

2018 VCE English as an Additional Language (EAL) examination report

General comments

The 2018 English as an Additional Language (EAL) examination consisted of three sections: Section A required short-answer responses to two aural texts, Section B required an analytical interpretation of one text and Section C required the completion of two questions in response to unseen material.

Assessment of extended responses in Sections B and C was holistic, using the published assessment criteria. Assessors related student performance directly to these criteria, and their judgments were assisted by the use of a set of descriptors. Teachers and students should be aware of the assessment criteria, the descriptors and the sample examination, which are published on the VCAA website.

Specific information

Note: Student responses reproduced in this report have not been corrected for grammar, spelling or factual information.

This report provides sample answers or an indication of what answers may have included. Unless otherwise stated, these are not intended to be exemplary or complete responses.

The statistics in this report may be subject to rounding resulting in a total more or less than 100 per cent.

Section A – Listening to texts

Students were required to respond to short-answer questions based on their comprehension of two unfamiliar spoken texts. For each text students were supplied with brief written background information. The first text was a talk given by Joe Ryan, a second-year professional hockey player, to new recruits. The second text was a conversation between neighbours Peter and Jenny about an issue Peter had with the noise of Jenny's chickens. The topics were deemed accessible, with a good contrast between the text types, and were delivered with clear diction using appropriate pacing and emphasis. There was a mix of question types, with varying degrees of challenge. Most students made effective use of the note-taking space provided beside the questions on the examination.

Overall, most questions were attempted and responses showed that students were familiar with most question types. Responses indicated that students were well aware of the key knowledge and key skills and that they had used appropriate practice material.

The questions covered a variety of aspects of listening skills, including explicit meaning, indirect language and strategies speakers use to create emphasis. Some questions required appraisal of

meaning across the whole text, for example, Question 1f. Students need to develop their critical listening skills both in and outside of the classroom. They are encouraged to listen, in English, to anything that interests them – current affairs, news, documentaries and podcasts can all be useful. Students should listen for the added effect of emphasis, pauses, sighs, hesitations, etc. Students are expected to be familiar with the terminology used in the key knowledge and key skills for this task. Low-scoring responses showed that students had difficulty responding to the non-verbal aspects of communication.

Students are encouraged to use the key words in the questions as a focus for their listening. They should read carefully for words in the question that draw attention to a specific part of the text. Short-answer questions require concise and precise answers. Responses that demonstrated understanding provided what was asked for without including extraneous information. Expression skills need to be sufficiently controlled to convey meaning accurately.

Text 1

Question 1a.

Marks	0	1	Average
%	50	50	0.5

Any one of the following was correct:

- His first year was a struggle.
- He had highs and lows in his first year.
- He had injuries.

The most common incorrect answer was 'I'm not the fastest or most talented player'. This observation was made in relation to why he was overwhelmed in his own first year.

Question 1b.

Marks	0	1	2	Average
%	25	42	33	1.1

Students needed to provide a response that reflected one of the following ideas:

- help recruits to survive their first year as professional players
- help recruits achieve their goals/dreams
- convey what he learnt/what helped him to be a better player/team member

Relevant language use (one of):

- '**Believe me** when I say to you my words **just might** help you achieve your dreams.'
- 'So, listen and learn from the reality of my first year.'
- 'Listen when I say...'

Relevant delivery (one of). It was not necessary to name the technique:

- Imperative: 'Believe me'
- Modals: 'just might'
- Pace of delivery – pauses: 'just ...might...'
- Repetition: listen
- Emphasis: for example, through volume

Question 1c.

Marks	0	1	Average
%	71	29	0.3

Any one of the following examples of a strategy was correct:

- Repetition: '[quickly] No, no, no.'
- Imperatives: 'Don't', 'Work hard...'
- Fast pace and emphatic tone: 'Do exactly'
- Uses number 1: listing conveys emphasis

The question asked for examples related to Joe's first tip. Responses that used examples from other parts of the material were incorrect.

Question 1d.

Marks	0	1	2	Average
%	61	18	20	0.6

The correct responses were words that signal a suggestion.

- 'Try it'
- 'Well at least consider it'
- '...think about how you will relax'
- '...you might find it helps...'

The relevant part of the task material had two components – examples of Joe's own experiences and suggestions for the new recruits that were indicated with the words above. Responses that listed Joe's experiences were incorrect.

Question 1e.

Marks	0	1	Average
%	57	43	0.5

Correct responses showed that Joe meant that strategies or tactics are also important in playing the game. Responses that referred to the brain or the mind were correct, including references to aspects that are mind or brain related, for example, knowledge or memory.

The most common incorrect responses centred around ideas such as 'the team is important'.

Question 1f.

Marks	0	1	2	3	Average
%	37	25	21	17	1.2

The following descriptions of change were considered correct:

- He realises that teamwork is more important than individual play.
- It's the team not the individual that wins games.
- He needed to use his brain as well as be strong and fit.

The following quotes were relevant. Responses that showed an understanding, using some of the words or that were closely re-worded, were accepted.

- 'I know some of you are sitting there feeling just like I did one year ago: wanting action not words.'

- 'I just want to play hockey. I don't want to sit in meetings listening to someone else's experience.'
- '...I always thought that if I played my best hockey with as much skill, speed and precision as I could, then I had helped the team.'
- 'So **everyone** on the team needs to contribute and work together.'
- '...keeping your brain sharp...'

The quotes could reflect his second year only, the first year only, or both.

Text 2

Question 2ai.

Marks	0	1	Average
%	60	40	0.4

Either:

- he is having trouble sleeping during the day because of the noise of the chickens
- the noise of her chickens.

The most common incorrect response was 'he was having trouble sleeping' or 'he was tired'.

Question 2aii.

Marks	0	1	2	Average
%	31	38	31	1

Any one of the following examples of indirect language was accepted as correct:

- '...it is surprising how noisy it can be during the day.'
- 'At least, I try to sleep.'
- 'I have noticed that you have started to keep chickens.'
- 'Does the noise bother you?'
- 'Coffee doesn't keep me awake but noises do.'

Any one of the following examples of delivery was accepted as correct:

- sighing, resigned tone
- [reservedly] 'Yes, I have **heard** them.'
- hesitant tone
- use of pauses
- asking a question rather than making a direct statement.

Question 2b.

Marks	0	1	Average
%	23	77	0.8

Any one of the following was correct:

- they're relaxing
- they seem so peaceful and contented
- they amuse her
- they're funny when they lay an egg.

Incorrect answers included those that referred to her love of fresh eggs. This is a reason she gives for getting home to lock up the chickens. 'I do love fried eggs', which is said by Peter, was also incorrect.

Question 2ci.

Marks	0	1	Average
%	51	49	0.5

The correct responses referred to a comparison with one of the following:

- cars and/or lawn mowers
- street noise
- unnatural noises.

Question 2cii.

Marks	0	1	Average
%	69	31	0.3

Either:

- '(True.) I hadn't really thought of that.'
- 'I suppose we're used to those sounds...'

The most common incorrect response was 'Perhaps I could help you with the chickens sometimes...', which Peter says to thank her for the eggs.

Question 2d.

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	Average
%	26	16	19	23	16	1.9

Words or phrases to describe their interaction included:

- polite but friendly
- neighbourly
- casual
- tolerant of each other
- relaxed
- kind
- caring
- respectful

Example of language use	Example of delivery
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'Hi, Jenny. [hesitantly] Sorry to bother you.' • 'Would you like something to drink?' • '...well thank you and perhaps I could help you...' • 'Here, have half a dozen. We have plenty.' 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • hesitation: 'Very well...' • Jenny laughs and has jokes with Peter • Peter's concerned tone at the beginning becomes more cheerful at the end • Jenny's tone is relaxed • Peter offers his help in a happy, lively tone • use of indirect questions

Section B – Analytical interpretation of a text

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Average
%	1	1	2	7	14	21	24	18	9	3	1	5.6

Students were required to write an analytical interpretation of one text. There were two topics for each of the 28 prescribed texts. The descriptors used for assessment related to knowledge of the text, including consideration of its concepts and construction, the structure and relevance of the response and the writing skills as demonstrated in control of the conventions of written English.

The most popular texts and their percentage average scores are shown in the table below.

Text	% of students	Average score
<i>Medea</i>	20.0%	5.7
<i>Black Diggers</i>	15.7%	5.8
<i>Rear Window</i>	12.8%	5.2
<i>Invictus</i>	11.1%	5.7
<i>I am Malala</i>	8.8%	5.3

The highest-scoring responses demonstrated an in-depth understanding of the questions and the texts by crafting an analytical interpretation of the text with relevant discussion in direct response to the chosen question. In these responses knowledge of the text was skilfully interwoven with analysis of the question. They were characterised by a sharp focus on the key words in the questions, selective and considered use of the text, and ideas expressed with strong language skills.

Students generally showed a good understanding and knowledge of the texts and were familiar with the main ideas raised in the questions. There were few very short or incomprehensible responses. Low-scoring responses tended to be more descriptive and dominated by detailed retelling of the content of the text rather than selective use of the text. In planning, students need to brainstorm all the key words in the question, paying particular attention to modifying words and comparatives. A well-planned response is less likely to slip into retelling the story or adapting a previously written response to fit the question.

Over 65 per cent of the responses were to the five most popular texts: *Medea*, *Black Diggers*, *Rear Window*, *Invictus* and *I am Malala*. Together with *The Crucible*, also a popular text, these figures indicate that films and plays were the most popular choice of text types. In fact, the five most popular texts did not include a novel. Many responses took the opportunity to consider the construction of these texts, including meaningful references to the stage directions in *Black Diggers*.

Topics for the most popular text, *Medea*, allowed for a wide range of students to respond with clarity and, in high-scoring responses, with depth. Average responses to the first topic did not address sufficiently the comparative aspect of this topic – ‘greatest crime’. Higher-scoring responses tended to challenge it, typically arguing that filicide is a far worse crime than betrayal. Some tried to argue that patriarchal social structures were the real crime. ‘Disloyalty’ was understood and most responses assumed that disloyalty was a crime. Many showed Medea’s disloyalty as well as Jason’s. Responses to the second topic generally took up the invitation to

discuss a range of characters. Some appeared to have only a vague idea of what is meant by 'manipulation'.

The first topic for *Black Diggers* also drew a wide range of responses that indicated engagement with the characters and the message. The concept of 'the loss of innocence' was not well understood in low-scoring responses. The second topic was the more popular. Both topics were inclusive of indigenous and non-indigenous characters, yet most responses did not discuss the white characters at all or made only passing reference to how they treated the black characters. Nevertheless most responses were able to discuss and analyse how skin colour can lead to racism and prejudice and were able to provide examples of soldiers' experiences before, during and after the war.

Most responses to *Rear Window* demonstrated reasonable knowledge of the text. Many responses to the first topic stopped short of dealing with the second half of the question – 'from truly looking at himself'. High-scoring responses analysed how voyeurism became a substitute for introspection, with many challenging the topic as Lisa's action forces Jeff to re-evaluate his relationship with Lisa. Many responses to the second topic read 'suspicion' as 'suspense', and even responses that showed a good understanding of technique (how does...) lacked a close connection to 'suspicion'.

Rear Window and *Invictus* were both accessible and popular texts. The second *Invictus* topic invited consideration of the filmmaker's techniques. Responses to this topic often did not identify the 'single purpose'. Many responses to the first topic interpreted 'know your enemy' quite literally and were able to show, often around the theme of 'forgiveness', the importance of getting to know the staff, Pienaar and the team. Insightful answers were more broad and thematic, with the best identifying the enemy as 'revenge'.

Many of the responses to *I am Malala* struggled to be analytical about her life. Aspects of the first topic such as 'tested' and 'extent of' were often overlooked. High-scoring responses included discussion of a range of characters while low-scoring ones were dominated by the story of Malala's life. Responses to the second topic often did not respond to 'pride', which was rarely defined or understood, and wrote about change, with only a few dealing with 'hinders'.

Some responses to the first topic for *The Crucible* showed a limited understanding of 'misguided', writing more about characters being misguided by others rather than about the leaders themselves being misguided by their own fears, prejudices, self-interest, etc. However, there were high-scoring responses that unpacked the idea of different types of leaders or who were or were not misguided. The term 'solely' in the second topic invited consideration of factors other than emotions, such as Danforth being driven by logic (or self-interest) to exercise his role 'by the book'. In many mid-range responses 'emotion' was mostly interpreted as 'fear'. High-scoring responses explored how, for some characters, the driving force behind their decisions shifted as the play progressed, for example, Hale and Proctor, who are open to reinterpreting their responses to events.

As part of their preparation, students need to consider the ways authors/directors build the world of the text by examining the choices made in the construction of texts. Students need to explore different interpretations of texts, synthesise ideas and develop an interpretation of their own. A thorough knowledge of the events, the themes and the characters in the text is required to achieve this. It is also important to be familiar with the language used for analysis. The focus of analytical writing is on the relationships between pieces of information rather than a description of them. Analytical writing may include comparing and contrasting, or assessing. Students need to develop writing skills that will enable them to incorporate knowledge of the text into their analysis. Writing that simply describes/tells what a character did rather than exploring why and how, and the effect of the behaviour relevant to the set topic, is a limited response. Students also need to be familiar with the variety of ways in which topics can be worded and understand the requirements of different task words and phrases, such as 'discuss', 'do you agree?', 'to what extent', etc. Thoughtful planning is needed to craft a response that directly addresses the set question. This includes an awareness of modifying words in a question and how they might shape a response,

e.g. 'the **most** significant effect of war', '**all** the characters', 'the **greatest** crime', 'to what extent', 'decisions based **solely**...'

The following upper-range response to *I am Malala* demonstrates understanding the implications of the topic and uses the text selectively to support discussion in a structured response. It generally sustains good control of language despite some weaknesses in expression but these do not detract from the meaning. The brief introduction directly addresses the question.

'In this text, when individuals are tested, they realise the extent of their strength.' Discuss.

People are often challenged with adversity in life, and these circumstances are the ones in which people discover their inner strength the most. In the memoir, I am Malala, written by the central figure Malala Yousafzai and her co-writer Christina Lamb, it is one again proven to the audience that when being tested, individuals realise the extent of their strength.

Ziauddin, Malala's father portrays incredible strength when he is put in difficult circumstances. As a child, Ziauddin struggles to overcome a stutter and assert himself before his ambitious and intimidating father, Rohul Amin. However, with 'the gift of education' that his father has given him, Ziauddin starts learning literature and rhetoric, he tries hard to overcome his stutter, eventually winning a series of prestigious speaking competitions and made his father proud. When tested, he has used education to 'turn (his) weakness into strength'. Following the chronological order, when Ziauddin was a college student, the Soviet union invaded Afghanistan and at first he was 'captivated' by the thought of becoming a 'jihadi' and fight against the Soviet under the name of Islam. At that time, Ziauddin stands in front of the two choices, one is to become a 'suicide bomber' or stay as in intellectual young man. His inner strength makes him choose not to become a jihadi, and he knows it is a kind of 'brainwashing'. Later, Ziauddin together with a friend follow their dream of opening a school. He is poor and has to borrow money to build the school. There are times when the school just feels like it is 'not meant to be', with the occurrence of the catastrophe such as floods, Ziauddin appears to be an admirable character to readers because of his resilience. In the first stage of opening the Khushal School, Ziauddin is a teacher, an accountant, a principle, he even sweeps the floors and cleans the toilets. When tested, his strength extends. As the Taliban takes control of Swat Valley, Ziauddin 'puts the first stone in the standing water' by speaking out against the Taliban and encourages others to do so as well. As the principle of a school, he later claims that he is 'left with no choice but to get involved in politics'. Due to the clear vision that he has about human's rights and general equalities, Ziauddin finds his strength and courage being extended greatly. It is crucial for readers to see that he is a role model especially when he speaks 'like a lion' in front of his students to inform them about their rights, but inside he is afraid and worried.

Similarly, from an ordinary teenage girl who is obsessed with twilight to 'Pakistan's Mother Theresa', Malala has discovered the extent of her strength when being tests in very harsh conditions. As the Taliban comes and takes control over Malala's Swat Valley, girls are restrained to go to school. With all the 'bad stuff' that is happening, Malala turns to school as a way to 'keep (her) going'. One could argue that it is the Khushal School with its 'magical entrance' that has given Malala 'the weapon of education' and important knowledge, which she uses to later combat with the Taliban. As the Taliban have 'stilled all lips' with its violence, it is incredible that a girl as young as eleven years old dares to speak out against them. In the chapter where Malala goes to Islamabad with her father's friend, Malala joyfully find out that the women there have professional careers such as doctors, lawyers with strong forceful personalities. This further gives her hope and strength as she understands that women do have the capabilities to do great things. When coming to Swat Valley, Malala throws herself in political projects. She actively writes diaries to the BBC under the pseudonym G to educate the West about what is really happening to her paradise – Swat Valley. Her courage has given incredible strength which makes her no worry even when hearing she is targeted. As a consequence, Malala is shot in her face, however even then she does not give up. The informality of Malala's left eye is a symbol of her strength, it is 'the beauty of her sacrifice'. One could give up long before getting shot, but Malala insists on pursuing her 'noble cause' and as she becomes 'the daughter of the nation', she is likely to realise the great extent of her strength.

Like Ziauddin and Malala, many other characters in the memoir have displayed the extent of strength when being tests. Malala's mother Toor Pekai is first described as a 'fragile china vase'. She is beautiful, kind and somewhat vulnerable. Yet under the Taliban, when her family become internally displaced persons in 2009, Toor Pekai becomes 'very courageous'. Zahid Khan, Ziauddin's friend is also an activist that speaks out against the Taliban. He then gets shot when in a mosque by the Taliban. However, he stays strong, never once gives up and continues fighting for what he thinks is right.

It is obvious to the audience that Malala, her family and the Swat Valley are all caught off-guard when she uses a simile and says that the Taliban are like 'vampires' that come in over night. However, in these harsh circumstances, they realise the extent of their strength the most.

Section C – Argument and persuasive language

The task material was one piece of writing in the form of a review. Two visuals accompanied the review. The first was of the writer himself and the second was a streetscape cartoon. This material offered opportunities for students at all levels to demonstrate their skills. The written review contained a strong point of view that was effectively reinforced by the cartoon.

Question 1

This question assessed comprehension of the task material, and answers needed to be precise to demonstrate comprehension. Most responses showed that students had understood the questions; however, some responses were incomplete or unclear.

Question 1a.

Marks	0	1	Average
%	45	55	0.6

Correct responses identified one of the following:

- quiet, leafy suburb (either 'quiet' or 'leafy' was accepted)
- the heart of the community
- vibrant streetscape.

Question 1bi.

Marks	0	1	Average
%	34	66	0.7

Correct responses identified that the **main** reason was customer service, for example:

- customer service is better at Flo's Patisserie
- he's treated better at Flo's.

Incorrect responses identified an example rather than the main reason.

Question 1bii.

Marks	0	1	2	Average
%	13	21	67	1.6

Correct responses identified two of the following, sometimes expressed as a quote from the text.

- He is greeted by name and served at his table at Flo's.
- He is almost ignored at the new cafe.
- The waiter seems bored/tired.

- There's no table service at the new cafe.

Incorrect responses included:

- Aspects of the cafes that did not relate to customer service.

Question 1c.

Marks	0	1	2	Average
%	32	49	20	0.9

Responses that provided a relevant explanation of 'lukewarm' were awarded, for example:

- Everything is not quite how it should be or needs to be, just like lukewarm coffee, which is not very enjoyable to drink.

Responses that provided relevant supporting material from the text were awarded two marks.

Supporting material included:

- It's not welcoming; staff aren't friendly.
- The décor is not warm and inviting.
- The biscuits look stale, so not pleasant to eat (i.e. like lukewarm coffee).
- The staff are unenthusiastic or indifferent.

Question 1d.

Marks	0	1	Average
%	57	43	0.5

Relevant words included: uncomfortable, affronted, ignored, unwelcome, dissatisfied, disappointed, unimpressed.

Question 1e.

Marks	0	1	Average
%	25	75	0.8

Correct responses identified that the local people will not go to the new cafe.

Incorrect responses included that they were not the target customers (this was stated not implied) or that they wanted the cafe closed.

Question 1f.

Marks	0	1	2	Average
%	43	39	18	0.8

Correct responses identified two of the following:

- It's not marketing to the older people who live in the area and frequent the street.
- It is full of noisier younger people versus the quiet leafy suburb described in the beginning.
- The cafe is trendy/new in an old-fashioned/heritage street.
- It is a chain store in a street of stand-alone stores.
- The standard/style of service is less than the community is used to.

Incorrect responses were not framed around what was 'suited to Benmore Village's High Street' and just made general observations about the new cafe.

Question 2

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Average
%	2	4	7	11	17	22	18	12	6	2	1	4.9

Most responses demonstrated understanding of the context and the problem of a cafe that did not fit into the street or community. Many responses identified that the writer was an older man, connected to an established community with shared values. High-scoring responses used a wide variety of language for analysis and saw the development of the writer's point of view through anecdote, analogy and strong language. Most commented on the cartoon drawing of the author as a direct attempt to win the audience. Relatively few responses tried to balance an analysis of argument with an analysis of language. The highest-scoring responses analysed argument use and language in an integrated way. They also picked up the irony around having a framed photo of the 'Employee of the Month' despite the cafe only being open for three weeks. Most also made accurate references to the nuances of the writer's tone when he referred to Jessica's absence and the possibility of her 'day off'.

The material was generally well understood and the majority understood the contention of the piece and commented on the way the author built credibility. Most students attempted to comment on the intended effect, showing understanding of how language is used to position audiences. Low-scoring responses described rather than analysed the arguments and the language.

Almost all students wrote about one or both visuals, but there was wide variation in how much detail students devoted to them. Many responded to the image of the writer and explained this as his way of connecting with the audience and linked it to the integrity of the review. However, the street cartoon was better handled than the image of the writer. Many commented on the dates and described the style of the older buildings. Responses generally showed an awareness that the cafe was out of place even when the historical significance of the street was glossed over. Most described how the new cafe stood out and was 'loud' and 'showy' in relation to the local, traditional shops. There were various attempts to describe the people depicted in the cartoon. Very few responses referred to the cranes in the background and what their presence might mean for the future of the street.

Upper-range responses were well written and demonstrated a strong understanding of the ways in which written and visual language and the use of argument were used through effective analysis of the material. Features of upper-range responses included:

- a clear understanding of the context of the writing and the opinion expressed in the review.
- ability to integrate analysis of language and argument
- exploration of the implications of specific language choices, for example, 'our quiet, leafy suburb', 'this fine neighbourhood', 'the always enthusiastic Marcel', 'Maybe it's her day off?', 'a tablet-holding youth', 'coffee beans assault you', 'milky monstrosities', 'ever-creeping shift..., won't support this intruder'
- analysis expressed with a range of precise vocabulary
- clear explanations linking the visuals and the words, and exploring the intended effect of the writer's choices.

Mid-range responses showed awareness of the task but some moved between explaining the material and an attempt to analyse it. Limitations of these responses included:

- difficulty describing tone accurately
- generalised descriptions of persuasive techniques without accurate connection to the task material
- little or no reference to the visuals or reference not linked to the text.

The background information given on the examination provides the context for the task material. It is important that students read and understand this information before attempting the task. In using language to persuade, writers have an 'audience focus' and the analysis needed to reflect this.

Introductions should be limited to showing an awareness of the audience, the context and the overall contention of the piece.

Students needed to be able to distinguish between argument as a structural feature, the support for the argument, and emotional pressure or appeals. Students' analysis should have included these distinctions. Students should look for linguistic cues to the reasoning of the author. Students should avoid explanations of the persuasive techniques; for example, the use of inclusive language includes everyone. Students should aim to integrate analysis of argument use, language use and the visuals. Students should consider what they see in the visuals and how it connects with the task material. Students should expect to find connections between the written task material and any accompanying visuals.

In the time available in the examination it is not possible to analyse everything in the material, so students need to choose the most significant features to analyse. They should focus on what the writer is saying, how they are saying it and why. As part of developing skills in analysis students need the functional, not descriptive, vocabulary used to analyse argument, language and visuals.

The VCAA is unable to publish student responses to Section C of the 2018 English as an Additional Language (EAL) examination. Teachers and students may refer to previous years' examination reports for illustrations of student responses to Section C.