VCE on a Northern Hemisphere Timetable

VCE English and English as an Additional Language (EAL) Text List 2018–2019

The following texts are available for selection for study by students enrolled in English or EAL Units 3 and 4 on the Northern Hemisphere Timetable in the academic year 2018-2019.

This modified list comprises the text selections of NHT providers, being subsets of the published Text List 2018 for schools following the standard Victorian timetable.

All students

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

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

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

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

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

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

ENGLISH

VCE English students

A total of four texts across the Units 3 and 4 sequence must be selected from the text list below.

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

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

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

List 1

Novels

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

Short stories

Kennedy, Cate, *Like a House on Fire* (A) (1)

Stories for study: ‘Flexion’, ‘Ashes’, ‘Laminex and Mirrors’, ‘Tender’, ‘Like a House on Fire’, ‘Five-Dollar Family’, ‘Cross-country’, ‘Sleepers’, ‘Whirlpool’, ‘Cake’, ‘White Spirit’, ‘Little Plastic Shipwreck’, ‘Waiting’, ‘Static’, ‘Seventy-Two Derwents’.

Plays

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

Multimodal texts

*Film*

Hitchcock, Alfred (director), *Rear Window* (1)

*Other*

Satrapi, Marjane, *Persepolis: The Story of a Childhood*, Jonathan Cape, 2003 (2)

List 2

Pair 1

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Play** | **Novel** |
| Wright, Tom, *Black Diggers* (A) (2) (EAL) | D’Aguiar, Fred, *The Longest Memory* (2) |

Pair 2

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Non-fiction text** | **Novel** |
| Funder, Anna, *Stasiland* (A) (2) (EAL) | Orwell, George, *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (2) |

Pair 3

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Non-fiction text** | **Multimodal text – Film** |
| Davidson, Robyn, *Tracks* (A) (2) (EAL) | Penn, Sean (director), *Into the Wild* (2) |

ENGLISH AS AN ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE

VCE EAL students

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

A total of three texts across the Units 3 and 4 sequence must be selected from the text list below.

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

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

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

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

List 1

Plays

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

Multimodal texts

*Film*

Hitchcock, Alfred (director), *Rear Window* (1)

List 2

Pair 1

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Play** | **Novel** |
| Wright, Tom, *Black Diggers* (A) (2) (EAL) | D’Aguiar, Fred, *The Longest Memory* (2) |

Pair 2

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Non-fiction text** | **Novel** |
| MacCarter, Kent and Lemer, Ali (eds), *Joyful Strains: Making Australia Home* (A) (2) (EAL) | Lahiri, Jhumpa, *The Namesake* (2) |

Annotations

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

List 1

Novels

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

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

Short stories

**Kennedy, Cate, *Like a House on Fire*, Scribe, 2013 (A) (1)**

Stories for study: ‘Flexion’, ‘Ashes’, ‘Laminex and Mirrors’, ‘Tender’, ‘Like a House on Fire’, ‘Five-Dollar Family’, ‘Cross-country’, ‘Sleepers’, ‘Whirlpool’, ‘Cake’, ‘White Spirit’, ‘Little Plastic Shipwreck’, ‘Waiting’, ‘Static’, ‘Seventy-Two Derwents’.

Victorian based author Cate Kennedy was shortlisted for The Stella Prize in 2013 for her most recent collection of short fiction, *Like a House on Fire*. This collection has been recognised for its ability to capture the subtleties of the ‘real’ people of modern Australia. While often dark and challenging, many of the stories highlight moments of hope in the complex lives of everyday individuals and their families.

The home and its role in creating strong family bonds are at the core of Kennedy’s stories. The cliché of the house on fire within the title is subverted, as for many it provides an environment of physical and emotional danger instead of a sanctuary from the outside world. Themes of regret, understanding, awareness, the complexity of filial and romantic relationships, the impact of chronic injury and sickness, as well as salvation underpin this collection of stories. Students will find writing that offers a great deal of discussion about issues faced in 21st century society.

Schools may need to deal with some complex and potentially controversial topics and effectively prepare students for mature themes.

Plays

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

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

Multimodal texts

*Films*

Hitchcock, Alfred (director)*, Rear Window*, 1954 (1)

When professional adventure photographer L. B. ‘Jeff’ Jeffries breaks his leg on assignment, he is confined to a wheelchair to recuperate in his New York apartment. Frustrated and bored in the summer heat, he begins watching his neighbours across the courtyard. Boredom turns to suspicion when he believes that one of his neighbours has been murdered. Calling on the support of his socialite girlfriend, Lisa Fremont, and his visiting nurse, Stella, Jeff embarks on an investigation into the actions of that fateful night and turns up more than he expected.

Nominated for four Academy Awards and long regarded as one of the best films of the 20th century, *Rear Window* is a masterpiece of storytelling from the master of suspense, Alfred Hitchcock. Filmed almost exclusively from Jeff’s perspective, this mystery thriller explores the various ‘ways of looking’ as the audience shares the journey with the three protagonists. Beautifully crafted, it is a film that stands up to repeat viewings and close analysis.

*Other*

**Satrapi, Marjane, *Persepolis: The Story of a Childhood,* Jonathan Cape, 2003 (2)**

Iranian-born Marjane Satrapi documents her childhood in Tehran, Iran, from age six to 14 in the graphic novel *Persepolis*. The book was met with critical acclaim, receiving several awards and being adapted into an animated film in 2007.

Growing up during the period of the Islamic revolution, Satrapi suffered under oppression and was exposed to violence and brutality. She does not shy away from exploring the often shocking and fatal repercussions of the repressive regime. However, *Persepolis* also offers countenance to this brutality by highlighting the courageous actions of Satrapi’s family, including her staunch Marxist parents and her activist uncle, Anoosh, who she idolises. *Persepolis* explores the contradictions between public and private life, and how absurd they appear through the eyes of an innocent child. The graphic novel form provides much for students to discuss regarding the written and the visual, both of which can be considered when analysing the themes of grief, mortality, freedom and repression, and heroism and gender.

List 2

Pair 1

Wright, Tom, *Black Diggers*, Playlab, 2015 (2) (A) (EAL)

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

D’Aguiar, Fred, *The Longest Memory*, Vintage, 1995 (2)

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

Pair 2

Funder, Anna, *Stasiland*, The Text Publishing Company, 2014 (A) (2) (EAL)

An investigation into the rule of the German Democratic Republic (GDR) and the role of the secret police, the Stasi, *Stasiland* considers the human cost of state control. Revealing episodes of recent history previously hidden behind the Berlin Wall, Australian writer Anna Funder presents stories of survival with compassion and humour. Funder recounts the personal stories of Stasi victims, from citizens to some Stasi officers themselves. The text illustrates not only the toll of such an oppressive regime at the time, but also considers the ongoing legacy of the Stasi long after the fall of the GDR.

Orwell, George, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, Penguin Books, 2013 (2)

George Orwell’s chilling vision of the future explores the consequences of totalitarian rule for the individual. Motivated by his love for Julia, protagonist Winston Smith engages in increasingly dangerous acts of dissent, despite the ever-present gaze of Big Brother. As Winston learns more about the way in which the Party exercises control, the futility of his rebellion becomes apparent and he is ultimately forced to conform and admit his love for Big Brother. Orwell’s text explores the way in which conformity facilitates social control and considers how loyalty can be compromised by the desire for self-preservation.

Pair 3

Davidson, Robyn, *Tracks*, Bloomsbury Publishing, 2013 (A) (2) (EAL)

Robyn Davidson’s 2700-kilometre trek from Alice Springs to the Indian Ocean in 1977 with camels became famous due to a *National Geographic* article focused on the journey of a heroine driven to achieve a personal goal, despite the patronising disbelief of those around her. Davidson’s 1980 memoir highlights an adventurer with a great affinity for the environment, empathy for Australia’s Indigenous people and a determination to achieve, despite setbacks. Told with brutal honesty, this story of the internal and external battle against the sandhills, spinifex and interminable space presents the reader with an intriguing study of a woman who tests herself in the isolation of the wilderness.

*Into the Wild*, Director: Sean Penn, 2007 (2)

In 1992, the body of Christopher McCandless was found in an abandoned bus in a national park in Alaska. *Into the Wild* reconstructs the events of the two years leading up the death of McCandless. Risk taker and idealist or dropout and loner, college graduate McCandless donates his entire life’s savings to charity and rejects conformity and materialism. He embarks on a search for adventure, a quest to find himself. Set against the backdrop of contrasting American landscapes, writer and director Sean Penn explores the journey of an individual through the edges of society, into isolation and eventually to the realisation that happiness is truly found with friends and family. (Rating: M)

Pair 4

MacCarter, Kent and Lemer, Ali (eds), *Joyful Strains: Making Australia Home*, Affirm Press, 2013 (A) (2) (EAL)

*Joyful Strains* is a collection of 27 short memoirs from writers of diverse ethnic backgrounds who reflect on their experiences of migration to Australia. Despite the range of experiences represented, there are common threads that tie these stories together, such as a longing for the old country and its traditions and food, the importance of family and names, what it takes to feel at home in a new country, and the enormous relief and gratitude for a new-found sense of personal freedom and safety. This anthology shows what it means to tear away from bonds of family and home in order to start over in a new country, a feeling that resonates with so many of us who now call Australia home.

Lahiri, Jhumpa, *The Namesake*, Fourth Estate, 2011 (2)

For as long as he can remember, Gogol Ganguli has hated his name. Growing up in an Indian family in suburban America did not make it any easier for him to accept. So, on his 18th birthday, he changes his awkward moniker by deed poll in the hope of casting it off along with the inherited values it represents. Gogol soon discovers, however, that his identity is bound up in much more than what he is called. No matter how hard he tries, he struggles to reconcile the tension that exists between his Indian heritage and his American values. It is this clash of cultures that is at the heart of this narrative, as well as the ways in which the members of the Ganguli family are shaped by their homeland and changed by the American soil on which they live.

Information for schools

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

Key to codes

Abbreviations in brackets after the titles signify the following:

(A) This text meets the Australian requirement.

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

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