



2012 English as a Second Language (ESL) GA 3: Examination

GENERAL COMMENTS

The 2012 English as a Second Language (ESL) examination paper consisted of three sections: Section A required a response to one text, Section B required a response to a prompt related to a selected Context and Section C required completion of two tasks in response to unseen material.

Assessment is holistic, using the published assessment criteria. Assessors relate student performance directly to these criteria. Their judgments are assisted by the use of a set of descriptors. Teachers and students should be aware of the assessment criteria, the descriptors and the sample examination paper, which are published on the VCAA website.

SPECIFIC INFORMATION

Note: Student responses reproduced herein have not been corrected for grammar, spelling or factual information.

Section A – Text response

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Average
%	0	1	2	5	12	21	25	19	10	4	1	5.8

Students were required to produce one piece of analytical or expository writing in response to one text. There were two topics for each of the 20 prescribed texts. The descriptors used for assessment relate to knowledge of the text, the structure and relevance of the response, and writing skills (the control of the mechanics of written English). Knowledge of the text includes consideration of its concepts and construction. Reference to structural features was more evident with films.

The most successful responses demonstrated an in-depth understanding of the topics and texts through an ability to craft meaningful, analytical and relevant discussion in direct response to the chosen question. Successful responses were able to skilfully weave knowledge of the text into the fabric of the analysis. Student writing generally reflected awareness of the construction and interpretation of texts, but the less sophisticated responses focused on the plot. Almost all responses displayed at least some knowledge of the text and an adequate knowledge of essay structure.

The most popular texts and their mean scores are shown in the table below.

Text	% of students	Average mark
<i>Twelve Angry Men</i>	28%	5.9
<i>On the Waterfront</i>	20%	5.6
<i>Interpreter of Maladies</i>	11%	5.8
<i>A Christmas Carol</i>	10%	5.3
<i>Cosi</i>	8.5%	5.3

Stronger responses were characterised by a sharp focus on the key words in the topics, selective and considered use of the text, and ideas expressed with strong language skills. There were few very short or incomprehensible responses. In planning, students need to brainstorm all the key words, paying particular attention to modifying words and comparatives within the question. A well-planned response is less likely to slip into retelling the story or adapting a previously written response to fit the question. Students need to be able to explore how texts are constructed and the effects of the writer’s choices in developing a narrative.

For both questions on *Twelve Angry Men* students generally understood the topics and were able to show detailed knowledge of the text. The second question, which invited students to look at both the characters and the jury/justice system, was better handled than the first question. Most students recognised that the jury has power and power can be misused, and clearly identified instances of the misuse of power. Responses to the first question often focused on the juror’s perspective more than the perspective of witnesses. Some responses described only the different perspectives and did not consider ‘importance’, which was the focus of the question. Weak responses did not demonstrate an understanding of ‘different perspectives’.



On the Waterfront was a popular text, with students clearly able to discuss how cinematic techniques were used to convey the ideas of the film. Both questions enabled students to demonstrate their detailed knowledge of the text. Weaker responses simply discussed a variety of the techniques used by Kazan, without clearly discussing the ones relevant to creating tension and suspense. Some discussed scenes and characters that led to tension or suspense, rather than how Kazan uses film to convey his ideas.

Both questions on *Interpreter of Maladies* drew on aspects of relationships. The first question was more popular than the second. For both questions students were able to respond to the key elements without retelling the story. Students discussed specific relevant examples with confidence. Some responses to the first question discussed only the ‘poor communication’ part of the question and neglected to include ‘unexpressed feelings’. In addressing the question of cause and effect, stronger responses were able to differentiate between the stories.

Both questions on *A Christmas Carol* allowed for a range of responses and multiple entry points. Many students were able to show some analysis and good knowledge of the text. Most responses to Question 1 tackled both parts. Some students were able to capitalise on the in-built rebuttal of each topic.

The second *Cosi* question was the more popular. Love was addressed as the major theme in many responses, even though few were able to make connections between Mozart’s message and Nowra’s point of view. Students were able to show their knowledge of the whole range of characters who all express widely divergent opinions on the nature of love. Some wrote about love or madness, without making an attempt to balance them. Many students neglected to write about madness at all. The first topic was not done as well as the second, with many students neglecting to consider ‘the final production’, despite good discussion of the importance of what occurs during rehearsal. Both questions required a comparison and few students adequately addressed the comparative aspect of these topics.

During their preparation, students need to consider how construction, language and other authors’/directors’ choices add meaning to the text, rather than merely looking at what happened, the themes and the characters. The importance of integrating text construction and authorial choices into responses needs to be emphasised, as well as discussing characters or themes. Language is the key. Students need to write analytically, not descriptively, and need to develop writing skills that will enable them to incorporate knowledge of the text into their analysis or exposition. Students should be encouraged to explore questions fully by unpacking topics in ways that allow their own ideas to emerge. With collections of stories, students should be encouraged to look for the links and connections between the stories.

Student response – Example 1

The introduction to the following upper-range response provides the structure for the writing, which discusses the concept of power in the play. There is a clear focus on the question, and close knowledge of the text is shown by the seamless integration of the characters’ words. References to the social context in which the play was written are made where this is relevant to the topic. Confident use of sophisticated language is sustained, if a little repetitive towards the end. There are some lapses in expression, which are not unusual in ESL student writing.

‘*Twelve Angry Men* is a play about how power can be misused.’ Discuss.

‘Gentlemen, I don’t envy your jobs. You are faced with grave responsibility.’ the Judge’s words poignantly depicts the significant power the jurors hold in determining the verdict of the case. Indeed, set in a New York jury room in the 1950’s, Reginald Rose’s play ‘Twelve Angry Men’ illustrates the ways that power can be misused through the ways that prejudiced opinions led certain jurors to believe in the guilt of the defendant and hence wanting him to be executed, as well as how others are reluctant to properly utilise their powers to complete their task of finding a fair verdict. However, as the crux of the plot unfolds, discerning readers must consider that a few individuals are able to utilise their power in the right way to facilitate the course of action.

The presence of prejudiced opinions results in the abuse of power of some jurors who try to determine the verdict based on no evidence. Juror 10 has strong racial prejudice against the socioeconomic group of ‘slum people’ as he believes that they are ‘born liars’ and ‘real trash’ who are ‘different’ from him. This allows him to easily believe that the boy ‘knifed’ [his] own father and hence, rather than spending time examining the evidence to make a fair verdict, he uses all his power to send the boy ‘to the electric chair.’ His prejudiced views inhibits him from seeing any truth as he is reluctant to ‘break [his] brains over’ such people. Therefore, juror 10 misuses his power to try to put the boy to death. Furthermore, juror 3 also has prejudiced opinions about the defendant as he sees him as a projection of his own ‘disappointing’ son. Due to his hatred for his own son, juror 3 takes on the role of a ‘self appointed public avenger’ to try to convince the others that the boy ‘deserves to die’. As a juror, instead of utilising his power in order to find ‘reasonable doubt’ like he is asked to, juror 3’s firm belief that he has got to ‘slap them down before they make trouble’ inhibits him from carrying out the role he is supposed to, resulting in the misuse of power to fulfil his own self-interest.



Power is also misused in the play in a way that individuals are reluctant to utilise their power to find a fair verdict. Due to the social context in the 1950's where racism is not perceived as a huge crime and that people only care for themselves, many jurors have an apathetic attitude towards the case. Juror 7, who has 'a baseball ticket burning through his pocket' believes that the trial is a 'goddamn waste of time.' He is reluctant to use his given power to try to save a boy's life as he believes that it is none of his concern. This inhibits him from critically examining the details of the case in order to find any reasonable doubt, and therefore results in his misuse of his given power as a juror. Furthermore, the series of actions described by Rose also illustrates the reluctance of individuals in assisting the court to determine a fair verdict, hence misusing their entitled power. Juror 10 is found to play 'tic-tac-toe' as he does not view his task as important where as juror 12 is found to 'doodle on the sheet'. The only excuse he provides is that drawing Rice Pops 'helps [him] think clearly.' These events are actions that should not appear in the jury room as everyone should be using all they can get to try to come up with a fair verdict. However, instead of 'separating the fact from fancy', power is misused as many are reluctant to help. The apathetic attitudes result in jurors not even trying to find a fair verdict, therefore their given power is wasted.

However, some individuals are able to utilise their power in the right way in order to facilitate the course of action in determining a fair verdict. Juror 8 puts his power to good use at the start of the play by 'standing alone the ridicules of others' and vote 'not guilty.' As the court requires a unanimous verdict, juror 8's persistence is rewarded as his outcast verdict begins a series of discussions that ultimately led to a fair verdict. His compassion and belief that he 'cannot send a boy off to die without talking about it first' results in his crucial usage of his power to stop a hurried and biased verdict. Therefore, juror 8 is able to utilise his power to facilitate the process and steer it in the right direction. Furthermore, the isolation of juror 10 towards the end of the play illustrates that power can be used in the right way to help determining a fair verdict. As other jurors realised that juror 10 is 'an ignorant man', his outburst of racial discrimination towards the defendant is met by no reaction of others as they 'slammed the door' and 'walked away'. As juror 4 told him to 'sit down and shut [his] filthy mouth', the power of the jurors are able to overcome the prejudice of a few individuals in order to reach a fair verdict. The isolation of juror 10 emphasises the ability of others to finally utilise their combined power in a good way, after juror 8's encouragement, in order to reach a fair verdict.

Reginald Rose's 'Twelve Angry Men' poignantly illustrates how power can be misused though not only having prejudiced views that result in the abuse of power, but also apathetic attitudes that can lead to the reluctance of using power to carry out a given task. However, as the crux of the plot unfolds, discerning readers many consider that a few individuals in the play is able to utilise their given power in the right way in order to facilitate the course of actions and hence, reaching a fair verdict in the end.

Student response – Example 2

This upper mid-range response to *On the Waterfront* is organised, structured and maintains relevance to the question. It demonstrates control of language, despite errors that frequently occur in ESL writing. The ideas expressed are supported by the text, including the use of cinematic techniques. The introduction is used effectively to introduce the ideas that will be explored in the writing.

'It is not only through physical violence that the mob maintains its power.' Do you agree?

The film 'On the Waterfront' directed by Elia Kazan which depicts the harsh life of the longshoremen who work in the docks in New Jersey in 1954. The dock workers live under the fear of Johnny Friendly, the leader of the corrupt mob run union. The protagonist Johnny Friendly requires complete loyalty from not only the longshoremen but also his henchmen, in order to maintain his power in the waterfront community, he does not allow any betrayal or even the idea of trying to testify against the mob run union is restricted. Furthermore, Johnny Friendly think that violence is the most important mean for he to reinforce his power over the whole community. As the main role of Johnny Friendly's fellow, Big Mac also establish the power of mob by controlling the work taps which is the essential part of the poor longshoremen.

As the leader of the mob run union, Johnny Friendly requires complete loyalty from every single one from the waterfront community in order to maintain his power and reputation. Therefore people in the waterfront have to live under the fear of Johnny Friendly's control and everyone should comply to the code 'Deaf and Dumb'. Kazan demonstrates the importance of the code by depicting Pop Doyle's reaction after his son is murdered, he says to the other longshoremen, 'keep quiet, you live longer.' It's not only the longshoremen has to be loyal to the mob, but also the members of the mob are required to be loyal to them. Charley Malloy who is recognised as the 'right hand of Johnny Friendly' by the longshoremen. Kazan uses the cinematic device of close up shoot to reveal the desire of Johnny Friendly's requirement of loyalty. When Charley says to Terry 'I will tell them that I can't find you' and lets Terry go to seek for his conscience which is to break up the code of 'D & D' and to testify against the mob run union, Charley understands that his brother's betrayal will lead him to death, as the camera shoot depicts his give up of life. Later on, when the henchmen call Terry to go down to see his brother, the Berstein's soft music comes out, which remains the audience that the murder happens to Charley. So Johnny Friendly requires the loyalty from everyone. Although he used to trust Charley but if he is no longer loyal to the mob, Johnny Friendly would not forgive him as he desires to maintain his power over the whole community.

Furthermore, the mob has a special rule which violence and money are the only way to achieve power and success. At the start of the film, Joey Doyle is pushed from the roof top by the mob members because he tries to 'song' to the mob run union. By depicting the attitudes of the other henchmen of the mob, Kazan attempts to reveal the violence of the mob in order to maintain their power, they even lost their sense of self and humanity. Kazan shoots their faces by using a close up to show their attitudes and



they still have the smile on their faces after seeing a person's murder. They also says to Terry 'Maybe he could sing, but he couldn't fly' which highlights their violence over the longshoremen who tries to testify again the community and affect them to maintain their power. Therefore, violence is another mean for the mob to maintain their power.

Moreover, the mob also controls the work opportunities in order to maintain their power, as they know that job is the only way that the dock workers could get payments and survive from the poverty. Kazan uses long shoot to depict the power of Big Mac who control the daily working tabs, by showing the massive longshoremen stand around attempt to get a work tab. Kazan also uses the close up shoot on Big Mac's face when he glances the dockworkers. Some of the dockworkers give him a silent signal to reveal that they are willing to get less payment in order to have a full day employment. It could also illustrate that the 'shop-up' come from the power of the mob run union. Therefore, the mob could also maintain their power by controlling the longshoremen's job opportunities.

Overall, the mob run union maintains their power by many means. Firstly, they require complete loyalty and impose the code 'D&D' for the longshoremen to comply to, and then they got their power from the violent behaviour or actions. Finally, they control the income of the longshoremen which the dockworkers have to survive from the payment they get from the work.

Section B – Writing in Context

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Average
%	1	1	2	8	15	23	25	16	7	2	0	5.5

Students were required to complete an extended written response that was an expository, persuasive or imaginative piece of writing. They were required to base the writing on the ideas in the prompt and draw directly from the selected text studied in the Context. The more successful responses were characterised by original ideas in response to the prompt and an ability to link these ideas to a broad range of texts. Many strong responses were in an expository style, with an opening designed to catch the reader's interest. In some responses the ideas were explored through thought-provoking and insightful personal stories, often beginning with an interesting anecdote. Some students attempted to include a 'point of difference' in their responses. There was a broad range of writing, including reflective and personal pieces as well as creative pieces. The examples below demonstrate some of the more individual approaches used by students to do something other than a straight expository piece of writing.

This year a few pieces resembled a text response (a response that begins with the selected text and makes little or no reference to other ideas). These responses began with a short introduction then gave a long analysis of the text and a brief reference to the prompt. Some were written directly to the text without first presenting the ideas that the text illuminated. Students with adequate, but in no way sophisticated, language skills were able to write relevant responses that drew on the chosen text, personal experience and other material. Weaker responses began with a standard definition of the Context without grappling with the prompt or indicating how the task would be approached.

The most popular context was Exploring issues of identity and belonging. *Growing up Asian in Australia* was the most popular text, used in 69 per cent of responses. *Whose Reality?* and *The Imaginative Landscape* attracted only 6 per cent of responses.

The writing revealed a range of understandings, and sometimes misinterpretations, of the prompt. Some students wrote about different relationships forcing people to change their identity, rather than exploring the idea of people having different aspects to their identity that may be apparent in different relationships or situations. Stronger responses also explored the idea of a person's identity changing over time, depending on the relationships and events that they encounter. Some struggled to develop ideas beyond superficial differences in behaviour and interests that occur at different points in people's lives. Responses on *Skin* included a lot of retelling of Sandra's life. Most students picked up on the theme of the influence of parents and society, but there was a surprising lack of reference to the situation – apartheid. Many students missed the 'situations' and focused on different representations of self to different people. Many students referred to three very popular stories from *Growing Up Asian in Australia* but did not relate them clearly to the prompt. Some explored the idea of the prompt by referring to having to adapt to the group. Most students agreed with the prompt with great conviction, supported by their own personal experience of living in the world of their parents and the world of school. A few recognised that in most cases multiple identities are united by a core identity that hinges around less malleable beliefs and values. A superficial understanding of identity as being more about image was the focus in weaker responses.

Context 3, Encountering conflict, was chosen by 31 per cent of students. In this Context, *Paradise Road* was the most popular text, used in 39 per cent of responses, while *The Rugmaker of Mazar-e-Sharif* and *The Crucible* were also popular texts. Some students did not appear to understand the the meaning of the key word 'priorities'. They discussed changes in people's attitudes rather than priorities. Some wrote about 'change' caused by conflict but not change in



people's priorities. *Paradise Road* was well used to show how people changed and contrasting priorities through the choices people made. Students were also able to connect characters' actions and choices with their priorities in *The Crucible*.

Stronger students drew clearly on key words from the prompts and used relevant details from the selected text and their own lives as evidence. Weaker students' responses tended to be characterised by a misinterpretation of the key words, or little reference to them. In *Whose Reality?* some students tried to manipulate the key words to suit what they wanted to write about; for example, some interpreted 'fantasies' as anything a person wanted to do, such as be more confident or achieve a goal.

It is recommended that the Section B response be taught as a writing task and not as a text task. Working with the ideas of the prompt and/or stimulus material should be the focus of this piece of writing. The Context is about exploring ideas and students need lots of classroom practice at teasing out ideas before they tackle the selected text. The text will be a source of ideas to explore later in their study. In the best pieces of writing it will not dominate. Models of student writing should be used to explore how connections between texts, the prompt and/or stimulus material and students' own experiences are made. This task rewards students who read widely, consider ideas carefully and synthesise them. Students need an 'idea bank' and an 'example bank' from which to draw on for this writing. Not every item in the 'bank' can be used with a particular prompt or stimulus. Students should be encouraged to keep their own files of material during the year, including keeping reflections in a journal. Teachers should provide students with a number of activities that encourage them to write a variety of pieces in different forms and styles. Choosing to write three short, different pieces for the SAC task is one way of doing this. Teachers could also model different ways in which the ideas of the chosen text could be incorporated into a piece of writing.

Student response – Example 1

This upper-range response demonstrates how the Section B task draws on very different writing skills from those required for Section A. It is characterised by consideration of the wider implications of ideas from the Context, draws on a range of resources, includes a brief personal anecdote as well as adequate use of the selected text. It uses the prompt effectively as a springboard for a piece of analytical writing enhanced by sophisticated vocabulary.

'Each person has different identities for different relationships and situations.'

Humans are complex entities whose identities are formed through multitudes of experience and relationships. Owing to their multi-faceted nature, many people accept the idea that each person has different identities for different relationships and situations in order to belong. While this can be believed to be true, there are also others whose perception of self is so strong that they refuse to 'role-play' in different circumstances. Moreover despite the different 'roles' people have in their life, there are factors that form a part of one's innate, 'true' persona including sexual orientation and genetic inheritance.

Indeed, people may feel that the roles they play at different times of their life form the individual faces of their identity. For instance, my own father, who used to work as a high school teacher for 25 years, strongly believes that a large part of his identity is defined by his experience as a Geography teacher. At the same time, he is a husband, a father and a neighbour, all of which is part of who he feels he is. Likewise, a person can be a friend, a mother, an author and an employer in different situations. A strong example is the FBI, or anyone who works in an organisation that is highly confidential and important. A recent interview with a retired man who used to work in a secret government organisation in South Korea revealed that his life was divided by two, where he had to live as two completely different people at his workplace and his home, despite both of which being his identity. Clearly, he segregated his work and outside life in order to hide his identity and fulfil government responsibility but also protect himself and his family, as well as belong to the normal community. Meanwhile, in a highly multicultural society such as Australia, people with more than one culture may take different roles at different times. Blossom Beeby from 'Growing up Asian in Australia' is an adopted Korean child whose 'family was white, friends were white and world was white.' However, as she visits Korea and experience the Korean culture, she 'feels' Korean, and builds relationships as part of her 'Korean' identity while maintaining her Australian belonging. Therefore, these examples clearly show that one can have different identities for different relationships and situations as part of one's sense of self and belonging.

On the other hand, it is also possible that people refuse to play their roles in a given relationship or situation in order to pursue the ideas of their own interest. This can be seen by existentialists such as Nietzsche and Satre, who believed that 'man is nothing else but what he makes of himself.' In other words they prefer to 'be who they are' in any situations rather than role-playing in order to belong and value their own experiences over anything else. Moreover, a strong cultural upbringing can result in a strong identity that one believes it is one's 'true' self. The Vietnamese father from 'Water Buffalo' depicts through the metaphysical image of the buffalo, that his 'real' identity remains to be rural-Vietnamese, while he resides in Australia and is able to integrate himself with the culture. This is supported by his description as a 'stranger in a new land.' In addition, when the family expectations and one's career conflict, one may choose to reject one's family rather than wearing a mask to hide oneself. This is shown by Diana Nguyen from 'Five ways to disappoint your Vietnamese mother' where she chooses her acting career



over her mother's expectations on her to become a doctor. Therefore, it is clearly shown that at times one may decide not to play their 'supposed roles' or be someone else when their ideas do not correspond to that of their groups and relationships.

Furthermore there are aspects of oneself that determine one's 'innate' identity that is consistent in any situations or relationships one has. One of those aspects is one's sexual orientation. Through Benjamin Law's struggles in his 'Towards Manhood' to be part of his mainstream community it can be understood that there are certain situations such as being a homosexual, that one cannot hide and pretend to be somebody else. As consequence, Benjamin Law openly accepts he is gay and maintains his 'true' identity from then on. This is contrasted by a gay Chinese actor, Leslie Cheung who suicided because he could not stand the disparity between his innate sense of self and the norm of his mainstream, heterosexual society. Nonetheless, the result is still the same in the sense that both people refused to be someone else and hide their real identities. Additionally, there is also genetic influence that influences one's intrinsic perception of self that do not change in different relationships or situations. According to the research on identical twins separated at birth by the University of Minnesota in 1979, the twins has shown to be remarkably alike in their social values and attitudes as well as behaviour. Thus it is strongly supported that there are factors that enable one's individuality to be consistent under any circumstances in one's life.

Saint Brigit quoted that 'we become that which we love.' Indeed, according to our multi-layered nature of identity and belonging, people can have different roles, that is, identities in different situations or relationships. However, there are also cases where one refuses to have different identities due to their strong sense of self and intrinsic qualities.

Student response – Example 2

This strong response uses the form of a newspaper article based on an interview to draw readers into consideration of whether the experience of conflict changes people's priorities. Extracts from the interview are interspersed with ideas drawn from the selected text and other sources. Expression problems do not detract from the engaging liveliness of the piece. Awareness of the reader is maintained.

'The experience of conflict changes people's priorities.'

England Riot Special Edition
03/03/2012

The recent conclusion of the large-scale riot in England has sparked discussions in Ausstalia in regards to the ways that conflict is able to change people's priorities. As the British Government handed out 1800 jail sentences, I was lucky enough to interview one of the London Riot survivors – Joseph. Through this interview, I was able to gain further insight into the riot and in turn, explore how conflict can really change people.

'What was going through your mind as your friendly neighbour charged in your store with a mob of African-American men?'
Joseph: 'I was utterly shocked! I thought we were mates, but his pistol said otherwise. (chuckles) We used to go down to the bar together so as he came in, yelling about how we are responsible for 'blowing Mark Duggan's head off', I was stunned.'

Indeed, conflict has the ability to change people's priorities. Just like Joseph's neighbour, once upon a time, his priority may be to maintain friendship with his neighbourhood but as the situation changes, his priority shifted to protecting his and Mark Duggan's dignity, hence resulting to violent means in order for his voice to be heard.

In the contemporary society, it is easy to 'play nice', whether it involves complimenting your boss on his strange haircut, or to grab a quick bite with a colleague that you despise deep inside. However, under a conflict situation, the game of 'play pretend' comes to an end. Everyone straightens their priority and put themselves first. Just like the war prisoners during WW11 in Sulmatra, Indonesia from previous interviews, high class English and Dutch women who usually go to high tea together may erupt in a fist-fight over a bar of misplaced soap under conflict situations. Usually soap means less than nothing to them, but priorities early shifts under conflict situation and hence alters the way people may behave.

'If they are just protestors, what happened to your diamond sets?'

Joseph: 'copy-cat rioters, they took all of them. They could not care less about Mark Duggan, they saw the opportunity and cleared all my valuables. What a disgrace!'

People's priorities may also shift as conflict creates unexpected opportunities. Individuals may be forced to choose a side, between their morals or personal interest. The latter usually wins. Just like the copy-cat rioters who were there just for the goods, their priorities shifted as they saw that it is unlikely for them to be caught in the midst of a riot, hence took advantage of the situation. Similarly war prisoners are often faced with difficult choices. Young, attractive women are often given the choice of working in 'the officer's club', meaning prostitution, in exchange for food and comfort. Due to the extreme situation, many betray their morals and families and take up the opportunity as conflict has changed their priorities. Once you put survival as you top priority, dignity, patriotism, they no longer matter.



However, for some strong individuals, their priorities may remain the same no matter how hard things become. ‘What went through your mind as you shot your neighbour?’

Joseph: ‘Regret. I did not want to, believe me, but he threatened my daughter. I would not have if it was me, but nobody touches my daughter. Period.’

Indeed, Joseph’s extreme actions reflect that in some cases, people’s priority still remains the same. He chose to shoot his neighbour in order to disarm him, so he cannot hurt Joseph’s 5-year old daughter. It is understandable that a parent always puts their kid’s life as their top priority. No matter what the situation is, that seems to remain the same. Individuals may commit things that they are not proud of doing extreme situations as long as their actions align with their priorities. When something is truly important to them, it is guarded more importantly than one’s own life.

Joseph’s action is deemed as ‘self-defence’, however his neighbour and the mob have all been sentenced to jail for different amount of years that they each deserved. Through the interview with Joseph, he has given me a great insight as to the ways conflict change some people’s priorities (For full interview, please view page 28).

Joan Smith, Journalist of ‘The Australian’

Section C – Analysis of language use

Part 1

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Average
%	4	4	6	10	13	16	18	15	11	4	1	5.2

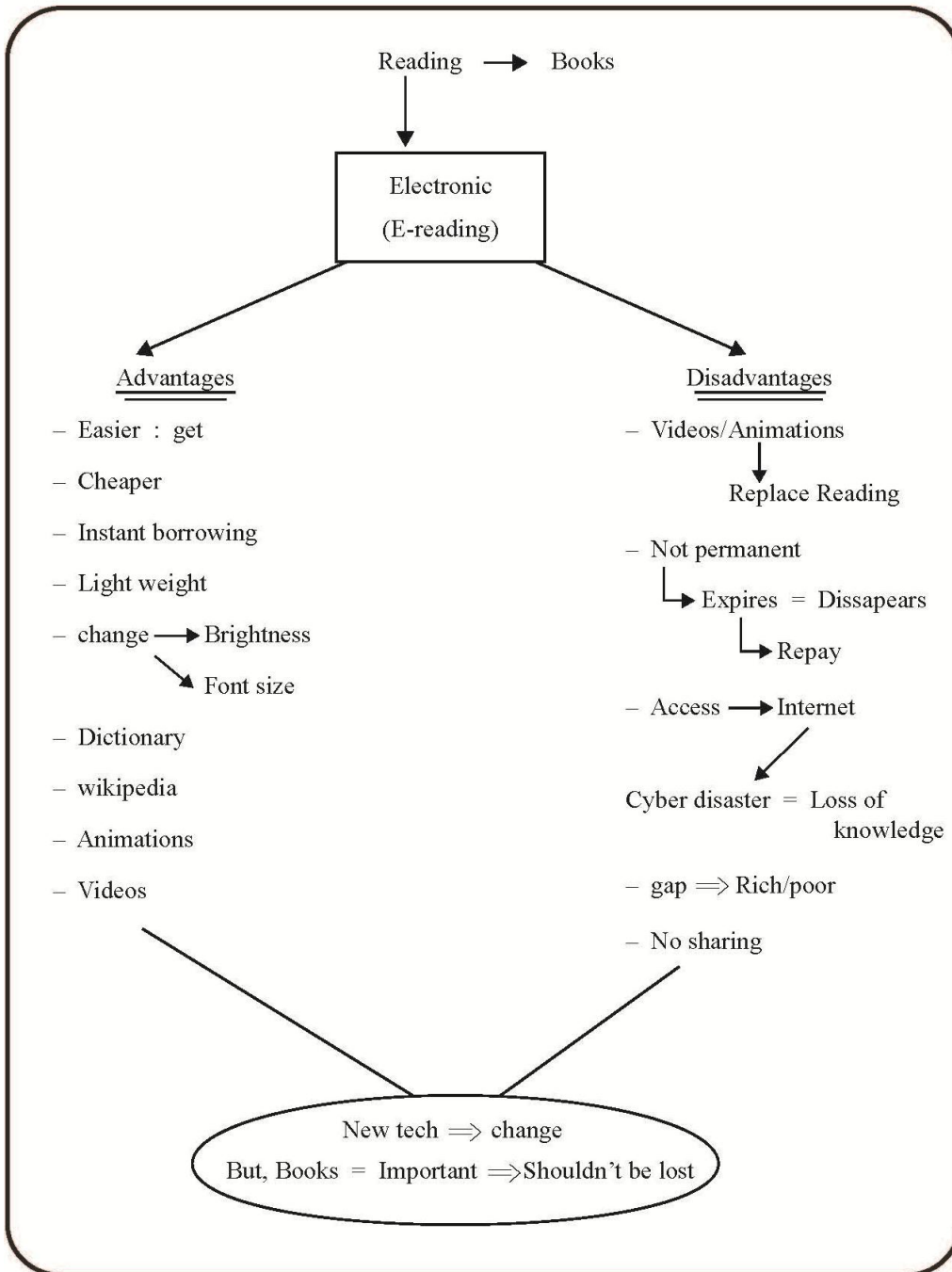
The task material about ebooks and reading was a speech delivered by a retired teacher-librarian at a forum. The scenario was accessible to students and the material supplied gave them plenty of opportunity to comment on at least some aspects of the writer’s language and visuals. The form, word length and language were all appropriate for the task. Students could readily identify the advantages and disadvantages of ebooks, but some had difficulty identifying Mrs Elliot’s overall message.

The note-form responses mostly demonstrated an awareness of the key reasons for the speaker’s contention but were not always as clear on the contention. The challenge in this task was to design a structure (for the summary) through which processing of the material could be demonstrated. Many attempted a response in the form of advantages and disadvantages. The main ideas could be satisfactorily presented in this form but such responses did not always include the overall message of the material, or just copied the last line of the task material without demonstrating any understanding of it. Many students did not come to the conclusion that ebooks should be embraced with caution; many concluded that they should be banned. Many students grouped ideas well, but there were still some just listing without processing the information.

The following student responses demonstrate an overall understanding of the material, processing of the information and selection of the key ideas presented in a meaningful form.

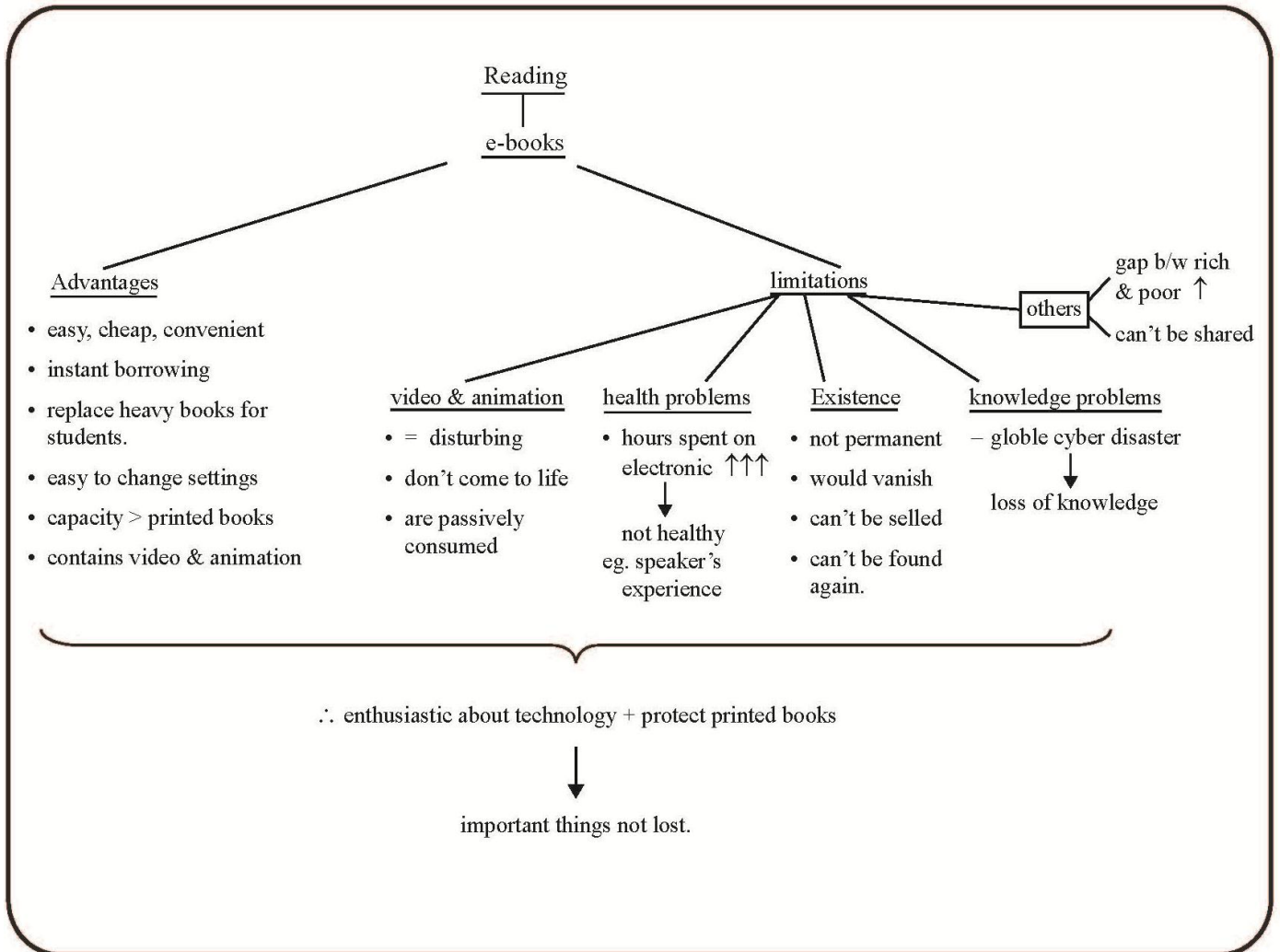


Student response – Example 1





Student response – Example 2





Part 2

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Average
%	4	5	9	14	20	20	13	9	4	1	0	4.4

In Part 2 the context of the speech appeared to be well understood by many students, but an ability to accurately identify the specific language use and appeals employed by the speaker was generally confined to students with stronger language skills. Some students struggled to accurately describe tone, writing long lists of adjectives implying that the speaker used a vast array of diverse (and often extreme) tones in the speech. Most recognised that the audience was a mixed age range, but comparatively few identified that they were probably enthusiastic readers. Stronger responses explored how specific groups in the audience might feel. There were also responses that simply worked through the piece. Some responses were structured around the techniques rather than the ideas. Many responses demonstrated a good knowledge of persuasive techniques but not an ability to apply this knowledge effectively to the task material. Some tried to define pre-determined techniques rather than respond to the information given in the text. Weaker responses were descriptive rather than analytical.

Generally, the use of the visuals was incorporated well into the responses and students gave a range of interpretations. The photo was generally better used in the analysis than the cartoon and many were able to link one or both to appropriate points. The photo was generally connected to the idea that ebooks removed the 'terrible burden' of textbooks. Many students misunderstood the cartoon, with some thinking it was set in a library.

High-range responses in this section were well written and demonstrated a strong understanding of the ways in which language and visual features were used through effective analysis of the material. High-range responses showed

- a clear understanding of the context and the speaker's point of view
- a focus on analysis of language, not argument
- an exploration of how specific sections of the audience might react
- clear explanations linking visuals to the writer's point of view and exploring the intended effect of the visuals.

Mid-range responses showed awareness of the task, but some moved between explaining the material and an attempt at analysing it. Limitations in these responses included

- difficulty describing tone accurately
- limited awareness of the context of the speech
- generalised descriptions of persuasive techniques
- reference to visuals not linked to the text.

Student response – Example 1

This upper-range response demonstrates understanding of the task, the material presented and the context of the speech. It examines a range of ways in which words and visuals position the audience. There are lapses in fluency and some inaccurate use of English, but in general language has been used effectively to convey the student's understanding. Unnecessary repetition and lack of conciseness detract from the fluency of the piece. The use of 'readers' instead of 'audience or listeners' is a common error.

The recent increase in e-book technology has triggered a discussion in regards to whether or not e-books should take over traditional books. Mrs Elliot, in her speech at the opening of 'Reading: the future' contends that new technology and traditional forms of reading should co-exist. This article targets teachers and students, as well as people who are interested in literacy, as it concerns them the most.

The speech commences by Mrs Elliot's recognition that she 'likes change'. She clearly lists out the benefits of e-books and the things that they can achieve where traditional books can't, including 'change brightness and font size' as well as 'look upWikipedia by selecting a word.' By listing out the advantages of e-books, especially targeting specific weaknesses of traditional books, she is able to create a positive image of e-technology for the older audiences who may not appreciate technology as much. Via utilising the term 'brightness' 'font size', people are reminded of the difficulty of trying to read small words in a dark place and how unpleasant it is. Therefore, the older generations are more likely to agree with the presenter that the new technology has its advantages if it can assist them in so many ways, especially if they are long sighted. Furthermore, via the incorporation of the visual slide of the boy smiling with his technology set on, leaning against a huge pile of thick books, Mrs Elliot is reminding the parents that E-book may rid 'the terrible burden' of 'great big text books' for the kids. The boy in the image seem very happy, hence alluding the parents into thinking that by giving them a chance at using e-technology, their own kids will be equally happy. On the contrary, the huge pile of books seem scary as it is taller than the boy. The picture implies that if parents do not accept the new technology, their kids may have to endure the pain of carrying such heavy books in their bags. Parents are likely to feel scared and unwilling to put their fragile children under such unpleasant tasks, hence the ones who are more negative towards the new technology may consider its benefits, and therefore be more likely to agree with Mrs Elliot that both forms of reading should co-exist to benefit everyone.



The form of this piece is a speech, therefore the audience do not only include parents, but also teenagers and students who usually favor technology more than traditional things. Utilising a reasonable and humbled tone, Mrs Elliot points out that E-technology also has it's flaws, hence it should not replace traditional books. By utilising 'TV advertisement' of 'computer-generated dinosaurs', she explains that the concept of feeding images to kids is 'disturbing' as it is just like a 'packaged up takeaway meal'. The comparison to 'takeaway meals' signifies the fake and cheap nature of such actions, and associates such actions with unhealthiness. The usage of the word 'disturbing' leaks out the sense of resent the presenter has towards feeding kids 'imagination'. The negative annotations in the paragraph is likely to trigger a sense of disgust from the audience as they do not wish to be cheaply fed by a device and let it replace their own imagination. Therefore, the audience is more likely to agree that e-books has its flaws, so it should not replace traditional books. Furthermore, the 2nd slide show displays the 'vanish property' of e-books as they need constant 'update' and may just 'vanish' after its expiring date. The image appeals to the reader's hip-pocket nerves as they would feel like they are paying for something that they do not even 'own'. Furthermore, the fact that the books cannot stay forever seem to be really unreliable, as it will plant a seed of doubt in the readers as to whether it is good enough to replace normal books. Together with the cartoon of the sarcastic words of the shop assistant, audiences are exposed to how unreliable e-books can be, hence triggering a sense of fear that knowledge can no longer be preserved, therefore more likely to agree with Mrs Elliot that it is flawed, hence it should co-exist with tradiitonal means of reading.

The presentation is made more convincing due to the anecdote Mrs Elliot brought in as her own experience. As she retells the story of the book that has been 'left there deliberately', 'free for anyone to read' and pass on, she is illustrating the benefits of a traditional book. Her pleasant experience and the little surprise makes the normal paper-books seem like a wonderful thing for people to enjoy. Audiences are likely to imagine thnemselves walking into a park, finding such pleasant surprise themselves, hence would like that fantasy to come true. Therefore, they are more likely to agree with Mrs Elliot's views for the co-existence of book technologies, as they would like that park adventure to have a chance of coming true. Being a 'retired teacher-librarian', Mrs Elliot also has strong grounds to make her point on the matters related to reading. It is known that teachers are professionals at education and librarians are experts in the field of reading. Being a combination of both, the words of Mrs Elliot become expert opinions that the audiences are likely to take more seriously as her experience and background allow her to have more insight on the matter than most people. Her combined experience, with her humbled tone and attitude that can be felt as she jokes about herself being a 'dinosaur' allows the audience full of expert teachers, librarians as well as students and parents to be more likely to agree on her views. Hence, they are more likely to agree that e-books and the traditional books can in fact co-exist.

The crux of the prose stems from its use of multiple anecdotes in persuading the audiences that e-books and traditional books both have their own advantages and disadvantages, and hence, should co-exist. The presentation targets parents, teachers and students, but may alienate who are not interested in reading, as it does not concern them.

Student response – Example 2

This upper mid-range response demonstrates some understanding of how language and visuals are used to persuade and some accurate application of this knowledge to the speech and context. There is overall understanding of the material, organisation and general control of language and expression.

The speech at the opening of 'reading: the future' presented by Mrs Elliot asserts that e-books is the future of reading but printed books should not be lost.

Elliot uses repetition and photo to make her main points that e-reading device is good for reading. Elliot lists the goodness of e-books through 'easier to get, ...to,...to..' to emphasize the change brought by e-books is positive. Combined with the second repetition that 'I wanted....I wanted...I even imagined....' to show Elliot is enthusiastic fan of e-reading device because it is truly convenient to book readers. It has effect on making the audience believes that e-books is a good thing. In addition, a photo of a boy sitting on the floor using re-reading device rather than textbooks. The comparison between the size of big textbooks and a small device suggests how convenient to carry just one e-book device. It increases the interest of the audience specially students on owning a e-reading device. The audience is positioned to agree with Elliot that e-reading device brings a bright change to the reading future.

Elliot utilizes rhetorical question and metaphor to support her next argument that the video and animated images of e-books is not good as genuine books to children. Elliot makes an analogy between takeaway meal and imagines suggesting that computer-generated images is meaningless to the boy. Without the imagination from our own selves, the imagines is 'dead'. The use of rhetorical question 'so is there....worry about?' and '...electronic games?', Elliot questions on the video and animated images is good to students' mental and physical health. It also appeals to family value. It has effect on making parents consider their children's health. The audience is positioned to agree with Elliot that e-books has bad influence on children's growth.

Futhermore, by using inclusive language and colorful language, Elliot makes her third argument that E-books is not permant but printed books are. The use of phrases 'like many of you, I'm...' and 'we...' Elliot invite the audience to stand by her sides through her sincere tone. It has effect on give the feeling of togetherness to the audience. Elliot also uses the cartoon to show how precious that printed book can maintain the knowledge before it disappear because of vanishing. The cartoons also brings impression to the audience because it makes the audience relaxed. The word 'flooded' suggests that e-books is harmful to knowledge, history and even culure. It causes fear to the audience especially to book-lovers. It also suggests that the audience

2012 Assessment Report



who is one of book-lovers will agree with Elliot that books are permanent but e-books are not. Hence, textbooks should not be lost in the reading future.

Examining and analysing model answers could assist students in understanding the requirements of the tasks in Section C. They should practise note-form responses with shorter one-sided pieces. Students need skills in presenting their notes in a variety of ways. Even if the material can be used for a neat division of points into advantage/disadvantage or yes/no, the notes still need to be framed under the overall contention of the piece. These skills are developed through practice and could be connected to other areas of study; for example, using material related to the Context study and practised from early in the year. ESL students in mainstream classes need specific teaching towards developing these skills. This teaching needs to focus on understanding the material as a whole, as well as how to structure notes.

Short letters from the media that present only one point of argument using several persuasive strategies are a useful starting point for Part 2. These can also be used to consider how visuals are used within written material. Generic explanations of language devices are insufficient. Knowledge of a writer's possible tactics must be applied directly to the unseen passage. Set language stems will only help if there is understanding of the task material. Students do not need to be able to label persuasive language, they need to write about how it persuades and to look for subtleties in language choices. Students should focus on specific words and phrases, and fully explore their connotations within the piece.

The background information given on the exam paper provided the context for the task material, including identifying the audience. Using language to persuade has an 'audience focus' and the analysis needed to be related to the specified audience. Students should be discouraged from writing lengthy introductions that list techniques and becoming sidetracked from the main task. Introductions should be limited to showing an awareness of the audience, the context and the overall contention of the piece. The topic sentence of each following paragraph should identify the point of argument on which the language analysis will focus.