



# VCAA Bulletin VCE, VCAL and VET Supplement 1

## VCE English/ESL Text list 2008–2009 VCE Literature Text list 2008

### VCE English/ESL Text list 2008–2009

The following texts proposed by the English Text Advisory Panel have been approved by the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority as suitable for study in 2008 and 2009.

#### Criteria for text selection

Texts for study in Units 3 and 4 English/ESL are grouped into two lists: List 1 for the study of Outcome 1, and List 2 for the study of Outcome 2. The lists should be considered in conjunction with the relevant Text Selection requirements set out in the *VCE English/ESL Study Design* for Units 3 and 4.

Texts have been selected in accordance with the following guidelines.

Each text selected for the VCE English and English (ESL) text list will:

- have literary merit and be worthy of close study
- be an excellent example of form and genre
- sustain intensive study, raising interesting issues and providing challenging ideas
- be appropriate for both male and female students
- be appropriate for the age and development of students and, in that context, reflect current community standards and expectations.

The text list as a whole will:

- be suitable for a wide range of students, including second language students
- reflect the cultural diversity of the Victorian community
- include a balance of new and established works
- include texts that display affirming perspectives.

#### Guidelines for text selection

The text list for VCE English/ESL must:

1. Contain a total of 36 available texts  
20 (List 1: Area of Study 1)  
16 (four for each Context) (List 2: Area of Study 2)

Contexts for study in Area of Study 2, Units 3 and 4

- The imaginative landscape
  - Whose reality?
  - Encountering conflict
  - Exploring issues of identity and belonging
2. Represent the full range of texts indicated in the study design in the following approximate proportions:





#### Area of Study 1: List 1 (20 texts)

- 8 novels
- 2 collections of short stories
- 2 collections of poetry or songs
- 3 plays
- 2 film texts
- 3 non-fiction texts

#### Area of Study 2: List 2 (16 texts)

For each Context

- 1 novel
- 1 film text

Plus 2 from the following, depending on relevance to the Context:

- Plays
- Short stories
- Poetry
- Other Literature

A film text may be selected from List 1 or List 2 but not both. **Students are not permitted to write on more than one film in the examination.**

At least one of the selected texts in each of Units 3 and 4 should be an imaginative print text such as a novel, a play, a collection of short stories, or poetry.

At least one of the selected texts should be by an Australian or about Australians.

3. Contain at least five texts for List 1, four texts for List 2 (one in each Context) by or about Australians.
4. Contain print and film texts that are widely available, preferably for sale.
5. Contain no titles in common with those on the VCE Literature Text list.
6. After the first two years of implementation be reviewed annually with approximately 25 per cent of the texts being changed. After the first two years of implementation no text should appear for more than four consecutive years or fewer than two years.
7. Be accompanied by full bibliographic details where necessary.

The annotations are provided to assist with selection of texts in accordance with the requirements in the English study design. It is important to avoid genre confusion. A film version of a novel, short story, play or non-fiction text is not acceptable for purposes of the examination, although it might be used in the classroom for teaching purposes.

**Note:** While the VCAA considers all the texts on this list suitable for study, teachers should be aware that in some instances sensitivity may be needed where particular issues are raised in certain texts. In selecting texts for study teachers should make themselves aware of these issues prior to introducing the text to students.

### Key to codes

This list is presented alphabetically by author, grouped according to kind of text. Abbreviations in brackets after the titles signify:

- (A) This text meets the Australian requirement
- (#) Bracketed numbers indicate the number of years that a text or Context has appeared on the English/ESL Text list, (1) for example, indicates that 2008 is the first year a text has appeared on the list.

## List 1

### Novels

- Allende, Isabel, *Of Love and Shadows* (2)
- Behrendt, Larissa, *Home* (A) (2)
- Dickens, Charles, *Hard Times* (2)
- Goldsworthy, Peter, *Maestro*, (A) (1)
- Harrison, Charles Yale, *Generals Die in Bed* (3)
- Hosseini, Khaled, *The Kite Runner* (3)
- O'Brien, Tim, *In the Lake of the Woods* (3)
- Orwell, George, *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (2)

### Short stories

- Farmer, Beverley, *Collected Stories* (A) (1)
- (The stories for study are as follows: 'Place of Birth', 'Caffe Veneto', 'The Harem', 'A Woman with Black Hair', 'Market Day', 'Home Time', 'White Friday', 'A Man in the Laundrette', 'Fire and Flood', 'Marina', 'A Girl on the Sand', 'Matrimonial Home', 'Pomegranates', 'Our Lady of the Beehives')
- Poe, Edgar Allan (ed. G.R. Thompson), *Great Short Works* (1)

- (Tales for study are as follows: 'Berenice', 'The Fall of the House of Usher', 'William Wilson', 'The Murders in the Rue Morgue', 'The Oval Portrait', 'The Masque of the Red Death', 'The Pit and the Pendulum', 'The Tell-Tale Heart', 'The Black Cat', 'The Premature Burial', 'The Purloined Letter', 'The Cask of Amontillado')

### Plays

- Bolt, Robert, *A Man for all Seasons* (2)
- Rayson, Hannie, *Inheritance* (A) (3)
- Shakespeare, William, *Richard III* (1)

### Poetry/Songs

- Kelly, Paul, *Don't Start Me Talking: Lyrics 1984–2004* (A) (3)
- Slessor, Kenneth, *Selected Poems* (A) (1)

### Film texts

- Citizen Kane* (Director: Orson Welles) (2)
- Look Both Ways* (Director: Sarah Watt) (A) (2)

### Non-fiction texts

- Gaita, Raimond, *Romulus, My Father* (A) (4)
- Krakauer, Jon, *Into Thin Air* (1)
- Xinran, *Sky Burial* (3)

## List 2

### *The Imaginative landscape* (1)

- Frost, Robert, (ed. Edward Lathem), *The Poetry of Robert Frost* (1)
- Jindabyne* (Director: Ray Lawrence) (A) (1)
- MacLeod, Alistair, *Island* (1)
- Malouf, David, *Fly Away Peter* (A) (1)

### *Whose reality?* (1)

- Drewe, Robert, *The Shark Net* (A) (1)
- Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind* (Director: Michel Gondry) (1)
- McEwan, Ian, *Enduring Love* (1)
- Williams, Tennessee, *A Streetcar Named Desire* (1)

### **Encountering conflict (1)**

Flanagan, Arch and Martin, *The Line*, (A) (1)

Grenville, Kate, *The Secret River* (A) (1)

Miller, Arthur, *The Crucible* (1)

*Omagh* (Director: Peter Weir) (1)

### **Exploring issues of identity and belonging (1)**

Dawe, Bruce, *Sometimes Gladness* (A) (1)

Murray-Smith, Joanna, *Bombshells* (A) (1)

Salinger, J D, *The Catcher in the Rye* (1)

*Witness* (Director: Peter Weir) (A) (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. The list is arranged alphabetically by author in text types. Films are listed by title. The VCAA does not prescribe editions: any complete edition may be used. The bibliographic information 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 VCE, VCAL and VET and VCAA website regularly for any amendments or alterations to the list.

## **List 1**

### **Novels**

#### **Allende, Isabel, *Of Love and Shadows*, Black Swan, 1988**

*Of Love and Shadows* is a political novel which examines the circumstances in an unnamed South American country in the 1970s. Using the framework of an unfolding love story between the main protagonist, Irene Beltrán, and her photographer lover Francisco, Allende examines and exposes the human rights abuses under Pinochet's regime in Chile. Allende combines an affectionate description of the strength and magic which can be found in a community suffering horrible oppression with a profound understanding of characters and motivations. She has created a dense text which utilises imagery of good and evil, of hope and oppression, of defeat and defiance. Allende explores the triumph of the human spirit under an oppressive regime.

#### **Behrendt, Larissa, *Home*, University of Queensland Press, 2004 (A)**

Larissa Behrendt, a practising lawyer, has had a distinguished career lecturing and writing extensively on the Law. *Home* is Behrendt's first novel. It is a heartfelt and largely autobiographical account of the impact of government policies which saw the removal of indigenous children from their families. Candice, a successful city lawyer, visits her ancestral country and begins a personal journey as she learns of Garibooli, her grandmother, who was wrenched from her family as a young girl. Through Garibooli and her extended family, Behrendt explores issues of race, identity, loss, and ultimately, survival.

#### **Dickens, Charles, *Hard Times*, Penguin Classics, 2003**

*Hard Times* begins in a nineteenth century classroom in Coketown, a fictional city where rapid industrialisation has led to dehumanising conditions. The classroom is represented

as a microcosm for the world outside; a factory-style method of mass education is designed to produce future workers who are treated like machines. While exploring social conditions and the role of education, Dickens also shows the impact on the family of Thomas Gradgrind of the attempt to eliminate imagination and inculcate facts and statistics.

#### **Goldsworthy, Peter, *Maestro*, HarperCollins Publishers, 2004 (A)**

Paul Crabbe, recently arrived in Darwin, is taught by another exile, Eduard Keller. Paul initially dislikes his teacher, but changes as he comes to understand him. In the process Paul learns more about himself, about the difference between musical competence and genius, and about facing up to reality.

#### **Harrison, Charles Yale, *Generals Die in Bed*, Penguin, 2003**

Drawing on his own experiences in the First World War, Charles Yale Harrison tells a stark and poignant story of a young man sent to fight on the Western Front. This novel brings to life a period of history seen through the eyes of a 20-year-old narrator, who reminds us that there is neither glamour nor glory in war.

#### **Hosseini, Khaled, *The Kite Runner*, Bloomsbury Publishing, 2004**

Khaled Hosseini was born in Afghanistan and is now a doctor living in California. *The Kite Runner*, a timely and topical novel, is set against the background of Afghanistan's recent turbulent history. It is the tale of the friendship between two young boys, Amir and his family's low-caste servant, Hassan, which changes forever on the day of a kite running tournament. Amir flees with his family to America when the Russians invade. His past betrayal of his friend can no longer remain buried, and as a man, Amir returns to Afghanistan to redeem himself.

#### **O'Brien, Tim, *In the Lake of the Woods*, HarperCollins Publishers, 1995**

Set in northern Minnesota, during the week immediately following the first electoral loss for a formerly successful politician, O'Brien's novel explores, among other issues, the 'win at all costs' mentality of political campaigns, the My Lai massacre in Vietnam, and the cost to human relationships as well as the compromise of personal integrity. The plot is driven, in part, by the mysterious disappearance of the politician's wife.

#### **Orwell, George, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, Penguin Classics, 2000**

In *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, Winston lives in a totalitarian society led by Big Brother. His behaviour is censored, as are his thoughts. Winston, and his clandestine lover Julia, attempt to rebel against the regime, only to realise its complete power and their own powerlessness. Published in 1948, *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is George Orwell's bleak vision of how the power of the state could come to dominate the lives of individuals. Winston's individual personality cannot withstand Big Brother's cultural conditioning and torturous tactics. Winston ultimately accepts his powerlessness and declares his love for Big Brother. Orwell's chilling warnings about authoritarian regimes and an individual's political vulnerability resonate today.

## Short stories

**Farmer, Beverley, *Collected Stories*, University of Queensland Press, 2004 (A)**

(The stories for study are as follows: *Place of Birth*, *Caffe Veneto*, *The Harem*, *A Woman with Black Hair*, *Market Day*, *Home Time*, *White Friday*, *A Man in the Laundrette*, *Fire and Flood*, *Marina*, *A Girl on the Sand*, *Matrimonial Home*, *Pomegranates*, *Our Lady of the Beehives*) **Note:** these stories were formerly anthologised in the collection *Home Time*.

This collection of stories features a range of settings, including Australia, Greece and the United States, with some of the stories being linked by characters and others by a sense of place. The stories deal with the experiences of people coming to terms with a range of circumstances. They are rich in character and variety and will engage students on a number of levels. The writer captures the Greek ambience and environment superbly and her characters are finely developed and readily come to life for readers.

**Poe, Edgar Allan (ed. G. R. Thompson), *Great Short Works*, HarperCollins Publishers, 2004**

(Tales for study are as follows: 'Berenice', 'The Fall of the House of Usher', 'William Wilson', 'The Murders in the Rue Morgue', 'The Oval Portrait', 'The Masque of the Red Death', 'The Pit and the Pendulum', 'The Tell-Tale Heart', 'The Black Cat', 'The Premature Burial', 'The Purloined Letter', 'The Cask of Amontillado')

A man contemplates the meaning of darkness in a mysterious prison. Another commits the 'perfect murder' but is given away by a beating heart. At a surreal fancy dress party, an uninvited guest called Death suddenly appears. Edgar Allan Poe's stories explore the gloomy corners of existence while occasionally poking fun at the conventions of the Gothic genre that influenced so much of his work. Stories such as 'The Tell-Tale Heart' reveal Poe's subtle understanding of the human mind and there is a sophisticated psychological dimension to these stories. Poe's writing is timeless and he is credited with creating the first modern detective in the Sherlock Holmes-like Auguste Dupin who appears in several tales including 'The Murders in the Rue Morgue'. All of the stories are challenging but also highly entertaining. Edgar Allan Poe's characters and language will linger long in the imagination.

## Plays

**Bolt, Robert, *A Man for all Seasons*, Methuen, 2001**

Henry VIII broke with Rome and established the Church of England because the Pope would not give him a divorce. Sir Thomas More, a great lawyer, was one of the few men who refused to agree to the King's action, choosing to act in accordance with his conscience, rather than from self-interest. More, who has no wish to be a martyr, has to contend with the attempts of his friends, his enemies and his family to persuade him to act pragmatically. More ultimately faces death because he is morally unable to lie under oath. The play explores psychological and political issues which are still relevant today.

**Rayson, Hannie, *Inheritance*, Currency Press, 2003 (A)**

At the core of Hannie Rayson's play are some vexed questions. Both in real and moral terms, she asks whose land is it: those who own it in law, either legal or spiritual, or those who work it? Taking the story of two related clans, the Hamilton

and the Delaney, over five generations, and the Indigenous 'illegitimate' son of one of the family patriarchs, Rayson mixes mythic narratives with contemporary political and family discourses to tell a story of Australia.

**Shakespeare, William, *Richard III*, Penguin Shakespeare Series, 2005**

Shakespeare's *Richard III* is one of several 'history' plays and chronicles the bloody deeds and atrocities perpetrated by its central figure—the murderous and tyrannical King Richard III. The power of the drama lies partly in the ease with which he commits crime to achieve his ends. Many historians now reject this version of Richard arguing that he was a king of far greater courage and ability than previously acknowledged. Shakespeare's Richard, though, is Machiavellian in his ruthlessness; a character of seemingly endless villainy. The play also compares the destructive leadership of Richard with that of the noble Richmond. Students will enjoy the richness of language, the fast pace, and the opportunity to explore the machinations of a man bent on gaining power at any cost.

## Poetry

**Kelly, Paul, *Don't Start Me Talking: Lyrics 1984–2004*, Allen & Unwin, 2004 (A)**

One of Australia's best loved songwriters and performers and also one of the most prolific, this collection gathers together all of Kelly's lyrics and poems written between 1984 and 2004. Kelly's greatest gift as a songwriter is his honesty. The lyrics include low key love songs with a message and always with an edge, as well as lyrics dealing with the minutiae of the lives of everyday Australians.

**Slessor, Kenneth, *Selected Poems*, HarperCollins Publishers, 1993 (A)**

The poems of Kenneth Slessor explore universal human concerns such as time, the meaning of life, change and death. His poems reflect his knowledge of Australia's historical heritage and of Australian urban and rural landscapes. In addition, his poems reveal his interest in widespread subject matter such as mythology, history and other cultures. Slessor focuses on the inner and external experiences human beings encounter. His poems explore dualities and contain a balance of tensions in an attempt to understand contradictory aspects of experience.

## Film texts

***Citizen Kane* (Film), Director: Orson Welles, (1941)**

Written and directed by and starring Orson Welles, this 1941 film is generally regarded as one of the classics of twentieth century cinema. Welles used film techniques in an innovative way to tell the story of Charles Foster Kane in his journey from newspaper journalist to media tycoon, famous capitalist and politician. The film, which has many parallels with newspaper tycoon William Randolph Hearst, is the story of a reporter who decided that Kane's dying words would explain his life. Through the use of flashbacks, his research takes him to five different people who each give their own version of Kane's life. It is only the audience who discover the truth about Kane, his personal despair, his motivations and his image of himself. (Classification: PG) (English subtitles for the hearing impaired)

**Look Both Ways, (Film) Director: Sarah Watt, 2005 (A)**

This film explores the effect of traumatic incidents on peoples' lives. The two main characters are a woman who witnesses the death of a man hit by a freight train and the photographer who attends the accident. Both characters have experienced tragedies in their lives that they were struggling to deal with. Their relationship blossoms in the context of the train accident which is set against a larger, more newsworthy disaster. The film, which has an uplifting conclusion, raises many questions about why these things happen, whether they can be avoided and if tragedy does happen, is it sometimes meant to be? The film is characterised by the use of montage and animated sequences. (Classification: M)

## Non-fiction texts

**Gaita, Raimond, *Romulus, My Father* Text Publishing, 2002 (A)**

Romulus Gaita fled his home in Yugoslavia at the age of thirteen, soon after the end of World War II and came to Australia with his young wife Christine and their four-year-old son. Tragic events were to overtake them, events which Gaita explores in his story about growing up with his increasingly troubled father in rural Victoria. This is the story of how a compassionate and honest man taught his son the meaning of living a decent life. It deals with friendship and betrayal, with the fragility of existence, with the cruelty of depression and mental illness and the dignity of work. It is about survival and the struggle to establish a sense of self and integrity of character despite, or because of, the obstacles that fate may provide.

**Krakauer, Jon, *Into Thin Air*, Pan Books, 1998**

Journalist and accomplished climber, Jon Krakauer presents a controversial and compelling account of the worst tragedy on Mount Everest. In May 1996, eight climbers died trying to reach the summit in treacherous conditions. The climbers' experience in mountain climbing and dealing with high altitudes varied – some were qualified while others were highly reliant on the guides. All had paid up to \$US65 000 for the climb. Krakauer suggests that this transaction distorted the judgments made on the mountain and resulted in the line between the dangerous and the deadly being crossed, with tragic consequences. Krakauer, who participated in the climb, completed extensive research and interviewed the survivors. The text examines how arrogance, ego and commercialism impacted on this endeavour to conquer the mountain.

**Xinran, *Sky Burial*, Chatto & Windus, 2004**

In March 1958, a Chinese woman learns that her husband, an idealistic army doctor, has died while serving in Tibet. Determined to know what has happened to him, she courageously sets off to join his regiment. To her horror, instead of finding a Tibetan people welcoming their Chinese 'liberators', she walks into a bloody conflict. Before she can know her husband's fate, she is taken hostage and embarks on a life-changing journey through the Tibetan countryside – a journey that will last twenty years and lead her to a deep appreciation of Tibetan culture.

## List 2

### The Imaginative Landscape

#### Novel

**Malouf, David, *Fly Away Peter*, Vintage, Random House, 1999 (A)**

Set initially in Queensland in 1914, *Fly Away Peter* tells the story of Jim Sadler, an amateur ornithologist who is befriended by Ashley Crowther, the owner of a marshland. He is given the task of recording the bird life of the area. Imogen Harcourt, a photographer, meets Jim, and their shared interest in birds cements their friendship. The timeless landscape, with kingfisher and ibis, is contrasted with the brutal conflict of World War I. Jim and Ashley, as soldier and officer respectively, find themselves on the Western Front in France.

Deceptively simple in plot and structure, the novel celebrates the life of an ordinary, self-effacing man. We follow Jim through the horrors of trench warfare to the moment when he confronts his deepest fears. Malouf tackles the ANZAC story and examines some of the mythology surrounding Australia's involvement in the World War I. He is also interested in the notion of life as a continuum and explores notions of the individual's place in a complex, multilayered world, the importance of a sense of place, and the relationships between nature and the world of men and women.

#### Film

***Jindabyne*, Director: Ray Lawrence, 2006 (A)**

The screenplay written by Beatrix Christian is based on Raymond Carver's short story, 'So much water so close to home', also drawn on by songwriter Paul Kelly in his work.

On an annual fishing trip, in the isolated high country in the Snowy Mountains, four men find a girl's body in the river. They make the decision to finish their fishing weekend rather than make the trek back to report her death. On their return the consequences of their disturbing decision are far reaching for the men, their families, the girl's family and their community. The varied reactions form the core of the story. Some believe they have done nothing wrong; however, others react differently and one is particularly repelled and haunted by the choice.

The realisation that what is done cannot be undone is sobering and viewers are faced with the effects of the corrosive nature of guilt. (Classification: M) (English subtitles for the hearing impaired)

#### Short stories

**MacLeod, Alistair, *Island*, Vintage, Random House, 2002**

**Note:** These stories were formerly anthologised in the collection *The Lost Salt Gift of Blood*.

Alistair MacLeod's first short story collection, now published as *Island*, includes finely crafted tales of individuals, families, and small communities. Most of the stories are set in Canada's remote eastern provinces. His preoccupations are familial relationships and memory. Grandparents, parents, husbands and 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. The landscape is cold and unforgiving but there is, nevertheless, a warmth to these stories.

### Poetry

**Frost, Robert, (ed. Edward Lathem), *The Poetry of Robert Frost*, Vintage, Random House, 2001**

Frost's poetry is characterised by precise and evocative imagery to describe the landscape of New England. Through observation and description he celebrates our place within the world and our contributions to its shape. His poetry usually explores the perspective of the solitary figure in the landscape and the writing creates links between man's inner life and the land. Frost's poems should enable students to explore and present their own links to their physical world in exciting ways.

### Whose Reality?

#### Novel

**McEwan, Ian, *Enduring Love*, Vintage, Random House, 2006**

After a tragic ballooning mishap, the lives of an academic couple Joe and Clarissa, are set asunder by Jed Parry, another person involved in the accident. Jed's initial attempts to make sense of the experience through Joe gradually turn into a more sinister obsession. Joe's reaction to this interest becomes increasingly damaging both to himself and to his relationship with Clarissa. The novel builds to a dramatic denouement that addresses love and the role of truth in relationships. *Enduring Love* looks at love with a dispassionate eye and questions what is it to love someone and how we deal with unrequited love. The title's ambiguity makes the reader think about how love lasts, and how it can be a trial.

#### Film

***Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind*, Director: Michel Gondry, 2004**

This film presents a world where people can have unpleasant memories erased. It centres on one couple, Joel and Clementine, who wipe each other's memory of their relationship. Through the use of multiple narratives, switching dream sequences and the erasing procedure itself, the film presents a series of dilemmas. It shows what may take place if the unpleasantness of life were removed. It also seems to suggest the inevitability and inscrutability of love and emotions and represents the messiness and unpredictability of life. (Classification: M) (English subtitles for the hearing impaired)

#### Play

**Williams, Tennessee, *A Streetcar Named Desire*, Penguin Classics, 2000**

*Streetcar*'s Blanche DuBois and Stanley Kowalski are two of the most well-known characters in American literature. Blanche's visit to her sister Stella's apartment in New Orleans precipitates the conflict between Blanche's 'Old South' pretensions, and the raw physical reality of Stella's husband, Stanley. Blanche denies reality: her age, her issues

with alcohol and the reasons she has left the family home in Laurel, Mississippi. Stanley sees through her fabrications, and despises her condescension towards his inner-city, diverse working-class world – the new America. Ultimately, Blanche's insecurities and denials mean that she withdraws from the real world altogether. Williams' play is a rich examination of ideas about death, fantasy and reality.

### Other Literature

**Drewe, Robert, *The Shark Net*, Penguin, 2003 (A)**

This memoir chronicles the life of Drewe from the age of six when his family moves to Perth, depicted as a sandy place on the edge of a vast continent. With a tone that combines nostalgia and a sense of the macabre, Drewe attempts to make sense of the changes in Perth wrought by serial killer Eric Cooke, and perhaps to make sense of himself as he comes to terms with his family relationships, his career as a cadet journalist and his yearnings for acceptance. The murders form a background to Drewe's exploration of the loss of innocence. When Drew returns to Melbourne his fantasies about the romantic beach films of his adolescence and his feelings for Perth are resolved.

### Encountering Conflict

#### Novel

**Grenville, Kate, *The Secret River*, Text Publishing, 2006 (A)**

Kate Grenville's acclaimed novel is set in the early nineteenth century. In 1806, protagonist William Thornhill is transported for the term of his natural life and travels with his family from the slums of London to New South Wales. After eight years as a convict, Thornhill is emancipated and sails up the Hawkesbury River to stake a claim for one hundred acres. Grenville presents a powerful, contemporary insight into the relationships between the settlers, the land and the Aboriginal people. Based on research into her own family history, the text deals with issues of identity, relationships, belonging and ownership.

#### Film

***Omagh*, Director: Pete Travis, 2004**

On August 15 1998 in Omagh, County Tyrone in Northern Ireland, a bomb explodes and hundreds of people are killed or injured in the blast. Pete Travis' film focuses on the family in a manner that reintroduces the 'personal' into the increasingly abstract notion of terrorism. The opening sequence leading up to explosion is almost unbearably tense. Afterwards viewers are left with a grieving father searching for elusive answers and some form of justice. Veteran Irish actor, Gerard McSorley, conveys his character's quiet dignity and pain with precision and sympathy. The film does not offer simple solutions, but instead raises even more difficult questions about culpability and the price of a drawn out peace process. Although it is set in Ireland, the ideas that drive the narrative are universal. This is a film that will provoke much debate and discussion. (Classification: MA)

## Play

### Miller, Arthur, *The Crucible*, Penguin Classics, 2000

Set in the claustrophobic and dangerous times of the Salem witch hunts in 1692, Arthur Miller recreates the terrifying reality of a village in New England caught up in naming and blaming each other for acts of witchcraft and trafficking with the devil. Abigail and a group of other young girls seem possessed and, in an attempt to escape retribution themselves, point the finger literally and figuratively at others. Of particular fascination is the flawed but ultimately heroic response by the protagonist, John Proctor, a man who has committed adultery but wants to save his marriage. He is identified as the chief perpetrator of witchcraft. His battle with Puritan authorities, jealous neighbours and those bent on personal revenge, suggests that love, integrity and dignity can prevail. *The Crucible* becomes a metaphor for what happened in 1950s Cold-War America where a number of people became entangled in the paranoid world of 'reds under the bed' and the 'outing' of 'communists'. While the power of the play ensures its historical appeal, it remains disturbingly relevant for the early twenty-first century. Students will have the opportunity to explore a fine play in which the best and worst of humanity are revealed.

## Short Stories

### Flanagan, Arch and Martin, *The Line, One Day Hill*, 2005 (A)

This biographical story has two of everything: two authors, two stories, two types of history and two hearts; but it is not a story divided. The stories intertwine with one explaining the other. Arch and Martin Flanagan, father and son, describe how Arch's difficult wartime experiences and memories made them who they are as individuals and as a family. Theirs is not the only relationship explored. Arch's four sections of *The Line*, about the building of the Burma rail line by prisoners of war, are interspersed with Martin's reflections on his father and the men with whom he went to war. For such a brutal experience, the warmth, gentleness and humour of many of those people are captured by both authors. The awfulness and enduring impact of the war experience are also described with enough detail to reveal the realities of dying in a jungle or of dealing daily with extraordinary privation. *The Line* is both a personal history and a larger history of a time, a place and people who were thrown together by harsh and brutal experiences.

## Exploring issues of identity and belonging

### Novel

### Salinger, J D, *The Catcher in the Rye*, Penguin, 1994

Holden Caulfield has run away from Pencey school, following his expulsion for poor academic performance. The archetypal alienated youth wanders around New York, just before Christmas, afraid to go home and tell his parents that he has been expelled from yet another school. Caulfield is a depressed and unreliable narrator, and his insights are often both cynical and wry. Intensely critical of his world and the

people he encounters, he is also capable of disarming affection and sensitivity. Holden's confession to his younger sister, Phoebe, that he wants to be a *Catcher in the Rye*, is based on his mishearing the line when he was a child in the song 'Comin' thro' the rye' as 'When a body catch a body, comin' thro' the rye'. Holden's view of himself as a potential catcher, or rescuer, of children, is symbolic of his own need to be rescued. Holden's first person narrative allows access into his own exploration of issues of identity and belonging.

### Film

### *Witness*, Director: Peter Weir, 1985 (A)

Samuel, a young Amish boy, on his first visit to the city witnesses the murder of a detective by corrupt fellow officers. John Book, an honest policeman, attempts to protect Samuel and is given refuge in an Amish community living in Western Pennsylvania. The film explores the developing relationship between Book, Samuel and his mother, and the Amish community, and the ways in which different cultures see and understand each other. Weir presents the Amish, living as farmers, without technology and rejecting violence, and Book's world. Contrasting cultures are seen through the eyes of the main protagonists so that the audience is given different perspectives, and an understanding of what it means to 'belong' in two different worlds. (Classification: M) (English subtitles for the hearing impaired)

### Play

### Murray-Smith, Joanna, *Bombshells*, Currency Press, 2004 (A)

First produced in 2004, *Bombshells* comprises six unconnected monologues, ranging from a teenager, a bride-to-be, an exhausted young mother, a deserted wife with a caustic approach to her hobby, a grieving, isolated widow, and a stage 'star' at the end of a supposedly great career. The play presents varying views of the roles of women, exploring a surprising range of emotions, all of which are presented with compassion and insight. The tone of some monologues is light, comic and playful, others poignant and touching.

### Other Literature

### Dawe, Bruce, *Sometimes Gladness*, Pearson, 2006 (A)

Bruce Dawe's poetry explores a range of human experience, often drawing on the voice of the 'person in the street', and using small episodes to make important points. His poems can be funny, witty and satirical on the one hand, yet lyrical, poignant, sad and tender on the other. The poems highlight the value and warmth to be found in everyday experiences. Hardship is acknowledged, but life is affirmed, and the poems explore the ways in which feelings of identity and belonging may be shaped by experience.

# VCE Literature Text list 2008

The following texts proposed by the Literature Text Advisory Panel have been approved by the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority as suitable for study in 2008.

## Criteria for text selection

Each text selected for the VCE Literature text list will:

- have literary merit and be worthy of close study
- be an excellent example of form and genre
- sustain intensive study, raising interesting issues and providing challenging ideas
- be appropriate for both male and female students
- be appropriate for the age and development of students and in that context reflect current community standards and expectations.

The text list as a whole will:

- be suitable for a wide range of students, including second language students
- reflect the cultural diversity of the Victorian community
- include a balance of new and established works.

## Guidelines for text selection

The text list for VCE Literature is determined within the following guidelines:

1. Texts used as the basis for achieving outcomes in the school-based coursework may be selected from either List A or List B.
2. The texts selected as the basis for the examination responses must come from List B.
3. Forty texts should be available for List A.
4. Thirty texts should be available for List B.
5. The list must represent a range of forms, experiences and voices, as described in the study design.
6. Genres for List A must be represented in the following approximate numbers:
  - 10 Novels
  - 10 Performances
  - 8 Poetry
  - 6 Stories
  - 6 Other LiteratureGenres for List B must be represented in the following approximate numbers:
  - 9 Novels
  - 9 Performances
  - 6 Poetry
  - 3 Stories
  - 3 Other Literature
7. One third of the texts should be Australian.
8. Approximately 75% of the texts must be texts that would be expected to be familiar to most Literature teachers.
9. Contain no titles in common with the VCE English/ESL text list.
10. Be reviewed annually with approximately 25% of the texts being changed. No text should appear for more than four consecutive years or fewer than two years.
11. Full bibliographic details must be supplied where necessary.

Text selection advice is published on page 19 of the *VCE Literature Study Design*.

When selecting texts teachers should ensure that students experience a range of literature from early to contemporary

works, dealing with a diversity of cultural experiences and a range of points of view.

At least two texts should be Australian.

At least two texts should be selected from List A and two texts from List B.

Selections from the text lists should include:

- One novel
- One play, film or television mini-series
- Between 10 and 15 poems
- Collection of short stories, letters, memoirs, essays, tales, myths and short extracts from a variety of sources
- Two further texts selected from novels, plays, collections of poetry, collections of short stories, biographies, autobiographies, collections of essays, letters or memoirs.

**Note:** While the VCAA considers all the texts on this list suitable for study, teachers should be aware that in some instances sensitivity may be needed where particular issues are raised in certain texts. 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. However, **it should be noted that editions nominated for titles from List B are those from which the passages for the examination will be selected.** The bibliographic information 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 list.

In List A the choice of poems for study is a teacher decision. Poems may be sourced from any edition of a poet's works and editions nominated for List A are not prescriptive. For List B, on the other hand, listed poems are prescriptive.

## Key to codes

(A) This text meets the Australian requirement.

(#) Bracketed numbers indicate the number of years that a text has appeared on the Literature text list: (1) for example, indicates that 2008 is the first year a text has appeared on the list.

## List A

### Novels

- Buck, Pearl, *The Good Earth*, Washington Square Press, 2004 (2)
- Collins, Wilkie, *The Woman in White*, Penguin Classics, 2003 (4)
- Day, Gregory, *The Patron Saint of Eels*, Picador, 2005 (A) (2)
- Eliot, George, *Silas Marner*, Penguin Classics, 1997 (1)
- Fforde, Jasper, *The Eyre Affair*, Hodder & Stoughton, 2001 (4)
- Gaskell, Elizabeth, *North and South*, Penguin Classics, 1996 (3)
- Gibson, William, *Pattern Recognition*, Penguin Books, 2003 (4)

Grenville, Kate, *The Idea of Perfection*, Picador, 2000 (A) (3)  
Leon, Donna, *Doctored Evidence*, Random House, 2004 (3)  
Mayes, Andrea, *The Rose Notes*, Penguin, 2005 (A) (1)

### Plays, films or television mini-series

Aristophanes, *The Birds in Four Plays by Aristophanes*, Penguin, 1994 (3)  
Brecht, Bertolt, *The Caucasian Chalk Circle*, Methuen, 1994 (2)  
*Casablanca* (Film) (Director: Michael Curtiz) (Classification: PG) (2)  
Enright, Nick, and Monjo, Justin, *Cloudstreet* (adapted from the novel by Tim Winton), Currency Press, 1999 (A) (1)  
*Far From Heaven* (Film) (Director: Todd Haynes) (Classification: M) (4)  
*Grave of the Fireflies* (DVD Animation), Director: Isao Takahata, (Classification: M), 1988 (3)  
Nowra, Louis, *Radiance*, Currency Press, 2004 (The Playscript) (A) (2)  
Parsons, Nick, *Dead Heart: The Play*, Currency Press, 2003 (A) (1)  
Webster, John, *The White Devil*, Penguin Classics, 1973 (3)  
Wilde, Oscar, *The Importance of Being Earnest*, in *The Importance of Being Earnest and Other Plays*, Penguin Classics, 2000 (2)

### Short stories

Carey, Peter, *Collected Stories*, Vintage, Random House, 2005 (Replaces: *The Fat Man in History*, UQP, 1994 now out of print) (A) (4)  
Dick, Philip K, *Minority Report*, Gollancz, 2002 (3)  
Drewe, Robert (ed.), *The Penguin Book of the Beach*, Penguin, 2001 (A) (2)  
Mansfield, Katherine, *The Collected Stories*, Penguin Classics, 2001 (1)  
Mears, Gillian, *A Map of the Gardens*, Picador, 2002 (A) (3)  
Munro, Alice, *Dance of the Happy Shades*, Vintage, Random House, 2000 (1)

### Other literature

Bayet-Charlton, Fabienne, *Finding Ullagundahi Island*, Allen & Unwin, 2002 (A) (4)  
Li, Cunxin, *Mao's Last Dancer*, Penguin, 2003 (A) (3)  
Ondaatje, Michael, *Running in the Family*, Picador, 1982 (1)  
Woolf, Virginia, *A Room of One's Own*, Penguin, 2000 (2)  
Wright, Judith, *Half a Lifetime*, Penguin, 2001 (A) (3)

### Poetry

**Note:** No specific editions or poems are nominated for poets in List A, as the choice of poems is a teacher decision.

Atwood, Margaret (4)  
Bishop, Elizabeth (4)  
Eliot, T S (3)  
Lawrence, Anthony, *Skinned by Light*, University of Queensland Press, 2002 (A) (2)  
Lowell, Robert (2)  
Murray, Les *Collected Poems*, Black Inc., 2006 (A) (1)  
*Poetry in Translation*; Modern French Poetry (1) (For details see Annotations below)  
Wordsworth, William (3)  
Wyatt, Thomas (3)

## List B

### Novels

Austen, Jane, *Sense and Sensibility*, Penguin Classics, 2003 (4)  
Barker, Pat, *Regeneration*, Penguin Books, 1992 (2)  
Bronte, Anne, *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*, Penguin Classics, 1996 (1)  
de Kretser, Michelle, *The Hamilton Case*, Vintage, Random House, 2004 (A) (4)  
Dickens, Charles, *Bleak House*, Penguin Classics, 2006 (1)  
Forster, E M, *A Passage to India*, Penguin Classics, 2005 (1)  
James, Henry, *Washington Square*, Penguin Classics, 1986 (3)  
McGahan, Andrew, *The White Earth*, Allen & Unwin, 2004 (A) (2)  
Patchett, Ann, *Bel Canto*, Fourth Estate, 2002 (4)

### Plays

Chekhov, Anton, *Three Sisters*, translated by Peter Carson, Penguin, 2002 (3)  
Ibsen, Henrik, *Hedda Gabler*, in *Hedda Gabler and Other Plays*, Penguin, 1961 (2)  
Murray-Smith, Joanna, *Honour*, Currency Press, 2006 (A) (3) (Note: The 1997 edition differs significantly from the 2006 edition and should not be used)  
Rayson, Hannie, *Hotel Sorrento*, Currency Press, 2002 (A) (2)  
Reza, Yasmina, 'Art', Faber & Faber, 1996 (3)  
Shakespeare, William, *King Lear*, Penguin Shakespeare Series, 2005 (4)  
Shakespeare, William, *Much Ado About Nothing*, Penguin Shakespeare Series, 2005 (2)  
Sophocles, *Antigone*, translated by E F Watling in *The Theban Plays*, Penguin, 2004 (2)  
Thomas, Dylan, *Under Milk Wood*, Penguin Modern Classics, 2000 (3)

### Short stories

Astley, Thea, *Hunting the Wild Pineapple*, Penguin, 1981 (A) (3)  
Byatt, A S, *Sugar & Other Stories*, Vintage, Random House, 1995 (2)  
Lawrence, D H, Three novellas: *The Fox/The Captain's Doll/The Ladybird*, Penguin Classics, 2006 (1)

### Other literature

McGirr, Michael, *Bypass: The Story of a Road*, Pan Macmillan, 2005 (A) (2)  
Modjeska, Drusilla, *Timepieces*, Picador, 2002 (A) (4)  
Wolff, Tobias, *This Boy's Life*, Bloomsbury, 1989 (1)

### Poetry

**Note:** 1. Each poem listed for a poet must be studied  
2. Teachers should note that in the case of longer poems, extracts from the poem may be used in the examination.

**Auden, W H, *Selected Poems*, ed. Edward Mendelson, Faber & Faber, 1979 (3)**

This lunar beauty  
To ask the hard question is simple  
Look, stranger, at this island now  
Lay your sleeping head, my love  
Musée des Beaux Arts

In Memory of W.B. Yeats  
The Unknown Citizen  
September 1, 1939  
Law, say the gardeners, is the sun  
Lady, weeping at the crossroads  
In Praise of Limestone  
Under Sirius  
The Shield of Achilles  
The More Loving One

**Beveridge, Judith, *Wolf Notes*, Giramondo Publishing Company, 2003. (A) (1)**

*Part 1: Peregrine*  
The Saffron Picker  
The Lake  
Exsanguination  
Woman and Child  
Crew

*Part 2: Between the Palace and the Bodhi Tree*

Dawn  
The River  
Tigers  
A Vow  
The Kite  
A Way  
In the Forest  
Path

*Part 3: Signatures*

Apprentice  
Sailor

**Donne, John, *Selected Poetry*, Oxford World's Classics, 1996 (3)**

From The Satires:

- Satire 3 [Kind pity chokes my spleen]

From the Love Elegies:

- To his Mistress Going to Bed
- His Picture

From the Songs and Sonnets:

- The Flea
- The Good Morrow
- The Sun Rising
- The Canonization
- Song (First line: *Sweetest love, I do not go*)
- The Anniversary
- A Valediction: forbidding Mourning
- The Relic

From the Holy Sonnets:

- [At the round earth's imagined corners]
- [Death be not proud]
- A Hymn to Christ, at the Author's last going into Germany
- Hymn to God my God, in my Sickness

**Keats, John, *The Major Works*, Oxford World Classics, 2001 (1)**

Ode to Apollo  
To My Brother George [Sonnet: First line: *Many the wonders I this day have seen*]  
On First Looking into Chapman's *Homer*  
On The Sea  
'When I have fears that I may cease to be'  
The Eve of St Agnes

La belle dame sans merci  
Ode to Psyche  
'If by dull rhymes our English must be chain'd'  
Ode on Indolence  
Ode to a Nightingale  
Ode on a Grecian Urn  
Ode on Melancholy  
To Autumn  
'Bright Star, would I were stedfast as thou art'

**Kinsella, John, *Peripheral Light: Selected and New Poems*, Fremantle Arts Centre Press, 2003 (A) (3)**

Links  
Inland  
Wheatbelt Gothic or Discovering a Wyeth  
The Silo  
Fog  
Goading Storms Out of a Darkening Field  
Wild Radishes  
Drowning in Wheat  
The Machine of the Twentieth Century Rolls Through the High-Yielding Crop  
First Essay on Linguistic Disobedience  
The Shed  
Salt Lesson  
Cold

**Larkin, Philip, *Collected Poems*, The Marvell Press and Faber & Faber, 2003 (2)**

Poetry of Departures  
Mr Bleaney  
Love Songs in Age  
Home is so Sad  
The Whitsun Weddings  
MCMXIV  
Ambulances  
The Arundel Tomb  
The Explosion  
Aubade

## Annotations of texts new to the Literature List 2008

These annotations of texts new to the Literature list in 2008 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; nor do they represent the view of the VCAA. The list is arranged alphabetically by author in text types. Films are listed by title.

### Novels

**Eliot, George, *Silas Marner*, Penguin Classics, 1997**

Silas Marner is a weaver who, after a false accusation, finds himself exiled to a small English village where he is the object of suspicion. Silas is initially an isolated and bitter man who hoards away his gold, taking it out only to admire and count it. When the gold is stolen, he is inconsolable. In its place, however, he gains much more. Fate brings Eppie to his door and through her he gains the acceptance of the villagers, regains his faith and discovers love. The novel epitomises the true meaning of what it is to be 'rich'. Silas emerges as a selfless character confronted by love, dishonesty and eventually finding redemption.

A film version starring Ben Kingsley and an adaptation starring Steve Martin called *A Simple Twist of Fate* make Silas Marner suitable for Area of study 1: Adaptations and transformations.

**Mayes, Andrea, *The Rose Notes*, Penguin, 2005 (A)**

*The Rose Notes* is a contemporary novel set on a farm in the southern Riverina of New South Wales. Pearl Kinnear, a middle-aged woman, lives on the farm with her elderly father, Dobie, who is struggling to come to terms with his failing powers. An uneasy relationship exists between the two. Pearl is lonely and finds the small community judgmental and suffocating, yet she is tied to the farm both financially and emotionally. She takes solace in tending the beautiful rose garden established by her mother, Alice, who died when Pearl was fifteen. Dobie, whom the author describes as having a 'Lear-like' character, is resentful of any life Pearl tries to establish for herself and sees her purpose as taking care of him. Thomas Hearne, the son of Henry, a rose grower who helped Alice establish the garden, comes to the property with a message from his father for Alice. The message helps Pearl to understand a little more of her past and to face the future with a self-confidence she has not had before.

**List B**

**Bronte, Anne, *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*, Penguin Classics, 1996**

*The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* critically presents the double standards of nineteenth-century Britain. Its strong feminist themes and exploration of morality sketch an accurate and intriguing insight into the prejudices and parochialism of the Regency era. The characters are powerfully and perceptively drawn, due perhaps – as some critics have argued – to the fact that Anne Bronte derived their portraits directly from her own experience. Certainly, the passions with which they are imbued encourage the reader to empathise whole-heartedly with their predicaments. Students should encounter no difficulty identifying with the motivations of the two main characters and should enjoy the immersion into a unique landscape that has been so affectionately sketched. Resources are plentiful; a BBC film version of the novel as well as a tele-movie would make it suitable for Area of Study 1 – Adaptations and transformations.

**Dickens, Charles, *Bleak House*, Penguin Classics, 2006**

Arguably Dickens' most complex and polished novel, *Bleak House* is focussed on the law and its capacity to absorb and destroy those it purports to serve. At the novel's heart is the Chancery case of Jarndyce and Jarndyce, a case embedded in wills and legal argument whose many turns will ultimately consume all of the estate and some of the individuals connected to it. The novel contains some of Dickens' richest creations, both comical and villainous, none more so than the scheming lawyer Tulkinghorn, who seeks information about everyone in order to have power over them. The language too is rich in metaphor and colour, rewarding close analysis. The narrative alternates between a sophisticated, mature, omniscient voice and that of Esther Summerson, a young associate of the wards in the Chancery case. The story involves murder, misfortune, revelations and rewards and offers some of Dickens' most trenchant criticism of the social ills of his world. The recent 8-part BBC TV series would also make it suitable for Area of Study 1 – Adaptations and transformations.

**Forster, E M, *A Passage to India*, Penguin Classics, 2005**

Forster's *A Passage to India* captures a turbulent and, at times, haunting image of colonial India. Adela Quested travels to Chandrapore with her future mother-in-law to marry her British magistrate fiancé, Ronny. Entranced by the charm of Dr Aziz, a local Muslim doctor, Miss Quested and Mrs Moore are drawn into a world starkly different from their own. Growing tension between the British colonists and the local Indians is heightened when Miss Quested becomes entangled in a rape trial after a visit to the extraordinary Marabar Caves.

Forster's novel touches on the mysticism of Indian culture and foreshadows impending change. The novel explores the ways in which characters are often altered by their environment and circumstances. The characters are far from stereotypical.

An excellent film by David Lean would also make it suitable for Area of Study 1 – Adaptations and transformations.

**Plays, films or television mini-series**

**List A**

**Enright, Nick, and Monjo, Justin, *Cloudstreet* (adapted from the novel by Tim Winton) Currency Press, 1999 (A)**

Tim Winton's much-celebrated novel was adapted for the stage in 1998. It is the story of two families, the Lambs and the Pickles, growing up in Perth in the 40s, 50s and early 60s. Neither family has much material wealth and each has suffered significant misfortune: Fish Lamb almost drowns, aged nine, while on a trip to the river with his family and is left brain-damaged; Sam Pickles loses four and a half fingers from his right hand in an accident with a winch. The families meet when the Pickles seek tenants for half of the rambling old house – 'Cloudstreet' – which they have inherited from Sam's cousin. The play deals frankly with both families' struggles to keep going and is at different times funny, moving, sad and uplifting. The characters are richly drawn and their stories compelling. The action moves quickly – some of the scenes are barely half a page long – as it deals with the shifting fortunes of both families. This text would be appropriate for any of the outcomes and the possibility exists for comparison with extracts from the original novel.

**Parsons, Nick, *Dead Heart: The Play*, Currency Press, Sydney, 2003 (A)**

How do societies with vastly differing legal and cultural traditions coexist? Of what value is the European notion of rule-of-law when it applies specifically to European laws only? Can and, indeed, should traditional tribal laws administered by tribal elders for centuries be recognised as the primary body of law in an Indigenous community? Most importantly, is there any possibility of a middle road that navigates its way between these two different bodies of European and Indigenous law or are 'whitefellas' and 'blackfellas' doomed to face off against each other across a mutually exclusive cultural divide? These complex questions are explored in Nick Parsons' powerful and disturbing play *Dead Heart*. On the one hand, the central white character, Senior Constable Ray Lorkin, seems to be dangerously taking the law into his own hands as he tries to limit and direct the use of tribal payback in his remote community of Wala Wala. On the other hand, he is convinced that none of the other whites living there – the school teacher and his family, the anthropologist and the doctor, all of whose

relationships have been broken by long despair and isolation – have anything like the understanding he has of the people under his jurisdiction. Meanwhile, the Aboriginal elder Poppy asserts that there is no middle road and that the only way his community can continue is with the complete expulsion of all outsiders. The stage is set for a tragic conflict to which there seems to be no resolution.

Teachers are advised that the text set for study is the Currency Press play script. Currency also publishes the screenplay of the film version of *Dead Heart*, directed by Nick Parsons. The film version is a good resource for use in Area of Study 1 – Adaptations and transformations.

## Short Stories

### List A

**Mansfield, Katherine, *The Collected Stories*, Penguin Classics, 2001**

The critic E J O'Brien regarded Mansfield's story 'The Fly' (1922) as one of the finest short stories ever written and her work has often been compared to Chekhov. The primary focus of Mansfield's stories is the complexity of human interrelationships, usually between members of a small group bound together by strong emotional ties: friends, married couples or a family. 'Bliss' (1920) recounts the experiences of Bertha Young, a woman of 30 who still skips with joy like a child and who regards her life as blissful until she discovers her husband is having an affair. A second major theme is children and their relationships with each other and with adults: in 'Sixpence', the small boy resents the power wielded by his omnipotent father. A third group of stories explore the difficulties faced by single women. Much of the appeal of her stories lies in Mansfield's talent for close observation of character, but her lyrical use of language adds to the reader's enjoyment. Mansfield seldom relied on simple chronological narration, preferring to juxtapose present, past, and occasionally, future events to construct richly detailed and highly evocative miniatures of the human condition. In 'The Fly' (1922), written as Mansfield confronted her approaching death from tuberculosis, two old men recall the death of a beloved son in the First World War and come to the realisation that life moves on despite grief and death.

**Munro, Alice, *Dance of the Happy Shades*, Vintage, Random House, 2000**

Munro's first collection comprises stories written over a period of twenty years, set mainly in rural Canadian towns and their outskirts. Munro's realisation of setting – from dank, claustrophobic interior spaces to impoverished suburbs and rugged woodlands – is exemplary. Her prose is intensely focussed on the minutiae of everyday life, but Munro's deft, precise touch propels each narrative forward, while intimating larger questions and concerns. Munro's preoccupation is largely with the lives of girls and young women whose various encounters with the realities of romance, gender roles, familial responsibilities and work make the collection very contemporary. Each story is emotionally charged, in particular by the characters' sense that they are constrained by circumstances from which escape is rarely achievable. Moreover, Munro's interest in the changes wrought by the passage of time and the inescapable pull of the past makes this collection both moving and memorable.

### List B

**Lawrence, D H, Three novellas: *The Fox/The Captain's Doll/The Ladybird*, Penguin Classics, 2006**

Lawrence's three novellas were written under the relentless shadow of the World War I. Lawrence feared that Europe would never recover from this catastrophe and that England, his England, would never be able to regenerate. These three stories read like the elegies of a lost generation and a doomed world. At the same time they contain prescient echoes of a terrible future, particularly in the mixture of masochism and aggrandisement in the tortured psychology of the wounded German Count, a prisoner of war in *The Ladybird*. These three novellas resemble poetry in the quality of their descriptiveness and the coherent compression of Lawrence's writing style. Lawrence's familiar motifs are deftly handled: Count Dionys, the broken man returned unrestfully from war in *The Ladybird*, the intrusion of an unassuming young ex-service man into the rural isolation and personal desolation of two women in *The Fox* and the inevitability of compromise in love in *The Captain's Doll*. The background to these stories of human loss is often the natural world, beautifully articulated by Lawrence's observant and detailed descriptions.

## Other Literature

### List A

**Ondaatje, Michael, *Running in the Family*, Picador, 1982**

In this succinct memoir, a writer travels in fact and in remembrance through Sri Lanka, seeking stories of his parents and their vanished community. An episodic structure, utilising narratives, descriptions and verse, initiates us into the flamboyant and bohemian world of a wealthy group of mixed-race people. Their aspirations, achievements, eccentricities and audacities are presented within the setting of a most beautiful tropical island and its mix of ancient and new cultures. Notable is Ondaatje's openness to manifold aspects of human nature, studied with compassion, cool reflection and wry humour. Freedom from moralising is intermingled with delight in the follies and freakish behaviour of variegated characters. A more serious note which eventually resounds strongly is the author's grief for his lost father, whose life was eroded by self-indulgence. Ondaatje's parents separated in his early adolescence and he left his homeland. This suffuses his writing with a nostalgic sense of a Shangri-La, as he attempts to recover experience in a record that is inevitably filled with gaps but becomes deeply poignant and ultimately noble.

### List B

**Wolff, Tobias, *This Boy's Life*, Bloomsbury, 1989**

This autobiographical narrative centres on the troubled childhood years of the acclaimed American short-story writer, Tobias Wolff. The text charts young Toby's life as the child of an impoverished divorcee whose longing for a more affluent, stable lifestyle propels her in and out of unsatisfactory relationships with men. From the gun-toting and obsessive Roy to the malicious and violent Dwight, Toby's father-figures influence his behaviour in ways that are both threatening and formative.

Toby's street-smartness, combined with his penchant for deceit and his unscrupulous ingenuity, help him negotiate the

violence and tedium of his early years and gradually fashion opportunities for a more promising future. Ultimately he gains entry to an elite private school through brazen deception and forgery, only to be unceremoniously expelled. Never one for mawkish sentimentality, Wolff represents his childhood self as flawed yet complex; as not particularly likeable yet intriguingly adaptable and resilient. Despite its serious content, this text is often wryly humorous and sharply observed. Wolff's economical prose and chronologically driven narrative also make *This Boy's Life* particularly accessible. The film version is a good resource for Area of Study 1 – Adaptations and transformations.

## Poetry

### List A

#### **Poetry in Translation; Modern French Poetry; a selection of poems including works by Charles Baudelaire, Arthur Rimbaud and Guillaume Apollinaire**

Baudelaire's poetic masterpiece, *The Flowers of Evil* (1857), likens the poet to a condemned hero shackled to the earth by wings of lead. His selected poems and works are available in English from many publishers including New Directions, Oxford and Penguin. Rimbaud's (1854–1891) poet is an outlaw-chemist advocating the disintegration of all the senses and the reintegration of them and the world through language and poetry. Wallace Fowlie (University of Chicago Press, 1966), Paul Schmidt (Harper and Row, 1975) and Martin Sorrell (Oxford University Press, USA, 2001) have translated his complete works into English. Apollinaire's (1880–1918) part-symbolist, part-spiritual aesthetic is the voice of a poet eternally longing in the eternal present. Anne Hyde Greet has translated his pre-war collection, *Alcools* (University of California, 1965) and his 1918 *Calligrammes: Poems of War and Peace* (1991 & 2004). Oliver Bernard has translated his *Selected Poems* (Anvil Press, 2003).

#### **Murray, Les, *Collected Poems*, Black Inc., 2006 (A)**

Born in 1938, Murray has devoted the last 36 years to celebrating the Australian condition. His poetry embraces the beauty and diversity of nature and respectfully references the experiences of Australia's traditional owners. It would be impossible to not find something in his vast collection of works that spoke evocatively to the human spirit. Murray views the world in a unique fashion, creating imagery that is often thought-provoking and sometimes quite simply, startling.

### List B

#### **Beveridge, Judith, *Wolf Notes*, Giramondo Publishing Company, 2003 (A)**

Judith Beveridge is a contemporary Australian poet whose work is highly acclaimed nationally and internationally. This recent collection is divided into three sections. The first offers a series of character studies; the second – and longest – explores the travels in north and central India of Siddhartha Gotama prior to achieving enlightenment and becoming the Buddha; and the third includes several dramatic monologues. Although the settings and moods of each section vary widely, the poems are linked by their shared focus on capturing the vital intensity of each moment of being. Beveridge finds in her subjects, regardless of whether they are human or part of the natural world, a rich supply of images and ideas. Her highly distilled use of language and her mastery and manipulation of form focus her observations, generating a compelling synergy between form and content that makes the poems particularly rewarding for analysis.

#### **Keats, John, *The Major Works*, Oxford World Classics, OUP, 2001**

Later among the Romantic poets, the lyric poet John Keats (1795–1821) promoted the notion of the individual sensibility as the means of ascertaining truth. He was influenced by the work of Wordsworth and Coleridge, but created a strong individual voice, combining an intensity of feeling and emotion with a concentration of expression. Frequently drawing on classical mythology, his works often invoke images from the ancient world to illuminate his present experience. His intensely sensuous imagery and confident control of poetic form reach a culmination in the odes of 1819. The poems selected for study represent a growth from a youthful, natural gift to a mature intellectual understanding of experience. These poems offer rich opportunities for students to examine imagery, poetic voice and stanzaic forms. The Oxford World's Classics Edition also contains a substantial selection of Keats's letters, useful background resources for the study of the poems.





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**VICTORIAN CURRICULUM AND ASSESSMENT AUTHORITY**

41 St Andrews Place East Melbourne Victoria 3002 Australia

TELEPHONE +61 3 9651 4300 FACSIMILE +61 3 9651 4324

EMAIL [vcaa@edumail.vic.gov.au](mailto:vcaa@edumail.vic.gov.au)

WEB [www.vcaa.vic.edu.au](http://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au)

