VCE on a Northern Hemisphere Timetable

VCE English and English as an Additional Language (EAL) Text List 2017–2018

The following texts are available for selection for study by students enrolled on the NHT.

List 1

Novels

Adiga, Aravind, *The White Tiger* (3)

Short stories

MacLeod, Alistair, *Island: Collected Stories* (2)  
Stories for study: ‘The Boat’, ‘The Vastness of the Dark’, ‘The Golden Gift of Grey’, ‘The Return’, ‘The Lost Salt Gift of Blood’, ‘The Road to Rankin’s Point’, ‘The Closing Down of Summer’,   
‘To Every Thing There Is a Season’, ‘Second Spring’, ‘Winter Dog’, ‘The Tuning of Perfection’, ‘Vision’, ‘Island’

Plays

Euripides, ‘Medea’, in *Medea and Other Plays* (3)

Multimodal texts

*Films*

Mankiewicz, Joseph L (director), *All About Eve* (4)

List 2

For **VCE EAL students only**, one text in each pair is nominated for achievement of Unit 3   
Outcome 1: Reading and creating texts. This text is indicated by (EAL).

Pair 1

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Multimodal text – Film** | **Novel** |
| Eastwood, Clint (director), *Invictus* (1) (EAL) | Malouf, David, *Ransom* (1) (A) |

Pair 2

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Play** | **Novel** |
| Wright, Tom, *Black Diggers* (1) (A) (EAL) | D’Aguiar, Fred, *The Longest Memory* (1) |

Annotations

These annotations are provided to assist teachers with text selection. The comments are not intended to represent the only possible interpretation or a favoured reading of a text.

List 1

Novels

Adiga, Aravind, *The White Tiger*, Atlantic Books, 2008 (3)

Set in modern-day India, *The White Tiger* follows Balram Halwai from his early life of rural poverty to his eventual success as an entrepreneur and wealthy urbanite. Narrated as a series of letters   
to the former Chinese premier, Wen Jiabao, the novel charts Balram’s journey out of the slums populated by the poor and lower castes, and celebrates his eventual triumph as he breaks free from a life of servitude and obeisance. The novel explores the divisions between the rich and the poor, and considers how social structures operate to reinforce class hierarchy. Adiga’s darkly comic novel also raises questions about the reliability and integrity of the narrator, and asks whether success is ever possible without moral compromise.

Short stories

MacLeod, Alistair, *Island: Collected Stories*, Vintage, 2002 (2)

Stories for study: ‘The Boat’, ‘The Vastness of the Dark’, ‘The Golden Gift of Grey’, ‘The Return’, ‘The Lost Salt Gift of Blood’, ‘The Road to Rankin’s Point’, ‘The Closing Down of Summer’,   
‘To Every Thing There Is a Season’, ‘Second Spring’, ‘Winter Dog’, ‘The Tuning of Perfection’, ‘Vision’, ‘Island’

MacLeod’s collection of short stories includes tales of individuals, families and small communities in his characteristic spare, evocative prose. MacLeod’s preoccupations are family relationships   
and memory; grandparents, parents, husbands, wives and their children come to terms with the past as they face an uncertain future. The reader sees a community in a period of modernisation and change, and is invited to question what is gained and what is lost. Most of the stories are set   
in Canada’s remote eastern provinces; the wild beauty of the land and sea provides a stark background to the human drama within each of the stories.

Plays

Euripides, ‘Medea’, in *Medea and Other Plays*, John Davie (trans.), Penguin Classics,   
2003 (3)

Euripides explores the psyche of the wronged woman in this famous ancient Greek tragedy.   
The eponymous Medea discovers that her husband, Jason, has married the daughter of King Creon, abandoning his barbarian wife and two sons. Jason promises to reunite them under one household, with Medea as his mistress, but Medea is not placated. The other characters fear   
what Medea might do and try to thwart her but, ultimately, Medea’s grief is so strong that revenge is inevitable. Medea’s sense of powerlessness against unfolding events, which are controlled by men, leads her to seek vengeance in a most hideous way, betraying even her love for her own children. As the play builds to its horrifying climax, the behaviour of the characters causes the audience to re-evaluate its sympathies and to question whether retribution can ever be justified.

Multimodal texts

*Films*

*All About Eve*, Director: Joseph L Mankiewicz, 1950 (4)

Winner of the Oscar for best picture in 1950, *All About Eve* is one of the classics of 20th-century film. Notable for its strong female roles, played by Bette Davis, Anne Baxter, Celeste Holm and Thelma Ritter, all of whom were nominated for Oscars, the film focuses on the ageing star Margo Channing, a Broadway actress renowned for being difficult. When ardent fan Eve Harrington expresses her admiration for her idol, Margo is at first flattered, but as Eve starts to work her way further into Margo’s life, she starts to suspect that Eve is not quite what she seems. The extremely witty screenplay highlights issues of gender, ageing, fame and trust. (Rating: PG)

List 2

Pair 1

*Invictus*,Director: Clint Eastwood, 2009 (1) (EAL)

As the newly elected president of South Africa after the fall of apartheid, Nelson Mandela faces   
the challenge of leading a racially and economically divided country. He believes he can unite his country through the universal language of sport. *Invictus* is about how Mandela joins forces with Francois Pienaar, captain of the national rugby team, to rally South Africans behind a bid to win the 1995 Rugby World Cup. The title, *Invictus*, means ‘undefeated’ or ‘unconquered’ in Latin. It is also the title of a poem by William Ernest Henley about the will to survive in the face of a severe test. (Rating: PG)

Malouf, David, *Ransom*, Vintage, 2010 (1) (A)

Malouf re-imagines the world of *The* *Iliad* through a little-known episode of the Trojan War. Maddened by Hector’s slaying of his dear friend Patroclus, Achilles takes revenge and subsequently violates Hector’s corpse. Priam – King of Troy and Hector’s father – journeys to Achilles’s camp seeking to ransom his son’s body. He travels in a donkey cart escorted only by a carter but aided by the god Hermes. The mission is a success and delivers to Priam enrichment in life and legendary status after death. *Ransom* reveals the powerful impact of love, leadership and paternal duty, and explores ideas of universal relevance, including the liberation of the spirit and what can be achieved through a vision of something new.

Pair 2

Wright, Tom, *Black Diggers*, Playlab, 2015 (1) (A) (EAL)

*Black Diggers* is composed of a series of short scenes exploring the experiences of Indigenous Australians before, during and after World War I. The play builds a picture reflecting the real-life experiences of the men who signed up to go to war to fight for Australia at a time when Indigenous Australians were deprived of rights and citizenship in their own country. Based on research into the experiences of many different soldiers, the play explores racism, mateship, sacrifice, courage and the horrors of war.

D’Aguiar, Fred, *The Longest Memory*, Vintage, 1995 (1)

This concise novel explores the story of Whitechapel, the oldest and most respected slave on a plantation in Virginia in the 18th century. Reflecting back on his life, Whitechapel remembers his past as a valued slave and advisor to his master, central to the functioning of the plantation. The key event that changed and marred his life is revealed through his reflections as he considers his role in the events leading to the death of his son. The narrative moves between first, second and third person, and between reflection, verse, diary entry and newspaper report. The novel examines the nature of slavery, sacrifice, power and the insidious nature of racism.

Information for schools

Teachers must consider the text list in conjunction with the relevant text selection information published on page 17 of the *VCE English and English as an Additional Language Study Design* 2017–2020 for Units 3 and 4.

VCE English students

A total of four texts across the Units 3 and 4 sequence must be selected from the text list published annually by the VCAA.

For Unit 3 Area of Study 1, students must read and study two selected texts from List 1.

For Unit 4 Area of Study 1, students must read and study one pair of texts (that is, two texts)   
from List 2.

At least two set texts must be selected from the following categories: novels, plays, collections of short stories or collections of poetry.

VCE EAL students

A total of three texts across the Units 3 and 4 sequence must be selected from the text list published annually by the VCAA.

VCE EAL students must read and study one selected text from List 1 and a pair of texts (that is, two texts) from List 2.

Two texts must be used for Unit 3 Area of Study 1 – one selected from List 1 and one of the pair selected from List 2.

The pair of texts from List 2 should be used for Unit 4 Area of Study 1.

In either Unit 3 or 4, at least one set text must be a written text in one of the following forms:   
a novel, a play, a collection of short stories or a collection of poetry.

All students

No more than one of the selected texts may be a multimodal text, for example, a film or graphic novel. A multimodal text may be selected from either List 1 or List 2, but not from both. Other multimodal texts may be used to support the study of selected texts.

At least one of the selected texts must be by an Australian, as indicated on the text list.

The annotations in this document are provided to assist teachers with selection of texts in accordance with the requirements in the *VCE English and English as an Additional Language Study Design*; they do not constitute advice about the teaching, learning or assessment of texts.

When selecting texts that do not come from the multimodal category, it is important to avoid genre confusion. A film version of a novel, short story, play or non-fiction text is not acceptable for the purposes of the examination, although it might be used in the classroom for teaching purposes.

While the VCAA considers all the texts on the text list suitable for study, teachers should be aware that with some texts there may be sensitivities in relation to certain issues. In selecting texts for study, teachers should make themselves aware of these issues prior to introducing the text to students.

The VCAA does not prescribe editions; any complete edition may be used. The bibliographic information in this document is provided to assist teachers to obtain texts and is correct, as far as possible, at the time of publication. Publishing details may change from time to time and teachers should consult the *VCAA Bulletin* regularly for any amendments or alterations to the text list.

Key to codes

List 1 is presented alphabetically by author according to text type. List 2 is presented in pairs, with the nominated EAL text in the first column.

Abbreviations in brackets after the titles signify the following:

(A) This text meets the Australian requirement.

(#) Bracketed numbers indicate the number of years that a text has appeared on the VCE English and EAL text list; (1) for example, indicates that 2017 is the first year that a text has appeared on the text list.

(EAL) This indicates that, for **VCE EAL students only**, the text is nominated for achievement of Unit 3 Outcome 1: Reading and creating texts.