



Victorian Association for
the Teaching of English

VATE Publications

2012

ENGLISH

Written examination sample paper

The scenario in Section C has been prepared for the sole purpose of providing sample material for the VATE English written examination sample paper. Names of individuals and the characters are fictional, with no comparison with, or comment on, any living individual intended. The views expressed in the scenario are not necessarily those of the writer or publisher.

Total writing time: 3 hours

TASK BOOK

<i>Section</i>	<i>Number of questions</i>	<i>Number of questions to be answered</i>	<i>Marks</i>
A — Text response (Reading and responding)	20	1	20
B — Writing in Context (Creating and presenting)	4	1	20
C — Analysis of language use (Using language to persuade)	1	1	20
			Total 60

Materials

Task book of 12 pages, including **Examination assessment criteria** on page 12.

You may use an English and/or bilingual printed dictionary.

Instructions

You must complete all **three sections** of the examination.

All answers must be written in English.

You must **not** write on two film texts in the examination.

Section A — Text response (Reading and responding) — Write the name of your selected text at the top of your answer page.

Section B — Writing in Context (Creating and presenting) — Write your **Context** and the name of your selected text at the top of your answer page.

Section C — Analysis of language use (Using language to persuade)

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Section A — Text response (Reading and responding)

Instructions for Section A

Section A requires students to complete **one analytical/expository** piece of writing in response to **one** topic (either **i.** or **ii.**) on **one** selected text.

Indicate at the top of your answer page whether you are answering **i.** or **ii.**

In your response you must develop a sustained discussion of **one** selected text from the Text list below.

Your response must be supported by close reference to and analysis of the selected text.

For collections of poetry or short stories, you may choose to write on several poems or short stories, or on one or two in very close detail, depending on what you think is appropriate.

Your response will be assessed according to the criteria set out on page 12 of this book.

Section A is worth one-third of the total assessment for the examination.

If you write on a film text in Section A, you must **not** write on a film text in Section B.

Text list

1. *A Christmas Carol*..... Charles Dickens
2. *A Farewell to Arms* Ernest Hemingway
3. *A Human Pattern: Selected Poems* Judith Wright
4. *Bypass: the story of a road* Michael McGirr
5. *Cat's Eye*..... Margaret Atwood
6. *Cosi* Louis Nowra
7. *Dear America — Letters Home from Vietnam* Edited by: Bernard Edelman
8. *Dreams from My Father*..... Barack Obama
9. *Henry IV Part 1* William Shakespeare
10. *Interpreter of Maladies* Jhumpa Lahiri
11. *Life of Pi*..... Yann Martel
12. *On the Waterfront* Director: Elia Kazan
13. *Ransom* David Malouf
14. *The Old Man Who Read Love Stories*..... Director: Rolf de Heer
15. *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*..... Mohsin Hamid
16. *The War Poems* Wilfred Owen
17. *Things We Didn't See Coming* Steven Amsterdam
18. *Twelve Angry Men* Reginald Rose
19. *Will You Please Be Quiet, Please?* Raymond Carver
20. *Year of Wonders* Geraldine Brooks

1. *A Christmas Carol*

- i. ‘*A Christmas Carol* demonstrates the importance of human connections and social traditions in a largely bleak world.’

Discuss.

OR

- ii. “I will live in the Past, the Present, and the Future!”

‘Scrooge’s redemption proves that destinies may be changed.’

Discuss.

2. *A Farewell to Arms*

- i. “This was the end of the trap.”

Is *A Farewell to Arms* predominantly a story about being trapped?

OR

- ii. To what extent are Catherine and Frederic victims of war?

3. *A Human Pattern: Selected Poems*

- i. ‘In her poetry, Wright examines the relationships humans form with each other and with nature.’

Discuss.

OR

- ii. ‘Judith Wright’s poetry speaks in many voices in order to discover what Australia is like.’

Discuss.

4. *Bypass: the story of a road*

- i. ‘*Bypass: the story of a road* suggests that restlessness is simply part of human nature.’

Discuss.

OR

- ii. ‘It takes the bicycle journey for McGirr to be sure of his place in the world.’

Do you agree?

5. *Cat’s Eye*

- i. ‘It is through Elaine’s paintings that Atwood depicts her character’s journey to self-knowledge.’

Do you agree?

OR

- ii. In what ways does Atwood explore the impact of childhood experiences on the adult self?

6. *Cosi*

- i. 'In *Cosi*, Nowra suggests that theatre is more than mere entertainment.'
Discuss.

OR

- ii. Do any of the characters in *Cosi* overcome their limitations?

7. *Dear America — Letters Home From Vietnam*

- i. 'Despite the horrors of war, *Dear America* shows that the human spirit remains undefeated.'
Do you agree?

OR

- ii. 'The careful arrangement of material in *Dear America* gives insight into the Vietnam War's effect on a generation of young men.'
Discuss.

8. *Dreams from My Father*

- i. 'The places Obama lives in are as influential in forming his character as the people he meets.'
Do you agree?

OR

- ii. 'Obama's father is never truly absent.'
Discuss.

9. *Henry IV Part 1*

- i. 'Though a comic play, *Henry IV Part 1* conveys Shakespeare's serious concerns about war and rulers.'
Discuss.

OR

- ii. "So shaken are we, so wan with care."
To what extent are King Henry's worries diminished by the end of the play?

10. *Interpreter of Maladies*

- i. '*Interpreter of Maladies* reflects that adaptation to culture is as important as cultural identity.'
Do you agree?

OR

- ii. 'The settings of each story are crucial to our understanding of Lahiri's central message.'
Do you agree?

11. *Life of Pi*

- i. ‘*Life of Pi* is a novel about the power of believing.’

Do you agree?

OR

- ii. How does *Life of Pi* force the reader to examine the nature of fiction and fact?

12. *On the Waterfront*

- i. How does the film position us to sympathise with Terry Malloy?

OR

- ii. “You wanna hear my philosophy of life? Do it to him before he does it to you.”

‘*On the Waterfront* is a film about separating false values from real ones.’

Discuss.

13. *Ransom*

- i. “This old fellow, like most storytellers, is a stealer of other men’s tales, of other men’s lives.”

‘Malouf uses *Ransom* to explore the significance of storytelling.’

Discuss.

OR

- ii. ‘Despite being king, Priam is, in the end, simply a man.’

Do you agree?

14. *The Old Man Who Read Love Stories*

- i. “Antonio Bolivar, you are like us, but you are not one of us.”

Does Antonio ever truly belong anywhere?

OR

- ii. Why does Rolf de Heer make such expansive use of flashbacks in *The Old Man Who Read Love Stories*?

15. *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*

- i. How is the reader of *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* affected by its narrative voice and inconclusive ending?

OR

- ii. “I am a lover of America.”

Do Changez’s words at the start of the novel prove to be true?

16. *The War Poems*

- i. In what ways do Owen's poems give voice to the suffering of the soldiers?

OR

- ii. 'War subverts the relationship between man and nature.'

Is this how Owen portrays the war?

17. *Things We Didn't See Coming*

- i. 'All relationships in the novel are about survival, not love.'

Do you agree?

OR

- ii. "I want to trust her completely."

Is the narrator able to trust anyone?

18. *Twelve Angry Men*

- i. '*Twelve Angry Men* shows that one man can make a difference.'

Do you agree?

OR

- ii. 'The setting of the play is just as important as the dialogue.'

Is this how you see *Twelve Angry Men*?

19. *Will You Please Be Quiet, Please?*

- i. 'In Carver's world the family is shown to be dysfunctional and unattractive.'

Do you agree?

OR

- ii. 'It is what the characters do, more than what they say, that most powerfully conveys their feelings.'

Discuss.

20. *Year of Wonders*

- i. "I woke to the slow tolling of our church bell, ringing once again for the dead."

'Brooks gives the reader limited room for optimism in her novel.'

Do you agree?

OR

- ii. "Why should this good woman lie here, in such extremity, when a man like my father lived to waste his reason on drunkenness."

'There is little justice in *Year of Wonders*.'

Discuss.

Section B — Writing in Context (Creating and presenting)

Instructions for Section B

Section B requires students to complete an extended written response.

In your writing, you must draw on ideas suggested by **one** of the following **four** Contexts.

Your writing must draw directly from **at least one** selected text that you have studied for this Context and be based on the ideas in the prompt.

Your response may be an expository, persuasive or imaginative piece of writing.

If you write on a selected film text in Section A, you must **not** write on a selected film text in Section B.

Section B is worth one-third of the total assessment for the examination.

Your response will be assessed according to the criteria set out on page 12 of this book.

Context 1 — The imaginative landscape

1. *Island* Alistair MacLeod
2. *One Night The Moon* Director: Rachel Perkins
3. *Peripheral Light* John Kinsella
4. *Tirra Lirra by the River* Jessica Anderson

Prompt

‘Our life experiences shape our connections to the landscape.’

Task

Complete an extended written response in expository, persuasive or imaginative style. Your writing must draw from **at least one** selected text for this Context and explore the idea that **‘our life experiences shape our connections to the landscape’**.

OR

Context 2 — Whose reality?

5. *A Streetcar Named Desire* Tennessee Williams
6. *Spies* Michael Frayn
7. *The Lot: In Words* Michael Leunig
8. *The Player* Director: Robert Altman

Prompt

‘Understanding what is real and what is not is never easy.’

Task

Complete an extended written response in expository, persuasive or imaginative style. Your writing must draw from **at least one** selected text for this Context and explore the idea that **‘understanding what is real and what is not is never easy’**.

Context 3 — Encountering conflict

9. *Paradise Road* Director: Bruce Beresford
10. *The Crucible* Arthur Miller
11. *The Quiet American* Graham Greene
12. *The Rugmaker of Mazar-e-Sharif* Najaf Mazari and Robert Hillman

Prompt

‘In times of conflict, people care more about themselves than anything or anyone else.’

Task

Complete an extended written response in expository, persuasive or imaginative style. Your writing must draw from **at least one** selected text for this Context and explore the idea that **‘in times of conflict, people care more about themselves than anything or anyone else’**.

OR

Context 4 — Exploring issues of identity and belonging

13. *Growing Up Asian in Australia* Alice Pung
14. *Skin* Director: Anthony Fabian
15. *Sometimes Gladness* Bruce Dawe
16. *The Member of the Wedding* Carson McCullers

Prompt

‘Our self-understanding comes from our interactions with other people.’

Task

Complete an extended written response in expository, persuasive or imaginative style. Your writing must draw from **at least one** selected text for this Context and explore the idea that **‘our self-understanding comes from our interactions with other people’**.

END OF SECTION B

Section C — Analysis of language use (Using language to persuade)

Instructions for Section C

Section C requires students to analyse the ways in which language and visual features are used to present a point of view.

Section C is worth one-third of the total assessment for the examination.

Read all parts of the speech *Friendship and Focus in the Slow Lane*, and then complete the task below.

Write your analysis as a coherently structured piece of prose.

Your response will be assessed according to the criteria set out on page 12 of this book.

TASK

How is written and visual language used to attempt to persuade the audience to share the point of view of Ms Layne in her speech *Friendship and Focus in the Slow Lane* on pages 10 and 11?

Background information

The anxiety experienced by many Year 12 students – and its causes and effects – is discussed and debated in all schools. Some argue that the demands on senior school students have increased in recent times and that this, coupled with the demands of adolescence more generally, can spell disaster if not effectively managed. In this context, and in response to feedback from parents of previous VCE students, the principal of Alwell College in Melbourne asked her school counsellor – Alison Layne – to convene a ‘Wellbeing Retreat’ for the incoming Year 12 cohort. The retreat was held over a weekend at the start of the school year and afforded students the opportunity to participate in workshops on physical and mental health, interpersonal relationships and study habits. Ms Layne presented the following speech to the students at the retreat’s opening session.

Friendship and Focus in the Slow Lane

Speech presented in February at Year 12 Wellbeing Retreat by Ms Alison Layne, School Counsellor

‘Good evening everyone. Can I just say what a pleasure it is to be back with you all this year! There’s nothing I enjoy more than talking about health and wellbeing and I am delighted that our principal has had the foresight to prioritise this issue at the start of your final, very busy year. It is important that we all acknowledge the significance of this year in your lives; it is one that will be filled with exciting highs, and probably some lousy lows (not too many, hopefully), and it is also a year of profound transition — from adolescence to adulthood and from secondary schooling to the world beyond. I am hoping this session will offer some practical advice regarding how you can all help to be there for each other, and therefore see the year through without too much drama.

(Slide one)



Now, let’s start with something that I’m sure you’re all very excited about: the end-of-year celebrations. Check out these fun-loving school leavers — it looks like they’re having a great time, doesn’t it? I bet quite a few of you have already started planning your own end-of-year adventures. There are some exciting times ahead, no doubt.

But I want you to look closer. I’m wondering if everyone here has made the smart choices up to this point. I wonder if they’re all in the right shape to continue making smart choices for the rest of the evening. And I wonder if they’ve all got good friends looking out for them as this night of nights unfolds...

What I really want to stress this evening is just how important it is for all of you to be looking out for each other. Not just during these end-of-year festivities either, but throughout the year. There will undoubtedly be times when you’ll feel under pressure, either from the demands of coursework or from people who will push you to achieve your best: your teachers, your parents, even some of your peers. There will, on the other hand, be times when you feel under pressure to behave in ways that might feel uncomfortable or even plain wrong. And it is at *these* times that you will need good friends the most — friends who will help to reassure you, help you stay on track, help you make the smart choices.

Now, let’s get an indication with hands: how many of you are already Learner drivers, en route to your Ps? Yes, just as I thought, a hefty percentage. It’s exciting, isn’t it? Knowing that every time you get behind the wheel and successfully navigate from A to B you inch closer to that future dream where driving means freedom... rather than an argument with mum or dad about the pitfalls of the parallel park! But just for a moment I want you to consider a true story. It involves a young man your age, with exactly your sense of excitement about the future and the freedom it so palpably represents. Let’s call him ‘Phil’. Phil turned eighteen in March of his final year of school, and decided to immediately get his Ps, despite some protestation from concerned parents who felt that — given Phil’s academic woes and a tendency to be easily led by mates — he should put the licence idea on hold until he had finished the academic year.

I know — some of you are thinking that this is a typically conservative response from parents, who are forever putting the brakes on the social development of their children. But consider their perspective: Phil had really struggled in Year 11. His grades had slipped substantially, and mum and dad were concerned that a burgeoning social life was getting in the way of an education. In fact, towards the end of that year Phil’s school counsellor had recommended a form of academic probation for the first term of Year 12. Phil had agreed that this was a reasonable way forward. So there he was: commencing his final, exciting year of schooling, on probation but keen to make a real go of his studies, and sporting a P1 licence. The future was bright.

Until Thursday March 27, in just the third week of the new school year, when Phil crashed the family car into a telephone pole and blew .077 in a subsequent breath test.

(Slide two)



Here we go — that's the car. A nice one too, isn't it? (Or, I should say, wasn't it?) Now I see some of you are finding this amusing, and thankfully no-one here was seriously injured — Phil survived, and so did the three passengers that he foolishly decided to drive home from the party they had attended that night. But the cost was substantial: a car written off, a licence revoked, stressful court appearances, strained friendships and family relationships and, tragically, a level of stress and anxiety in Phil so high that he was unable to complete his VCE studies. And of course, it could have been much, much worse...

"Why is she telling us this depressing story?" I hear you asking. And yes, I'm sorry, I know it seems like bleak territory for the start of the year. But what Phil's story can teach us is that sometimes — perhaps particularly during adolescence when the weight of social expectation sits heavily on our shoulders — we can feel pressured to make stupid choices. Phil badly wanted his Ps because two of his best friends had them. And on the night of the accident he was far too keen to impress those friends, and made some terrible mistakes as a result: he had been drinking, was carrying an illegal number of passengers, and was speeding. And in a moment, a bright future suddenly got a lot darker. Perhaps if Phil's friends had been more supportive, it would have turned out differently.

Speed is actually a good metaphor for our talk today. When we are in Year 12, we want everything to happen quickly. (OK — other than the school holidays!) We want to clock up the kilometres quickly, we want to get through our SACs quickly, we want the academic year to go quickly, to just be over. And who doesn't want to experience that feeling of waking up, after the final Year 12 examination, with the realisation that the unflattering beige and brown school uniform will never be worn again (other than at a 'back to school' nightclub theme party)? But I would suggest that what we really need to remember in this final year, is that we would do well to slow down. To go easy on the markers of adulthood that we are so keen to embrace — getting a licence, drinking alcohol, going out to bars — but that can sometimes have a negative impact on our health and safety. And sometimes we need others to remind us to slow down — good friends who have our best interests at heart, and who understand exactly what we're going through.

Slide one is shown again

So, these happy people have every right to smile — they've achieved so much. And of course, we can always find examples of people who don't know how to slow down, and thankfully they are a minority; for every idiot who takes it too far and too fast there are hundreds of smart adults who know their limits, and how to apply the brakes. But when it comes to an event like Schoolies, I would encourage you to remember — particularly when you're feeling swamped with deadlines — that it isn't going anywhere! It will be there waiting, like a patient friend, when the exams are done and dusted and that beige and brown uniform has been relegated to the dark recesses of the wardrobe, replaced by board shorts or bikinis! So make an effort this year to look out for each other; because everyone needs the support of those around them. And in less than nine months you will all be free: free to drive yourself around, to let your hair down, to unwind in whatever way you like. Less than nine months! It's not far away at all. Just slow down, and savour every minute of what will no doubt be one of the most exciting years of your life. Thanks everyone.'

**END OF SECTION C
TURN OVER**

Examination assessment criteria

The examination will address all the criteria. All student responses will be assessed against each criterion.

The extent to which the response is characterised by:

Section A – Text response (Reading and responding)

- detailed knowledge and understanding of the selected text, demonstrated appropriately in response to the topic
- development in the writing of a coherent and effective discussion in response to the task
- controlled use of expressive and effective language appropriate to the task

Section B – Writing in Context (Creating and presenting)

- understanding and effective exploration of the ideas, and/or arguments relevant to the prompt
- effective use of detail and ideas drawn from the selected text as appropriate to the task
- development in the writing of a coherent and effective structure in response to the task, showing an understanding of the relationship between purpose, form, language and audience
- controlled use of language appropriate to the purpose, form and audience

Section C – Analysis of language use (Using language to persuade)

- understanding of the ideas and points of view presented
- analysis of ways in which language and visual features are used to present a point of view and to persuade readers
- controlled and effective use of language appropriate to the task

CONTRIBUTORS

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END OF TASK BOOK

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