to be different ones, not the same one in different words.
- Use material from comparable exams in other states.
- Make sure students understand what a question is asking.
- Encourage the use of key words in the questions as a focus for listening, 'a job'.
- Marks indicated and space provided are a guide to the amount of information required in the answer.
- Practise a wide range of question types, 'how', 'why', 'support your answer'.
- Teach how to look for clues from context, e.g. 'have stopped arguing', 'avoided feeling annoyed', 'the **most** important'.
- Strategies for improving aural discrimination, e.g. 'Cracking the Code'/ Dictation – fair/fear; events/advance/offence.

Year	Context	Topic	Participants
Sample 2017	Podcast Interview Community Radio Impromptu Interview	Bilingual Brains The Joys of Cycling	Interviewer & Science expert. Friends Mario & Jing with radio host.
Nov. 2017	Radio Interview Conversation at home	Tea Drinking Travel to Antarctica	Author and radio host. A couple and a
NHT June 2018	Radio Program "What's your hobby?" Video Chat	Collectibles Life in different hemispheres.	Radio host and 2 collectors. 2 cousins
Nov. 2018	Motivational talk Visit to a neighbour	Being a professional hockey player Issue of disturbed sleep caused by neighbour's chickens.	One speaker – Joe Neighbours Peter and Jenny.

Year	Context	Topic	Participants
NHT June 2019	Family discussion Radio interview	Moving out of home Volunteering, with an emphasis on seniors.	Sisters sharing experiences. Interviewer and guest.
Nov. 2019	Discussion Radio interview	Fancy-dress party Garage sales	Two teenage friends Interviewer & guest (a new resident).
Nov 2020	Siblings arguing Job interview	Sister asks brother for a lift to buy shoes Student seeks job in a cafe	Brother and sister Café owner and student
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Section B – Analytical Interpretation of a text

- Text quote followed by a question – *After Darkness I*
- Text quote followed by a statement and a question – *Behind the Beautiful Forevers ii*
- To what extent – involves an evaluative judgment – no right or wrong answers but consider how well the writer supports his/her position, using the text – *Extinction ii, Nine Days I, Rear Window ii, Runaway ii*.
- How does the writer/text or How is/are...? – asking for the ways in which...
Persepolis I, William Wordsworth ii.
- Discuss – sift the considerations for and against the statement - the most frequent style of question. In 2020 28 of 56 questions had this tag.
- Extracting values – attached to a discuss or do you agree question – *Photograph 51 i, Nine Days i*
- Do you agree? - *After Darkness ii, Tracks i*. In 2020 12 questions had this tag.
- Reader interpretation – *After Darkness i, Extinction i, questions with 'Do you agree?' or 'To what extent do you agree?'*

Popular texts

Extinction	4.9%	10.8
I am Malala	7.3%	11.5
Rear Window	13.3%	11.2
The 7 Stages of Grieving	14.0%	11.7
The Crucible	7.5%	11.6
The Golden Age	5.3%	11.9
The Queen	13.0%	11

66%

Overall mean 5.6

Features of strong responses

- Depth of understanding of task requirements and knowledge of texts – including being able to use this to challenge ideas in the topics.
- Ability to weave knowledge of the text with analysis of the topic
- Insightful analysis and ability to select and explain relevant examples from the texts, even with lapses in language control
- An introduction which established relevance through a sharp focus on key words in the topic which set up the structure of the essay.

Features of weaker responses

- Text knowledge clear but not linked to the topic
- Answering only part of the question or writing on past questions.
- Story telling – demonstrating knowledge of the text but not much else.
- Communication of ideas limited by lack of vocabulary
- Attempts at relevance by throwing in final sentence for each paragraph that connects with the topic but not with what was actually in the paragraph.

Preparing for Section B 2021

What is the goal for students?

An analytical interpretation of a text which demonstrates

- knowledge and understanding of the text in response to the question
- Selective use of the text to respond to a specific question
- A coherent and effective structure in response to a specific question - organisation of material in an analytical way
- Expressive and effective language appropriate to the topic

Study Design - Key knowledge

- The world of the text as presented by the author/director and the explicit and implied values it expresses.
- The ways an author/director creates meaning and builds the world of the text.
- The ways in which readers' interpretation of text differ and why.
- The features of analytical interpretations of texts: structure, conventions and language.

Choosing texts

- ✓ Relevance, e.g. age, experience, issues, location.
- ✓ Pre-teaching needed, e.g. cultural knowledge, Australian history etc
- ✓ Sensitive issues, e.g. graphic details of horror
- ✓ Length – does it match reading skills of students?
- ✓ Linguistic accessibility – can the students read the text independently?
- ✓ Structural accessibility- time shifts, multiple narrative voices etc may need supporting explanations
- ✓ Does it contain clear big issues which can stimulate discussion?
- ✓ What values underpin the text and what issues arise for characters or society as a consequence of these values?

Knowledge and understanding of text

- Choose accessible texts (for your students).
- Key knowledge – 'an understanding of the world of a text and the explicit and implied values it expresses'
- Explicitly teach the ways in which authors create meaning and build the world of the text
- Tackle the complex ideas behind the story.
- Encourage the development of their own interpretation in response to the text
- Short stories & poems – look for links so that students can use the stories/poems to support their analytical interpretation. Task requires reference to at least two.
- Students are usually well-prepared in respect to themes and characters so highlight structure throughout discussions.

Structure and organisation of writing

- Teach how to respond to a wide range of question types
- Focus on introductions which address the specifics of the question.
- Concise introductions will give context, contention and a guide to how the response will be structured e.g. key ideas which will be paragraph topics.
- Demonstrate strategies for analysing the questions
- Begin paragraphs with an idea rather than a text example or character
- Body paragraphs should contain a clear point that links directly to the essay topic.

n "The 7 Stages of Grieving", a play depicting stages of Aboriginal history and their current plight, Wesley Enoch as well as Deborah Mailman explore the importance of storytelling in order to make their voices heard. The playwrights reveal that storytelling has a healing effect on the subjugated individuals in a society entrenched in racism.

Furthermore, the playwrights convey that getting the young generation of Aboriginal community to hear their ancestors' stories is vital to pass down their traditions as well as their grief. Ultimately, Enoch and Mailman demonstrate that by telling Aboriginal stories to the white community, it allows reconciliation between the two cultures to achieve.

Introduction

- brief
- responds directly to the topic
- shows a plan for the essay as follows:

The healing effect of story-telling

Traditions are passed down by younger generations hearing their ancestors' stories.

Telling stories to the white community allows reconciliation to occur

Expressive and effective language

- Write analytically not descriptively.
- Using a dictionary – check below the first meaning. Macquarie is the standard used in all VCAA work.
- Treat each question as unique
- Learning words, phrases, metalanguage can be helpful.
- Good writing is rewarded so practice improving how to write
- Control of language enables ideas to be expressed in depth
- Students need to understand and be able to use language which conveys comparison e.g. likewise, similarly, in the same way, although, by contrast, even though, however, on the contrary, regardless, whereas, while.
- Ample writing practice – paragraphs, introductions etc. to keep working on grammar and clarity of writing.

Analytical Writing

Section B – an analytical interpretation of a text

Section C - Analyse the ways in which ...

- Analysis involves considering different interpretations, synthesising ideas and forming one's own interpretation. (see key skills Outcome 1 Unit 3)
- TO WHAT EXTENT allows for consideration of different interpretations.
- Analysis involves stepping back from the material to consider it objectively
- Analytical writing starts with analytical thinking.
- Analytical thinking involves asking questions.
- Analytical thinking involves exploring HOW and WHY

Section C Task Material

- Single item – transcript of a speech at a local meeting
- Accessible, appropriate, clear for the majority of students.
- Length – appropriate
- Clear point of view with carefully constructed argument.
- Enough material to analyse – students of all levels could demonstrate their skills.
- Two visuals
- Clear instructions about how to use the material

Question 1

- Six short answer questions.
- Questions which expect understanding of specific parts of the text and across the text
- To demonstrate understanding answers need to be precise – information in the report gives the correct answers and examples of incorrect responses.
- The most common errors came from not reading the question properly or not understanding the question, e.g. 'Explain why..' is looking for reasons.

Question 2- strong responses

- Clear understanding of context of the speech and opinions expressed
- Integration of analysis of language and argument
- Exploration of the implications of specific language choices
- Analysis expressed with a range of precise vocabulary
- Clear links between visuals and words, exploring how the speaker's choices positioned the listener

Question 2 – weaker responses

- Summarised arguments without analysis
- Generalised descriptions of persuasive techniques
- Difficulty describing tone
- Tendency to explain the material rather than analyse it
- Little reference to visuals and without connection to the text

Visual 1 – crashed drone

- ✓ Features the drone as a centrepiece while the user is stepping on the farm
- ✓ Highlights the idea of uncontrollable drones
- ✓ Show how hard it can be to find a drone in a large area
- ✓ Foregrounding the drone magnifies the severe damage it can cause
- ✓ Blurring the woman to hide the identity of the tourist

Visual 2 – medical aid via drone

- Demonstrates the efficiency and benefit offered by drones
- Positioned to complement the speaker's story
- Medical kit shows the correct use of drones
- Universally recognised symbol of medical aid – emotive appeal of this
- No other distractions heightens the impact of this image
- Contrast with the first image

Section C 2021

The goal for students is to

- Understand the main ideas and points of view (the arguments) in the unseen text/s
- Analyse the the use of argument and language features to try to persuade
- Have control of the mechanics of English required for these tasks

Understanding the task material

- Short answer questions require students to demonstrate understanding of the main ideas/point of view in the material
- A range of question types

Section C Question 1

- Read questions carefully, e.g. provide the main problem and an example – not 2 examples.
- Look for implied meaning, e.g. d
- Processing to 'explain why' – b

Section C Question 2

- 'language' refers to written, spoken and visual language.
- Students will not be required to:
evaluate the relative merits of arguments or
the effectiveness of the use of persuasive language in any
text(s).

The use of argument

- What do we understand by 'argument'? A process of reasoning, a series of reasons, statement or fact tending to support a point.
- Construction and intended effect of the argument - Use the *Background Information* provided to consider both audience and context and how these are likely to have influenced the crafting of the text.
- Argument is used to position the audience – consider how it is intended to contribute to the overall persuasive intent in the context provided.
- An argument can be both 'bad' and persuasive – not required to evaluate the argument.

The use of argument and language

- Analysis of the use of argument IS part of the task – evaluation of the soundness of the argument is NOT
- Analysis of the use of language to persuade IS part of the task – evaluation of whether the chosen use is effective/likely to be effective is NOT
- A common mistake in EAL Section C writing is to include 'therefore the reader/listener will be convinced.'

Analysis of language and visual

- Read the text for the flow/structure of argument and how this is positioning the reader
- More than one text – identify links between the two points of view.
- Using language to persuade has an 'audience focus'
- Focus on specific words and phrases
- Emphasise 'how' language persuades in the context of the particular text.
- Model what is required with short items – focus on the choice of language and the use of visuals – both what you see and its implications.

Analysis of language and visual

- The use of argument – consider words associated with reasons, e.g. because, for, since, the reason being, follows from the fact that.
- "WHY?" is the question you want answered about the choice of language and visuals
- Two pieces with different opinions, consider language of comparison, e.g. 'Whereas (name) focuses on....., (name) seeks to alarm the reader by.....
- Use a colour-coding task to analyse task material and responses.
- Time management in the examination

Analysis of language and visual

- As with listening, teach the skills gradually and provide lots of opportunity for practice.
- Teach formal language appropriate for the task, e.g. 'financial self-interest' rather than 'hip pocket nerve'.
- Begin by identifying the argument/s and then the language, or the HOW, used to reach the audience.
- Practise summarising from a list of examples to a word or phrase which covers the idea of these examples.
- Provide students with a strong verb table and different ways of phrasing the analysis.

What to avoid

- Re-writing the background information as an introduction. Overly long introductions compromise the actual analysis.
- Generic explanations of techniques of persuasion
- Describing or re-phrasing what the writer is saying...He/she means that...
- The task is analysis, not description.

Colour code task

Consider analysing a response or sample of writing as follows:

- Red – argument
- Yellow – tone
- Pink – visual
- Green – language use
- Blue – intended effect

Sample colour coding

In the weekly message in Spire Primary School's newsletter published on the school's website, the Principal, Denise Walker, **contends that unnecessary packaging for food must be reduced.**

Benevolent and worried in tone, she aims to target parents of students in Spire Primary School with the **inclusion of an accompanying image to reinforce her point of view.** In response to the

Principal's message, a parent, Louise, **denigrates walker's contention that packaging needs to be reduced.** **Critical and informal in tone**, she appeals to not only the Principal but also other parents.

Upon commencement, **Walker advocates that excessive packaging for food causes damage to the environment and therefore must be reduced.** **She attempts to establish a friendly rapport with the readers through the use of inclusive language "we", and in appealing to their sense of social responsibility by asserting "we are responsible for the future of our world",** **readers may be instilled with a feeling of obligation to help preserve the planet.**

Sample introduction

As the increase in the recreational use of drones by many of the tourists visiting the district has caused concern to the local farming businesses, the local council of Byways organises a meeting to discuss the issue. Warwick Bandle, who is a young farmer of the suburb, contends in a concerned and reasonable tone that inexperienced drone users should be better restricted by the rules and reminds the council of the vital role that farmers play in the suburb. His speech targets a listener of local residents and two images are included to complement his contention.

Analytical language

Consider the language which connects ideas in the analysis:

From the outset, Bandle commences his speech...

He follows this....

Coupled with an image that features.....

Moreover, through the listing of negative outcomes...

By utilising anecdotal evidence...

Further reinforced by his generalisation....

Ultimately, Bandle claims that....

Through the consecutive short sentences such as....

By establishing a striking dichotomy between....

Overall, Bandle.... At the same time,.....

Resources

- Encourage students to be aware of issues which are making the news
- Use opinion pieces and editorials about these issues in daily newspapers.
- Letters to the editor are often accompanied by a connected visual – provides stimulus for discussion about what writers do. These are a good way to 'start small'.
- Assist with the language appropriate to discussing visuals – focus on how they connect with the text.
- Remember that students need to answer WHY and HOW in relation to visual and written language.

Contact

If you have further questions about the Study Design or the examination please contact:

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