

Supplement 4

VCE English/ESL Text list 2011

VCE Literature Text list 2011

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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 Units 3 and 4 in 2011.

Criteria for text selection

Each text selected for the VCE English and English as a Second Language (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 (List 2: Area of Study 2) four for each Context:
 - 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)

- eight novels
- two collections of short stories
- two collections of poetry or songs
- three plays
- two film texts
- three non fiction texts

Area of Study 2: List 2 (16 texts) for each Context

- 1 novel
- 1 film text

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

- Plays
- Short stories
- Poetry
- Other Literature

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 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.

Text selection – advice to schools

Texts for study in Units 3 and 4 English/ESL are grouped into two lists: List 1 for Area of Study 1, Reading and Responding, which focuses on the reading of a range of literary texts to develop critical and supported responses in relation to Outcome 1; and List 2 for Area of Study 2, Creating and Presenting, which focuses on reading and writing and their interconnection, in relation to Outcome 2.

Teachers should consider the lists in conjunction with the Text Selection advice published on page 23 of the *VCE English/ESL Study Design*.

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.

The annotations are provided to assist teachers with selection of texts in accordance with the requirements in the *VCE English/ESL 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 **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.

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 text list.

List 1

Novels

- Amsterdam, Steven, *Things We Didn't See Coming* (A) (1)
- Brooks, Geraldine, *Year of Wonders* (A) (2)
- Dickens, Charles, *A Christmas Carol* (1)
- Goldsworthy, Peter, *Maestro*, (A) (4)
- Hamid, Mohsin, *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* (1)
- Hemingway, Ernest, *A Farewell to Arms* (2)
- Malouf, David, *Ransom* (A) (1)
- Martel, Yann, *Life of Pi* (2)

Short stories

- Lahiri, Jhumpa, *Interpreter of Maladies* (2)
(Stories for study: 'A Temporary Matter', 'When Mr. Pirzada Came to Dine', 'Interpreter of Maladies', 'A Real Durwan', 'Sexy', 'Mrs. Sen's', 'This Blessed House', 'The Treatment of Bibi Haldar', 'The Third and Final Continent'.)
- Poe, Edgar Allan, (ed. G R Thompson) *Great Short Works* (4)

(Tales for study: '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

- Nowra, Louis, *Cosi* (A) (2)
- Rose, Reginald, *Twelve Angry Men* (1)
- Shakespeare, William, *Richard III* (4)

Poetry/Songs

- Slessor, Kenneth, *Selected Poems* (A) (4)
- Wright, Judith, *A Human Pattern – Selected Poems* (A) (2)

Film texts

- The Old Man Who Read Love Stories*, (Director: Rolf de Heer) (A) (1)
- On the Waterfront*, (Director: Elia Kazan) (2)

Non-fiction texts

- Edelman, Bernard, *Dear America – Letters Home from Vietnam* (2)
- McGirr, Michael, *Bypass: the story of a road* (A) (2)
- Obama, Barack, *Dreams from My Father* (1)

List 2

The imaginative landscape (4)

- Anderson, Jessica, *Tirra Lirra by the River* (A) (2)
- Frost, Robert, (ed. Edward Lathem), *The Poetry of Robert Frost* (4)
- MacLeod, Alistair, *Island* (4)
- One Night the Moon*, (Director: Rachel Perkins) (A) (1)

Whose reality? (4)

- Drewe, Robert, *The Shark Net* (A) (4)
- Frayn, Michael, *Spies* (1)
- The Player*, (Director: Robert Altman) (2)
- Williams, Tennessee, *A Streetcar Named Desire* (4)

Encountering conflict (4)

- Grenville, Kate, *The Secret River* (A) (4)
- Miller, Arthur, *The Crucible* (4)
- Paradise Road*, (Director: Bruce Beresford) (A) (1)
- Hillman, R and Mazari, N, *The Rugmaker of Mazar-e-Sharif* (A) (2)

Exploring issues of identity and belonging (4)

- Dawe, Bruce, *Sometimes Gladness* (A) (4)
- McCullers, Carson, *The Member of the Wedding* (1)
- Pung, Alice, *Growing Up Asian in Australia* (A) (2)
- Witness* (Director: Peter Weir) (A) (4)

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

Amsterdam, Steven, *Things We Didn't See Coming*, Sleepers Publishing, 2009 (A)

Amsterdam's episodic novel charts an unnamed narrator attempting to navigate his life in unpredictable times. Beginning at the millennium celebrations of 2000, the novel slowly explores a future of political and environmental collapse. A speculative vision of a world beset by extreme political division and implosion, unpredictable weather patterns and government-backed disaster relief teams may seem bleak. However, in asking how people cope when faced with political and personal disasters, this novel ultimately offers hope and a vision of humanity bound by love and the importance of connecting with others.

Brooks, Geraldine, *Year of Wonders*, Fourth Estate, 2001 (A)

The plague year of 1666 brought fear, confusion and grief to a small village in Derbyshire. A maid, Anna Frith narrates her story and so traces the anguish of her community as they endure the terrors of a deadly infectious disease and self-imposed isolation. The community seeks answers in religion and superstitions as the Plague takes its toll physically, mentally and spiritually. The relationships of Anna, the idealistic but driven rector and his troubled wife are central to the unfolding tragedy in the village. The language of this novel reflects its well-researched historical basis as much as the complex nature of its subject matter.

Dickens, Charles, *A Christmas Carol*, Pocket Penguin Classics, 2007

Ebenezer Scrooge, Tiny Tim, The Ghost of Christmas Past, Bob Cratchit – Bah, Humbug! This is a novel about redemption. Scrooge has lost his soul and needs a spooky lesson in reaching out to his fellow man. Also a novel about social justice and the plight of the working poor, it shows 'wealth-building' values for what they truly are: greed and pettiness. Don't confuse the novel with its many film interpretations; Dickens may never have produced a sharper piece of writing than *A Christmas Carol*. It is, at once, a classic ghost story, a searing polemic, and an utterly compelling narrative about what it is to be human

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.

Hamid, Mohsin, *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*, Penguin, 2008

This provocatively titled novel explores controversial terrain in a first-person narrative. Changez, an American-university educated Pakistani, addresses an American companion with whom he is sharing a table outside a café in Pakistan. Changez's personal and political narrative reveals post-9/11

mistrust and suspicion, and invites the reader to think about these difficult and controversial matters. The novel is rich in irony, exploring views on love, prejudice, lifestyle and the behaviour of individuals and countries. The open ending adds to its fascinating narrative structure and content.

Hemingway, Ernest, *A Farewell to Arms*, Vintage, Random House, 2005

This twentieth century classic draws on Hemingway's experiences during the First World War. The novel is constructed around Frederic Henry's service in the Italian Ambulance Corps, his desertion and escape to Switzerland with a British nurse. It analyses the brutalising nature of violence, the psychology of defeat and the ultimate futility of war. Hemingway also examines love and desire through his central characters. The prose is very simple, and is used to both hide and expose characters' emotions and desires.

Malouf, David, *Ransom*, Vintage, Random House, 2009 (A)

Malouf reimagines the world of the *Iliad*, including a little-known episode of the Trojan Wars. 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' camp seeking to ransom his son's body. He travels in a donkey cart escorted only by the carter but aided by the god Hermes. The mission succeeds, delivering to Priam enrichment in life and legendary status after death. *Ransom* explores universal themes of paternal pride and love, and liberation of the spirit - as relevant today as in classical Greece.

Martel, Yann, *Life of Pi*, Canongate, Text publishing, 2009

Is it a true story? A boy called Pi Patel becomes a Christian, a Muslim, and a Hindu. Soon afterwards he finds himself in the middle of the Pacific Ocean sharing a lifeboat with a 450-pound Bengal Tiger named Richard Parker. They land on a carnivorous island that eats meerkats. No one believes his story but it's true or at least it's supposed to be true. But then, what is truth when a good story is at stake? *Life of Pi* doesn't answer any questions but it asks a lot of interesting ones. One part *Dr Doolittle* is mixed with several parts *Salman Rushdie* and the result is like nothing you've ever read. The main character of this book is the story itself. *Life of Pi* is about the divine nature of a good yarn and the transcendent experience of hearing one.

Short stories

Lahiri, Jhumpa, *Interpreter of Maladies*, Flamingo, Harper Collins, 2000

(Stories for study: 'A Temporary Matter', 'When Mr. Pirzada Came to Dine', 'Interpreter of Maladies', 'A Real Durwan', 'Sexy', 'Mrs. Sen's', 'This Blessed House', 'The Treatment of Bibi Haldar', 'The Third and Final Continent'.)

Jhumpa Lahiri is an Indian writer who has grown up in the USA. Her short stories evoke the lives of Indian émigrés and their children, as they juggle the expectations of Indian traditions and American values. Lahiri also sets stories in India, which creates a further contrast of values and issues. Readers will be seduced by the writing to share the pathos of her unassuming characters, including newlyweds, a Pakistani

refugee, a mistress and a caretaker. Lahiri is a master of style, social comedy and observation. She is also a sophisticated creator of plots and memorable endings that have a sting in the tail.

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

(Tales for study: '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

Nowra, Louis, *Cosi*, Currency Press, 1994 (A)

Lewis, a young Australian University student, takes a job in 1970 as a director of a play in a mental asylum. Powered by one of the more flamboyant characters, they put on a performance of Mozart's *Così fan tutte*. The play within the play echoes many of the characters' own concerns. Their responses to the Vietnam War and the treatment of women, and their attempts to accept others are all key issues in the play. *Cosi* also examines the divisive nature of society, and the arbitrary reasons given for those who are excluded.

Rose, Reginald, *Twelve Angry Men*, Penguin Classics, 2006

The play takes its audience into the jury room where a group of twelve men is performing its civic duty. Through the jury's interactions, each man reveals himself more fully: his strengths, weaknesses and above all his prejudices. The eighth juror is initially alone in opposing a 'guilty' verdict, but as the members of the jury deliberate, we see at work a judicial system that values the right of the accused to be 'innocent until proved guilty' and the duty of a jury to explore 'reasonable doubt'.

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

Shakespeare's Richard III is one of several 'history' plays. It 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 any 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. Senior 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

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.

Wright, Judith, *A Human Pattern – Selected Poems*, ETT Imprint, 1996 (A)

Judith Wright's poetry is evocative, imaginative and often deeply moving. She adroitly teases out the threads of the mundane and majestic, the painful and the joyful, the grand picture and the minutiae of life. She explores themes such as growing up, loss, love, the Australian milieu, nature, and finding one's place in different environments. Wright superbly captures the individual within society, Australian suburbia, the terror and beauty of nature, and life in all its tender and harsh reality. Her language and verse structure are accessible for students even with a limited background of poetry study. With its vast range of poems, this anthology is a wonderful extension of students' study of Australian literature.

Film texts

***The Old Man Who Read Love Stories*, Director: Rolf de Heer, 2001 (A)**

Adapted from Luis Sepulveda's short novel, de Heer's film evokes the magic realism for which South American writing is justifiably famous. Our hero, an isolated old man, goes out with his side-kicks and his weapons to hunt the jaguar. Physical courage, though, is matched by the old man's determination to read. His ultimate reward will be a kiss from his true love 'to remember our lives by'. De Heer works with words, both written and spoken, to create a complex story about respect for people and animals, indigenous-settler contact, communication, fear, love, wisdom and passion. The jungle dentistry scenes may appear more barbarous than humorous, but an important theme of the film is that 'the barbarity of man can be conquered by love'. (Classification: M)

***On the Waterfront*, Director: Elia Kazan, 1954**

This black and white film was a controversial release in 1954. Kazan's exploration of tensions between employers and employees on the New York waterfront is worthy of close study for both its visual elements and its key concerns. Themes of human redemption and forgiveness, the permeating influence

of corruption and the harsh realities of working class life are exposed through the main character, Terry Malloy. Malloy, guilt stricken after luring a friend to his death for a corrupt union boss, undergoes a moral transformation as the love of the dead friend's sister shows him the way to redemption. The composition, sound-effects, angles and lighting of Kazan's award-winning film beautifully expose the difficulties of breaking free from the grip of the mob. (Classification: PG)

Non-fiction texts

Edelman, Bernard, *Dear America – Letters Home from Vietnam*, Norton paperback, 2002

The foreword to this informative and emotionally powerful collection of letters, posted home by American soldiers serving in the Vietnam War, tells us that 'the important thing was to write.' Written in a range of voices and styles, the letters humanise the soldiers by taking the reader into their world. Some letters are plain, unadorned descriptions of fighting whilst others are surprisingly literary, even poetic. These young letter writers reveal day to day routines of war as well as honest, fundamental human emotions. Poignantly combining private feelings with the public political issues, Edelman's collection amply illustrates that 'there are no simple truths about the Vietnam War'.

McGirr, Michael, *Bypass: the story of a road*, Picador, (Pan Macmillan), 2007 (A)

Accompanied by a copy of *Anna Karenina*, McGirr takes his reader on a humorous bicycle journey from Sydney to Melbourne along Australia's busiest road, the Hume Highway. It is not only a journey of self-discovery after a life-changing decision to leave the priesthood, but also a journey through Australian history and geography. As McGirr travels through bypassed towns, he has time to chat with the locals and to observe the links, both personal and historical, that Australians have with the road. In a quirky, witty and life-affirming narrative, McGirr tells stories of the features, landmarks and curiosities he sees as well as relating personal stories of the people he meets. He highlights the fact that journeys are not only physical but can also guide us to some place deeper inside ourselves.

Obama, Barack, *Dreams From My Father*, Text Publishing, 2008

Barack Obama's memoir is partly a search to understand his father, whom he knew mainly only from family stories. We learn of Obama's life as a African-American born and educated in Hawaii, his experiences in Indonesia with his mother, his work as a community organiser in Chicago, and his time in Kenya where he meets his father's relatives. Through his anecdotes and reflections, we see what the author truly values about the society in which he was born and bred. The memoir is a deeply thoughtful personal search for meaning and, for the reader, a compelling revelation of the background of a President.

List 2

The Imaginative Landscape

Novel

Anderson, Jessica, *Tirra Lirra by the River*, Picador (Macmillan) 2006 (A)

When she is in her seventies, Nora Porteous returns to her family home in Brisbane after a long period of expatriation in London. She suddenly falls ill, and during the weeks of her recovery, she slips between the past and the present, Brisbane and London, gradually revealing the often disturbing events that have shaped her life. As Nora's story unfolds, her reliance on art and poetry to provide an alternative landscape becomes clear, and Anderson examines both the benefits and costs of inhabiting the imagination in this way. Winner of the Miles Franklin Award (1978), this superbly crafted novel is an Australian classic.

Film

***One Night the Moon*, Director: Rachel Perkins, 2006 (A)**

Set in 1932 against the dramatic, ancient landscape of the Flinders Ranges, *One Night the Moon* explores differing ways that indigenous and non-indigenous Australians relate to the land. The viewer is drawn into the landscape by sparse dialogue coupled with stunning cinematography and music. Characters, including Paul Kelly as the father, sing their inner thoughts and feelings, while the camera captures light, darkness, clouds, flora and especially the moon that magically lures a young girl from her home. The image of the 'lost child' in the Australian landscape and the powerful use of song and scenery to convey the story combine to capture the imagination of the viewer. (Classification: M15+)

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

Frayn, Michael, *Spies*, Faber and Faber, Allen and Unwin, 2005

The aging narrator, Stephen, returns to the London streets of his childhood home. Through his reminiscences, it becomes clear that all was not as it seemed in the younger Stephen's neighbourhood. With the Second World War as a backdrop, *Spies* tells the story of the 'infiltration of the Germans' into the young Stephen's environs. Frayn's protagonist reminisces with a delightful sense of irony about his naïve attempts to impose a sense of order on the inevitable chaos of childhood perception. The novel is a touching, and sometimes tense, exploration of the blurring between fact and fiction, actuality and perception.

Film

***The Player*, Director: Robert Altman, 1992**

A character in Robert Altman's 1992 film *The Player* asks, 'What about truth? What about reality?' The film cynically explores these notions, exposing the towering egos, avarice, duplicity, amorality and intrigue that is Hollywood moviemaking. Tim Robbins plays a studio executive who receives death threats from an anonymous screenwriter who had pitched a movie to him and been ignored. Robbins' character is an amoral hero with ambiguous motives. Altman explores the Hollywood 'dream' machine through his characters' predicaments. (Classification: M)

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 desire and 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, which is 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 Drewe 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 with his family travels 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 his claim of 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

***Paradise Road*, Director: Bruce Beresford, 1997 (A)**

Based on a true story, a group of women from diverse backgrounds, classes and nationalities become prisoners in a Japanese concentration camp following the fall of Singapore in World War II. Prisoners and guards confront each other in what is certainly not 'paradise'. Faced with adversity, the women slowly understand that their survival is dependent on their individual and collective responses to the conflicts and horrors they encounter. The establishment of a vocal choir provides them with the impetus to find ways of working together to retain dignity and to find solace in the face of overwhelming challenges. (Classification: M15+)

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.

Hillman, R and Mazari, N, *The Rugmaker of Mazar-e-Sharif*, Insight, 2008 (A)

Najaf Mazari came to Australia as a refugee from Afghanistan. This charming biography conjures up his early life in the tiny northern town where he became entranced with rug-making. We follow his journey through war and its effects on his family, including the difficulties faced by Najaf to preserve his own life, finally making the perilous voyage to Australia. We observe Najaf’s experiences as an inmate of the Woomera Detention Centre, his methods of coping, his compassion for other detainees, and his unwavering devotion to the ideal of peace. Finally we see his heart-warming response to the kindnesses of strangers as he creates a new life for himself in Melbourne.

Exploring issues of identity and belonging

Novel

McCullers, Carson, *The Member of the Wedding*, Penguin Books, 2001

Twelve-year-old Frankie Addams feels trapped in an endless summer. At odds with her growing body and the shifting world around her, she yearns for a sense of belonging. When her brother Jarvis announces his plans to marry, Frankie fantasises about the forthcoming wedding, and sees herself as the third member of the new family. Set against the backdrop of the Second World War, and in a town where racial and gender expectations dominate people’s interactions, *The Member of the Wedding* invites the reader to question the societal, cultural and familial expectations that both define and constrain us.

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)

Poetry

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.

Short Stories

Pung, Alice, *Growing Up Asian in Australia*, Black Inc, 2008 (A)

This engaging collection addresses the migrant experience in Australia through personal stories, and its themes enable any reader to think about issues of identity and belonging. Representing a range of genres, the anthology spans several generations and explores diverse life experiences with honesty and humour. Fifty people write about issues such as dual identities, parental misunderstandings and the challenges of meeting the expectations of others while growing up in the ‘lucky’ country. From trying to hide scholastic abilities in ‘Exotic Rissoles’ to the self explanatory ‘Five ways to disappoint your Vietnamese mother’, this collection will have wide appeal. Editor Alice Pung compiled the anthology to highlight the difficulties faced by generations of immigrants.

VCE Literature Text list 2011

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 Units 3 and 4 in 2011.

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:
 - ten Novels
 - ten Performances
 - eight Poetry
 - six Stories
 - six Other LiteratureGenres for List B must be represented in the following approximate numbers:
 - nine Novels
 - nine Performances
 - six Poetry
 - three Stories
 - three Other Literature
7. One third of the texts should be Australian.
8. Approximately 75 per cent of the texts must be texts that would be expected to be familiar to most Literature teachers.
9. Contain no titles in common with those on the VCE English/ESL text lists
10. Be reviewed annually, with approximately 25 per cent 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 to schools

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 ten 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 **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. 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 VCE, VCAL and VET 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 in 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 a text has appeared on the Literature text list: (1) for example, indicates that 2010 is the first year a text has appeared on the list.

List A

Novels

- Calvino, Italo, *If on a Winter's Night a Traveller*, Vintage, Random House, 1998 (2)
- Eliot, George, *Silas Marner*, Penguin Classics, 1997 (4)
- Ham, Rosalie, *The Dressmaker*, Duffy & Snellgrove, 2000 (A) (2)
- Johnston, George, *My Brother Jack*, Harper Perennial, 2008 (A) (3)
- Leigh, Julia, *The Hunter*, Penguin, 1999 (A)
- Mayes, Andrea, *The Rose Notes*, Penguin Books, 2005 (A) (4)
- Rhys, Jean, *Wide Sargasso Sea*, Penguin Classics, 2001 (3)
- Vonnegut, Kurt, *Slaughterhouse Five*, Vintage, Random House, 2000 (3)
- Wharton, Edith, *Ethan Frome*, Penguin Classics, 2005 (2)
- Winterson, Jeanette, *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit*, Vintage, 2001 (1)

Plays, film or television mini-series

- Aristophanes, *Lysistrata*, in *Lysistrata and Other Plays* (trans. Alan H Sommerstein), Penguin Classics, 2002 (1)
- Brecht, Bertolt, *The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui*, Methuen Drama, 2007 (1)
- Cawley, A C (ed.) *Everyman and Medieval Miracle Plays*, Orion Publishing, 1993 (2)
- Chinatown* (DVD) Director: Roman Polanski (Classification: M), 1974 (1)
- Enright, Nick, and Monjo, Justin, adapted from the novel by Tim Winton, *Cloudstreet*, Currency Press, 1999 (A) (4)
- Parsons, Nick, *Dead Heart: The Play*, Currency Press, 2003 (A) (4)
- Persepolis*, (DVD) Director: Marjane Satrapi (Classification: PG) Sony Pictures Classics, 2007 (2)
- Stoppard, Tom, *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead*, Faber & Faber (Allen & Unwin) 1967 (3)
- Water* (DVD) Director: Deepa Mehta (Classification: M), 2005 (3)
- Oscar Wilde, *Lady Windermere's Fan*, Penguin Popular Classics, 1995 (1)

Short stories

- Atwood, Margaret, *Moral Disorder*, Virago, 2007 (2)
- de Maupassant, Guy, *A Parisian Affair and Other Stories*, Penguin Books, 2004 (3)
- Le, Nam, *The Boat*, Hamish Hamilton, Penguin Imprint, 2008 (A) (1)
- Moore, Lorrie, *Birds of America*, Faber & Faber, Allen & Unwin, 2004 (2)
- Munro, Alice, *Dance of the Happy Shades*, Vintage, Random House, 2000 (4)
- Murakami, Haruki, *After the Quake*, Vintage, Random House, 2003 (2)

Other literature

- Clendinnen, Inga, *Agamemnon's Kiss*, Text publishing, 2006 (A) (1)
- Ginibi, Ruby Langford, *Don't Take Your Love to Town*, University of Queensland Press, 2007 (A) (3)
- Hemingway, Ernest, *A Moveable Feast*, Arrow Books, 1994 (3)
- Malouf, David, *12 Edmonstone Street*, Vintage, Random House, 1999 (2)
- Ondaatje, Michael, *Running in the Family*, Picador, Macmillan, 1982 (4)

- Winchester, Simon, *The Surgeon of Crowthorne*, Penguin Books, 1999 (3)

Poetry

- Note:** No specific editions or poems are nominated for poets in List A as the choice of poems is a teacher decision.
- Dickinson, Emily (2)
- Gardner, Helen (ed.), *The Metaphysical Poets*, Penguin Classics, 1972 (2)
- Holland-Batt, Sarah, *Aria*, University of Queensland Press, 2008 (A) (1)
- Murray, Les, *Collected Poems*, Black Inc, 2006 (A) (4)
- Poetry in Translation*, Modern French Poetry, a selection of poems including works by Charles Baudelaire, Arthur Rimbaud and Guillaume Apollinaire (4)
- Reed, James (ed.), *Border Ballads: A Selection*, Fyfield Books, 2003 (2)
- Strauss, Jennifer, *Tiera Del Fuego*, Pariah Press, 2003 (A) (3)
- Tennyson, Alfred Lord, *Selected Poems*, Penguin Classics, 2007 (1)

List B

Novels

- Austen, Jane, *Emma*, Penguin Classics, 2003 (3)
- Bronte, Anne, *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*, Penguin Classics, 1996 (4)
- Dickens, Charles, *Bleak House*, Penguin Classics, 2006 (4)
- Forster, E M, *A Passage to India*, Penguin Classics, 2005 (4)
- Jones, Gail, *Sixty Lights*, Vintage, Random House, 2005 (A) (3)
- Lays, Simon, *The Death of Napoleon*, Black Inc, 2006 (A) (2)
- McEwan, Ian, *Atonement*, Vintage, Random House, 2007 (2)
- Shelley, Mary, *Frankenstein*, Penguin Classics, 2003 (3)
- White, Patrick, *The Aunt's Story*, Vintage Classics, 2008 (A) (1)

Plays

- Davis, Jack, *No Sugar*, Currency Press, 1998 (A) (2)
- Euripides, *The Bacchae* (trans. Vellacott), Penguin Classics, 1973 (1)
- Fo, Dario, *Accidental Death of an Anarchist*, Methuen Student Edition, 2005 (2)
- Frayn, Michael, *Copenhagen*, Methuen Student Edition, 2003 (3)
- Friel, Brian, *The Freedom of the City*, in *Brian Friel: Plays*, Faber and Faber (Allen & Unwin) 2001 (2)
- Rayson, Hannie, *Two Brothers*, Currency Press, 2005 (A) (1)
- Shakespeare, William, *Hamlet*, Cambridge School Shakespeare, Cambridge University Press, 2006 (3)
- Shakespeare, William, *The Tempest*, Penguin Books, 2007 (1)

Short stories

- Chekhov, Anton, *The Lady With the Little Dog and Other Stories, 1896–1904*, Penguin Classics, 2002 (2)
- (Stories for study: 'The House with the Mezzanine', 'Peasants', 'Man in a Case', 'Gooseberries', 'About Love', 'A Visit to Friends', 'Ionych', 'The Lady with the Little Dog',

'In the Ravine', 'Disturbing the Balance', 'The Bishop', 'The Bride'.
 Lawrence, D H, Three Novellas: *The Fox/The Captain's Doll/The Ladybird*, Penguin Classics, 2006 (4)
 Mansfield, Katherine, *The Collected Stories*, Penguin Classics, 2001 (2)
 (Stories for study: 'Prelude', 'Je ne Parle pas Français', 'Bliss', 'A Dill Pickle', 'The Little Governess', 'At the Bay', 'The Garden-Party', 'The Daughters of the Late Colonel', 'Life of Ma Parker', 'Miss Brill', 'The Singing Lesson', 'The Stranger', 'An Ideal Family', 'Taking the Veil', 'The Fly', 'The Canary', 'The Woman at the Store', 'Sixpence', 'Frau Fischer', 'The Modern Soul'.)

Other literature

Funder, Anna, *Stasiland*, Text Publishing 2003 (A) (3)
 Hooper, Chloe, *The Tall Man*, Hamish Hamilton, Penguin Imprint, 2008 (A) (1)
 Pamuk, Orhan, *Istanbul*, Faber and Faber, 2005 (2)
 Wolff, Tobias, *This Boy's Life*, Bloomsbury, 1989 (4)

Poetry

Note:

1. Each poem listed for a poet must be studied.
2. In the case of longer poems, extracts from the poem may be used in the examination.

Beveridge, Judith, *Wolf Notes*, Giramondo Publishing Company, 2003 (A) (4)

Part 1: Peregrine

The Saffron Picker
 The Lake
 Exsanguination
 Woman and Child
 Crew

Part 2: Between the Palace and the Buddha Tree

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

Part 3: Signatures

Apprentice
 Sailor

Blake, William: Mary Lynn Johnson and John E Grant, *Blake's Poetry and Designs*, Norton Critical Edition (second ed.; New York and London: Norton, 2008) (2)

From *Poetical Sketches* (1783)

Song ['How sweet I roam'd from field to field']
Visions of the Daughters of Albion (1793)

From *Songs of Innocence* (1789)

The Lamb
 The Little Black Boy
 The Chimney Sweeper
 Infant Joy

From *Songs of Experience* (1793)

The Sick Rose
 The Tyger
 London
 Infant Sorrow

From the *Pickering Manuscript* (1805)

Mary
 Auguries of Innocence

From *The Four Zoas* (1797–1805)

What is the price of Experience [35:11–36:13]

From *Milton* (1804; c. 1810–18)

And did those feet in ancient time (lines 1–16)

Harwood, Gwen, *Collected Poems*, ed. Alison Hoddinott and Greg Kratzmann, University of Queensland Press, 2003 (A) (3)

Prize-Giving

A Kitchen Poem

Estuary

An Impromptu for Ann Jennings

The Violets

Iris

Father and Child ('Barn Owl', 'Nightfall')

The Lion's Bride

The Secret Life of Frogs

Mother Who Gave Me Life

Class of 1927 ('Slate', 'The Spelling Prize', 'Religious Instruction', 'The Twins')

Night and Dreams

Heaney, Seamus, *Beowulf*, Faber & Faber, Allen & Unwin, 2000 (2)

Keats, John, *John Keats, The Major Works*, Oxford University Press, 2001 (4)

Ode to Apollo

To My Brother George ('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

Bright Star

Ode on Indolence

La Belle Dame Sans Merci

If by dull rhymes our English must be chained

Ode to Psyche

Ode to a Nightingale

Ode on Melancholy

Ode on a Grecian Urn

To Autumn

Porter, Peter, *Max is Missing*, Picador, Pan Macmillan, 2001 (A) (1)

Last Words

Streetside Poppies

In Paradisum

Max is Missing

The Sydney Spiders

Reinventing the Wheel

So Unimaginably Different and So Long Ago

The Lost Watch

Tasso's Oak

The Philosophers' Garden

Clichés as Clouds Above Calstock

Scrawled on Auden's Napkin

Sir Oran Haut-Ton on Forest Conservation

Duetting With Dorothea

Ex Libris Senator Pococurante

Lichtenbergers

Annotations of texts new to the Literature List 2011

Annotations – Literature Lists A and B

These annotations of texts new to the Literature list in 2011 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 or poet. Films are listed by title.

Novels

List A

Leigh, Julia, *The Hunter*, Penguin, 1999 (A)

Leigh's novella-length work of a glittering darkness reflects its Tasmanian setting, a place where much is hidden. Her irresistible narrative is embedded in the evocation of a marginal place where uncanniness passes into the vivid psychological presence of her characters. Hunting the thylacine is difficult, but possibly less so than dealing with what the 'naturalist' finds on arrival at a remote house. Leigh's sharply visual writing is as lean as a whippet. The protagonist's almost unbearable patience, inflected with menace and madness, builds largely through interior monologue, and we come to understand that 'the hunter's greatest weapon [is] a sense of immediacy, a complete understanding of why space is time'.

Winterson, Jeanette, *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit*, Vintage, 2001

This rite of passage novel tells the story of a girl brought up in an industrial town in northern England by adoptive Christian evangelical parents. Jeanette's feelings of social and emotional isolation from her peers are compounded by her need to come to terms with her own same-sex relationships. Winterson's narrative challenges, with sensitivity and humour, conventional perceptions of family and stereotypical representations of women, and argues that there is more than one reality.

List B

White, Patrick, *The Aunt's Story*, Vintage Classics, 2008 (A)

Theodora Goodman is the eccentric, androgynous and intuitive aunt of the title whose grip on reality becomes increasingly tenuous as the narrative unfolds. Initially she withstands the pretensions of her mother and sister by finding solace in the landscape around Meroë, the family farm in NSW, but following her father's death she is forced to leave and then flees from claustrophobic Sydney when her mother dies. In the south of France she meets an outlandish array of characters at the surreal Hôtel du Midi; later, in the US, she meets the more grounded Johnsons when her sanity is almost gone, but her mind is at its most perceptive. Stylistically virtuosic and intensely evocative, *The Aunt's Story* is both challenging and rewarding.

Plays, films or television mini-series

List A

Aristophanes, *Lysistrata*, in *Lysistrata and Other Plays* (trans. Alan H Sommerstein), Penguin Classics, 2002

Allowing for pacifist and feminist interpretations, *Lysistrata*, set during the long running war between Athens and Sparta, is Aristophanes' call for a peaceful resolution. Lysistrata is the heroine who conspires with her Spartan counterpart, Lampito. Together, they organise for the women to withhold sex from the men until they agree to negotiate for peace. Aristophanes' plays have variously been described as witty, bawdy, political, satirical and slapstick. Much of the comedy emanates from scenes showing a transfer of power from men to women and the play challenges stereotypical views of both sexes. It introduces students to the elements of a 'classic' comedy and offers possibilities for contemporary interpretations and adaptations.

Brecht, Bertolt, *The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui*, Methuen Drama, 2007

Brecht's very funny play about a Chicago gangster offers a didactic commentary on the rise of dictatorships, linking Hitler's rise to power with a gangster's campaign to control the city's vegetable market. The historical parallels are obvious but the play is more than a study of history. It challenges the values of a world which allows the rise of Ui and his henchmen and warns of the dangers of not heeding the mistakes of the past. Brecht constructs Ui as a clown-like character who becomes increasingly menacing, as the comic scenes work to disarm the audience before the play's disturbing conclusion. Brecht's form of 'epic theatre' is designed to make the audience think critically instead of retreating into escapism. This play offers rich possibilities for complex discussion on the nature of theatre and the playwright's interpretation of history and society.

Chinatown, Director: Polanski, Roman, 1974

Jack Nicholson stars as J J Gittes in Polanski's modern classic. Set in the 1930s, *Chinatown* pays homage to the great films noir of that era. Shot in colour and set in the blinding light of Los Angeles, this entertaining and fast-moving film is, ultimately, morally dark and bleak. The title suggests the importance of the physical and social setting, but Chinatown is a state of mind, where the pervasive corruption is beyond the comprehension of even such a tarnished hero as Gittes. John Huston is chilling as Noah Cross, who corrupts the water source of the city. Intertextuality extends to *Oedipus Rex* and *Shoot the Pianist* as well as to the entire noir genre. Beyond genre, this is both a study of evil, and of the neuroses of the 1970s, stemming from Vietnam and Watergate.

Wilde, Oscar, *Lady Windermere's Fan*, Penguin Popular Classics, 1995

Wilde's preoccupation with the notions of reputation, social propriety, secrecy and scandal come to the fore with both wit and pathos in this play. After being advised of her husband's encounters with the socially suspect Mrs Erlynne, the morally

upright Lady Windermere is ultimately compelled to reassess her understanding of 'good and evil, sin and innocence'. Margaret's relations with her husband, her friend Lord Darlington and the enigmatic Mrs Erlynne are tested against the backdrop of a society that both condemns scandalous behaviour and yet is fascinated and amused by it. For her part, Mrs Erlynne sacrifices her relatively tenuous social standing to protect the one she loves from the ire of 'Society'.

List B

Euripides, *The Bacchae* (trans. Vellacott) Penguin Classics, 1973

Dionysus the protagonist arrives in Thebes to demonstrate his divinity and punish the family of Cadmus. Pentheus, the King of Thebes, is opposed to the rising popularity of worship of Dionysus. He feels his power threatened by the 'women-only' rites, where women leave the city for the forest and enter into a frenzied state. To Pentheus, this is an illicit attempt to escape the mores and legal codes of Theban society. The play explores ideas associated with human psychology and the clash between two opposing forces, the rational self and the irrational self. These ideas still resonate with world events as well as the binary divisions that exist within individuals.

Rayson, Hannie, *Two Brothers*, Currency Press, 2005 (A)

Described as a thriller about power and evil, a warning against the dangers of moral bankruptcy in twenty-first century Australia, even as 'an evil brew', this controversial study of two brothers and the lives they have constructed for themselves derives its impetus from the SIEV X incident. Rayson examines our choices about how we live in an increasingly murky moral universe. She transcends simplistic binary oppositions in her portrayal of the brothers as she forces her audience to confront both private and national conduct and conscience. There are echoes of Cain and Abel, as familial relationships falter and the veneer of civilisation sheers off. Rayson's dialogue is tight, witty and as layered and complex as the ideas it explores.

Shakespeare, William, *The Tempest*, Penguin, 2007

The Tempest is usually taken to be the last of Shakespeare's plays. Set on an island where the exiled Duke Prospero and his daughter have found refuge, it is concerned with questions of justice and injustice, master and slave, revenge and forgiveness, and art and reality. These ideas are explored through Prospero's relations with his daughter Miranda, younger brother Antonio, servant Ariel, and the indigenous inhabitant of the island Caliban. For some readers Prospero is a representation of Shakespeare, and the play primarily concerned with the power of art to shape events. Others focus on Caliban and Ariel, arguing instead that it depicts relations between colonisers and colonised.

Poetry

List A

Holland-Batt, Sarah, *Aria*, University of Queensland Press, 2008

This collection has won a number of literary prizes. *Aria* does not confine itself to one style of poetry or thematic concern, although it does hold a sense of unity for study. Holland-Batt experiments with different modes ranging from romantic lyricism through to modernism with occasional forays into the brevity inspired by Japanese verse forms. Her work is often inspired by classical music (hence the title) and many of the poems contain references to opera and musical terminology. Other poems are more lyrical, reflecting on her environment or memories and verging on rhapsody.

Tennyson, Alfred Lord, *Selected Poems*, Penguin Classics, 2007

The poetry of Alfred Lord Tennyson, (1809–1892) the esteemed Victorian Poet Laureate, reflects the early promise of his boyhood and the anguish of his years of loneliness and obscurity during which he struggled with his religious faith. Poems such as 'Break, Break, Break' reveal his despair following the death of a close friend, while 'Ulysses' endeavours to come to terms with the brevity and apparent futility of life. Tennyson also questioned the role of the poet in a modern and changing world, particularly in an age of industrialisation, as seen in 'Timbuctoo' which won the Chancellor's medal at Cambridge in 1829. The Penguin Classics edition, with a useful introduction by Christopher Ricks, includes well-known poems such as 'In Memoriam A.H.H.', 'Idylls of the King', 'The Lady of Shalott', 'The Charge of the Light Brigade' and 'Maud'.

List B

Porter, Peter, *Max is Missing*, Picador, Pan Macmillan, 2001 (A)

Australian born Peter Porter has spent more than fifty years living and writing in Britain. His poetry is satiric, his subject matter social comment and the exploration of the uncertainties in human relationships. The verse is witty and ironic, erudite and intertextual, drawing on Porter's knowledge of painting, music and classical mythology and his familiarity with both Europe and Australia. Porter examines life in the twenty-first century, frequently juxtaposing contemporary concerns with the past. The title poem, 'Max is Missing', ranges through the subjects of Science, Mathematics, Philosophy and History as the speaker reflects on a researcher's missing cat. Porter's poetry is intellectual and quite spare, yet it evokes sympathetically and with some humour the emotions of the people he writes about. Although it is challenging on first reading, students will enjoy exploring the ideas Porter raises in his poetry.

Short Stories

List A

Le, Nam, *The Boat*, Hamish Hamilton, Penguin, 2008 (A)

Nam Le was born in Vietnam and grew up in Melbourne. This, his first published collection, has won a number of literary prizes. From the opening story, Le subverts many expectations about 'Ethnic Literature' and explores Western sensibilities towards a genre that it considers 'hot' but 'also important'. Many cultures, subcultures and places are within this writer's scope. Le's writing is at home in the New York art scene, the slums of Colombia or an Australian fishing town. His protagonists are equally diverse but share a sense of isolation and disconnection, sometimes redeemed through hope and love. Le's breadth is underscored by his accomplished writing which is gripping, visceral and moving.

Other Literature

List A

Clendinnen, Inga, *Agamemnon's Kiss*, Text publishing, 2006 (A)

The essay has undergone a considerable revival. Its great practitioners include Michel de Montaigne and George Orwell, but the form is alive and well in this country. These are elegant, sharply intelligent, often provocatively opinionated pieces. Clendinnen is a former academic, an historian whose incisive mind, cultured reading practices, and splendid prose takes the reader into indigenous matters, autobiography, the arts of reading and writing, identity, to Townsville and Europe, to reviews of work by other writers, to ideas that need to be aired in a lively, intelligent community. This collection is a long conversation, focused and digressive, in that marvellous tension that is the hallmark of this genre.

List B

Hooper, Chloe, *The Tall Man*, Hamish Hamilton, Penguin Imprint, 2008 (A)

Winner of numerous literary prizes, this confronting Australian story uses interwoven narratives to highlight the complex and tragic nature of an Aboriginal death in custody and to describe the subsequent events. Cameron Doomadgee was arrested for drunkenness by police officer Chris Hurley and forty minutes later he was dead. Frustration in the Palm Island community erupted into violence when the Director of Public Prosecutions decided not to charge Hurley despite damning evidence against him. Lawyer Andrew Boe takes up the cause for Doomadgee's family and Hooper herself establishes a strong personal connection with them. The story of Chris Hurley and the police is also told, with some sympathy; Hooper's unflinching prose describes how a once-popular and respected policeman became like the 'Tall Man', malevolent spirit of Aboriginal legends.



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