**Annelise Balsamo –** Hello and welcome to this on-demand video exploring VCE English examination from 2024 and Section A. My name's Annelise Balsamo and I'm the English curriculum manager at the VCAA and I'm joined on this video by Helen Billett, who is the chief assessor for 2023.

I wish to acknowledge the traditional custodians of the lands on which we record this on-demand video, which is the lands of the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin nation and pay my respects to the elders past and present and acknowledge their ongoing connection with the land on which we live and work. The overall take of this presentation is to look at the curriculum of the revised study design from 2024, particularly the key knowledge and skills, to have a look at what the internal assessment is for that section, and the external assessment that will be Section A on the exam, including the expected qualities.

When we look at the curriculum that we wrote for this revised study design, we really want to make it clear that the purpose of the key knowledge and skills is really to provide those opportunities for students to develop understanding capacity within the exploration of text, but beyond what we would expect in an examination. So, we're looking for those deep connections and those exciting engagements that the student can have when they engage with text. So when you have a look for example at these key skills that we have in the study design and this key knowledge, you can see that while there are features of analytical writing that a student will need to know and utilise in an examination or in any kind of assessment, there's also this understanding of how conventions around small group and whole class discussion work and ways that you can develop constructive interactions that a student can utilise both within their exploration of text, but across the other parts of the study design and indeed external to the classroom.

So, it's this understanding that what we're trying to do in the study design and inviting teachers to do in their classroom is to really develop deep understanding in their students that moves the students to create their own understanding and knowledge that they can demonstrate obviously in an examination, but they can transfer into other parts of their learning experiences and also their lives. Many of the skills in this study design also invite this sense of deep engagement with text but with understanding of text beyond what they are doing in this particular area of study.

So, these are transferable skills that a student can engage with in a classroom setting, but then utilise both in other parts of the course and indeed other parts of the study design or other study designs, but external to the classroom and in their post-secondary lives. So, applying reading and viewing strategies for example, or engaging with the text for meaning are things that students will be able to utilise beyond what they're doing in this area of study and certainly beyond what they might do in assessment.

The key skills in the curriculum do, of course, offer explicit guidance on assessment. And you can see here in this example that the bullet points that sit underneath the plan, construct, and edit analytical writing that gives really clear instructions as to what a student needs to demonstrate when they're creating an analytical text for assessment.

So, there is definite and clear guidance around assessment, but we want to make it clear that the curriculum is larger than the assessment task and in some ways inviting a richer engagement with what a student can demonstrate beyond assessment. You can see here too that the exam task and specifications are drawn directly from study design and specifically the key knowledge and skills. And you can see here the language that you will see in these dot points are going to be mirrored in what you see with expected qualities and specifications as we move through the presentation. Just a quick word on internal assessment, there are mandated internal assessment for Unit 3 and Unit 4. At Unit 1 and 2, it's a matter for schools to determine that. And so, you can see here that there's an outcome statement, a particular form of assessment, and the marks that a student is awarded when they complete that assessment.

But we want to make it really clear that internal assessment has a very different purpose to that of external or examination assessment. It can be cohort specific, it can be broad, it can be diverse in conditions, and it does offer the opportunity for deep feedback to students to share it with their peers and to be celebrated in the classroom and beyond.

**Helen Billett** - So let's have a look at the new exam specifications. In some ways, Section A and indeed Section C look very familiar, but there are a number of very small changes that are going to be significant and I want to draw your attention to the highlighted part and remind you that this is just a draught at this stage and it says that student responses should demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the text.

Now, there's nothing new with that. And in the old course, it went on to talk about the ideas within the text. It still does. It talks about the ideas, concerns, and the values. But I would draw your attention to the emphasis on the structure of the text and the structure of the ways in which those ideas, concerns, and values are developed. I would also draw your attention, and you'd be very familiar with this one, to the "raised by the topic" notion in the exam specifications there because it's always central that the student does indeed address the topic. Gone are the days if they ever did exist where students could go in with very broad general knowledge of the text, see one word in the topic and write a response around that. The topics are very specific and they're using those very skills that Annelise was talking about that are being developed in your class where students have confidence in their capacity to develop a reading of a text and also draw your attention to the fact that these responses need to be supported with close reference to the text.

Now, you'll be familiar with the new study design and aware of the fact that close reference to the text doesn't necessarily mean, as indeed some students think it does, 12 quotes that they might have memorised for the exam that students are going to be referencing the way in which ideas are conveyed through the structure of the text, the setting of the text, as well as perhaps what students have been more familiar with discussing characters and discussing plot points. And, of course, looking at the way in which language is used to communicate ideas. So close reference to the text does not simply mean quoting from the text, but it does include quoting from the text and there's a little word there that directs you towards short stories should you be studying them.

And so, we come to the assessment criteria. I'm going to draw your attention to the command term demonstrates, develops, and uses and I would encourage you to think about what they mean in terms of these assessment criteria. But if we look at the first one, it's still as it always was about the knowledge and understanding of the text. This time, its structure and the concerns, ideas, and values that it explores. The second one is very familiar that it must be in response to the unseen topic presented to the student in the exam. And the third one is about using evidence from the text to support analysis and what I said earlier about the sorts of evidence that students would use pertains here. And the last one is very familiar about fluent expression to communicate their ideas.

So, let's have a think about what this is going to mean about the sort of questions they're going to be asked. And the questions that come are drawn from past papers and I've kind of color-coded them. Green means go, red means no. So, we are going to get the sorts of questions like the first one there that is talking in general terms about characters, but references an idea, a concern, or a value. We're not going to get the sorts of questions that we did from time to time under the old study design, which were basically about characters. Just to stress that again, the first question is the kind of question we won't see anymore. And the second question is the kind of question that we will see.

So, we will still see questions that say to what extent or to discuss, it's the fact that it won't be a single character in focus. However, I do want to draw your attention to the fact that as is shown in the second question here, you can get questions that are about characters because characters, of course, are central to the ways in which ideas are conveyed in a text. However, it won't be directed towards a single character anymore. Students will have the opportunity to explore the ways in which characters both major and minor were used in the text to convey ideas. Let's look at the way that those assessment criteria are translated into expected qualities. So, what I've done with this slide is I've juxtaposed what was the expected quality for a particular level and this one is level six in 2023 with what's happening in 2024. And I've highlighted for you where the key differences lie.

So, in 2023, to get an EQ6, in the first descriptor, you were looking at some kind of adequate knowledge of the text. Now, the descriptor is somewhat more specific. It talks about elements of the text, its ideas, concerns, and values, and that the student needs to indicate some awareness of structure, setting, and language. And students at the EQ level six have been moving towards this for some time, but this new study design makes that very explicit. In the second descriptor, it used to be that students were required to present something that was appropriately supported by elements of the text and now it talks about appropriate evidence.

So, evidence, of course, is somewhat more specific than simply being able to reference elements of the text and thus we are looking for students to make that connection between the idea that they are discussing and the way in which they can support that idea. Descriptor three has stayed the same. Go from a mid-range response or a six to the very top to look at the EQ for 9 or 10. Let's have a little look at what it said in 2023. It demonstrated a close and perceptive reading of the text, exploring complexities of its concepts and construction. And now it says demonstrates a close and perceptive reading of the text, considering complexities of its ideas, concerns, and values explored through the structure of the text and its language. So, it becomes very clear what elements of the text students at this level will need to be focusing on. In the second descriptor, that understanding of the implications of the topic has been tightened up. So, there's got to be a clear understanding, that is the student can't just have happened upon and an implication, it needs to be kind of a purposeful consideration of that implication that students will be doing at that level.

**Annelise Balsamo** - If you have any questions about either the study design or the new examination, you're always welcome to get in contact with me. Here are my contact details. It's often easier to get me via email, so try that first perhaps, but you can always try me on my mobile as well. If I don't pick up, please leave a message 'cause I will return your call. Thank you so much for listening to this on-demand presentation.

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