

**Victorian Certificate of Education  
2023**

**ENGLISH**  
**Written examination**

**Tuesday 24 October 2023**

**Reading time: 9.00 am to 9.15 am (15 minutes)**

**Writing time: 9.15 am to 12.15 pm (3 hours)**

**TASK BOOK**

<i>Section</i>	<i>Number of questions</i>	<i>Number of questions to be answered</i>	<i>Marks</i>
A – Analytical interpretation of a text	20	1	20
B – Comparative analysis of texts	8	1	20
C – Argument and persuasive language	1	1	20
			Total 60

- Students are permitted to bring into the examination room: pens, pencils, highlighters, erasers, sharpeners, rulers and an English and/or bilingual printed dictionary.
- Students are NOT permitted to bring into the examination room: blank sheets of paper and/or correction fluid/tape.
- No calculator is allowed in this examination.

**Materials supplied**

- Task book of 14 pages, including **assessment criteria** on page 14
- One answer book

**Instructions**

- Write your **student number** on the front cover of the answer book.
- Complete each section in the correct part of the answer book.
- If you choose to write on a multimodal text in Section A, you must not write on a text pair that includes a multimodal text in Section B.
- You may ask the supervisor for extra answer books.
- All written responses must be in English.

**At the end of the examination**

- Place all other used answer books inside the front cover of the first answer book.
- You may keep this task book.

**Students are NOT permitted to bring mobile phones and/or any other unauthorised electronic devices into the examination room.**

**SECTION A – Analytical interpretation of a text****Instructions for Section A**

Section A requires students to write an analytical interpretation of a selected text in response to **one** topic (either **i.** or **ii.**) on **one** text.

Your response should be supported by close reference to the selected text.

If your selected text is a collection of poetry or short stories, you may write on several poems or stories, or on **at least two** in close detail.

If you choose to write on a multimodal text in Section A, you must **not** write on a text pair that includes a multimodal text in Section B.

In the answer book, indicate which text you have chosen to write on and whether you have chosen to answer **i.** or **ii.**

Your response will be assessed according to the assessment criteria set out on page 14 of this book.

Section A is worth one-third of the total marks for the examination.

**Text list**

1. *All the Light We Cannot See* ..... Anthony Doerr
2. *Bad Dreams and Other Stories* ..... Tessa Hadley
3. *Born a Crime* ..... Trevor Noah
4. *False Claims of Colonial Thieves* ..... Charmaine Papertalk Green and John Kinsella
5. *Flames* ..... Robbie Arnott
6. *Go, Went, Gone* ..... Jenny Erpenbeck
7. *High Ground* ..... directed by Stephen Johnson
8. *Much Ado About Nothing* ..... William Shakespeare
9. *Nine Days* ..... Toni Jordan
10. *Pride and Prejudice* ..... Jane Austen
11. *Rainbow's End* ..... Jane Harrison
12. *Requiem for a Beast* ..... Matt Ottley
13. *Runaway* ..... Alice Munro
14. *Station Eleven* ..... Emily St. John Mandel
15. *Sunset Boulevard* ..... directed by Billy Wilder
16. *The Erratics* ..... Vicki Laveau-Harvie
17. *The Women of Troy* ..... Euripides
18. *Things Fall Apart* ..... Chinua Achebe
19. *We Have Always Lived in the Castle* ..... Shirley Jackson
20. *William Wordsworth: Poems Selected by Seamus Heaney* ..... William Wordsworth

1. ***All the Light We Cannot See* by Anthony Doerr**

- i. ‘Ultimately, Doerr suggests that it is natural to fight for one’s beliefs.’  
To what extent do you agree?

OR

- ii. “Doing nothing is as good as collaborating.”  
How does *All the Light We Cannot See* show the damage individuals can do when they remain silent?

2. ***Bad Dreams and Other Stories* by Tessa Hadley**

- i. ‘Hadley’s stories suggest that life is never ordinary.’  
To what extent do you agree?

OR

- ii. ‘The stories in Hadley’s anthology demonstrate that new knowledge can either empower or endanger.’  
Discuss.

3. ***Born a Crime* by Trevor Noah**

- i. “... language, even more than color, defines who you are to people.”  
To what extent does Trevor Noah demonstrate this to be true?

OR

- ii. ‘*Born a Crime* is a story of overcoming limitations.’  
Do you agree?

4. ***False Claims of Colonial Thieves* by Charmaine Papertalk Green and John Kinsella**

- i. “How can over 50,000 yrs mean nothing?”  
How does *False Claims of Colonial Thieves* challenge the accepted versions of history?

OR

- ii. ‘The poems of Papertalk Green and Kinsella offer hope for contemporary Australia.’  
To what extent do you agree?

5. ***Flames* by Robbie Arnott**

- i. ‘The women in *Flames* are portrayed as life-giving, while the men are associated with death and destruction.’  
Discuss.

OR

- ii. “A man couldn’t hunt it alone, and neither could a seal, but together they could kill a beast twice as heavy as the two of them combined.”  
‘*Flames* suggests that for humans to succeed they must cooperate with nature.’  
Discuss.

**6. *Go, Went, Gone* by Jenny Erpenbeck**

- i. “The refugees ... are trying to gain admittance to this world that appears to them convincingly idyllic.”

‘There is nothing idyllic about the world into which the refugees in *Go, Went, Gone* seek admittance.’

Do you agree?

**OR**

- ii. ‘*Go, Went, Gone* presents a stern reminder that every individual has a moral responsibility for the welfare of others.’

Discuss.

**7. *High Ground* directed by Stephen Johnson**

- i. “Travis has no sense of duty, no sense of loyalty.”

‘*High Ground* presents different understandings of loyalty.’

Discuss.

**OR**

- ii. ‘In *High Ground*, it is impossible for individuals to escape their past.’

To what extent do you agree?

**8. *Much Ado About Nothing* by William Shakespeare**

- i. ‘In *Much Ado About Nothing*, accusations and rumours harm not only the individuals targeted, but also society as a whole.’

Discuss.

**OR**

- ii. ‘The women in the play have little influence over what happens to them.’

To what extent do you agree?

**9. *Nine Days* by Toni Jordan**

- i. To what extent are the characters in *Nine Days* sustained by optimism?

**OR**

- ii. “Like so many things that shape us, it’s the smallest actions that add up to leave the deepest marks.”

To what extent does *Nine Days* show this to be true?

**10. *Pride and Prejudice* by Jane Austen**

- i. ‘Austen demonstrates the necessity of marriage but also its constraints.’

Discuss.

**OR**

- ii. ‘Ultimately, the decisions of all the characters in *Pride and Prejudice* are motivated by greed.’

To what extent do you agree?

**11. *Rainbow's End* by Jane Harrison**

- i. To what extent does *Rainbow's End* show that the characters' optimism is justified?

**OR**

- ii. "We demand the right to control our own destiny."  
*'Rainbow's End* suggests that vulnerable people can control their own destinies.'  
 Do you agree?

**12. *Requiem for a Beast* by Matt Ottley**

- i. 'It is only through facing the past that the characters in *Requiem for a Beast* can heal.'  
 Discuss.

**OR**

- ii. "We all have to stand in the rain, however long it lasts."  
 To what extent are the characters in *Requiem for a Beast* able to shape their own lives?

**13. *Runaway* by Alice Munro**

- i. 'All the characters in Munro's anthology *Runaway* seek independence and freedom.'  
 Do you agree?

**OR**

- ii. 'In Munro's stories, refusal to conform inevitably leads to loneliness.'  
 Discuss.

**14. *Station Eleven* by Emily St. John Mandel**

- i. "I have walked all my life through this tarnished world."  
 'The worlds of *Station Eleven* are "tarnished".'  
 Do you agree?

**OR**

- ii. To what extent does Mandel emphasise regret as a motivator in *Station Eleven*?

**15. *Sunset Boulevard* directed by Billy Wilder**

- i. "Look at this street. All cardboard, all hollow, all phoney, all done with mirrors. You know, I like it better than any street in the world."  
 How does Wilder convey that Hollywood is both hollow and alluring?

**OR**

- ii. '*Sunset Boulevard* shows that the pursuit of fame is a perilous journey.'  
 Discuss.

**16. *The Erratics* by Vicki Laveau-Harvie**

- i. ‘Despite all the sadness and trauma in her life, the narrator is able to forgive.’  
Discuss.

**OR**

- ii. “She has her truth and I have mine ...”  
To what extent do the characters shape their own versions of the truth in order to survive?

**17. *The Women of Troy* by Euripides**

- i. ‘In *The Women of Troy*, acting impulsively leads to disaster.’  
Discuss.

**OR**

- ii. “There is no happiness. The lucky ones are dead.”  
To what extent is the audience and/or reader of *The Women of Troy* left without hope?

**18. *Things Fall Apart* by Chinua Achebe**

- i. ‘Achebe suggests that in Okonkwo’s world, while there is much to be proud of, pride ultimately leads to downfall.’  
Discuss.

**OR**

- ii. ‘In the end, *Things Fall Apart* shows that this traditional society is unable to resist the forces of change.’  
Discuss.

**19. *We Have Always Lived in the Castle* by Shirley Jackson**

- i. How is the Blackwood estate both a refuge and a prison in *We Have Always Lived in the Castle*?

**OR**

- ii. To what extent do the characters find power in a world determined to render them powerless?

**20. *William Wordsworth: Poems Selected by Seamus Heaney* by William Wordsworth**

- i. “The world is too much with us; late and soon, / Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers: ...”  
‘Much of Wordsworth’s poetry shows an exasperation with the world around him.’  
Do you agree?

**OR**

- ii. ‘Wordsworth’s poetry looks at how we may try but never succeed in our attempts to conquer the natural world.’  
Discuss.

**SECTION B – Comparative analysis of texts****Instructions for Section B**

Section B requires students to write a comparative analysis of a selected pair of texts in response to **one** topic (either **i.** or **ii.**) on **one** pair of texts.

Your response should analyse how the two texts present ideas and/or issues, and should be supported by close reference to both texts in the pair.

If you choose to write on a multimodal text in Section A, you must **not** write on a text pair that includes a multimodal text in Section B.

In the answer book, indicate which text pair you have chosen to write on and whether you have chosen to answer **i.** or **ii.**

Your response will be assessed according to the assessment criteria set out on page 14 of this book.

Section B is worth one-third of the total marks for the examination.

**Pair 1** *The Hate Race* by Maxine Beneba Clarke and *Charlie's Country* directed by Rolf de Heer

- i. “But I didn’t want a brown Cabbage Patch Kid.” (*The Hate Race*)  
“I danced for the Queen of England.” (*Charlie's Country*)  
Compare the ways in which the two texts explore the importance of culture in constructing identity.

**OR**

- ii. Compare the ways in which the two texts explore the challenges of survival in a hostile world.

**Pair 2** *The Queen* directed by Stephen Frears and *Ransom* by David Malouf

- i. Compare the ways in which each text explores the importance of tenderness.

**OR**

- ii. “If that’s your decision, ma’am, of course, the government will support it. Let’s keep in touch.” (*The Queen*)  
“Quietly, as they ate together, he and Achilles had discovered a kind of intimacy; wary at first, though also respectful ...” (*Ransom*)  
Compare the significance of the various forms of respect displayed in the two texts.

**Pair 3** *Things We Didn't See Coming* by Steven Amsterdam and *Never Let Me Go* by Kazuo Ishiguro

- i. Compare how the two texts suggest that adaptation is at times more practical than resistance.

**OR**

- ii. “We know we aren’t careful enough and that’s about all we know. That’s what I’m trying to protect us from.” (*Things We Didn't See Coming*)  
“Tommy’s right. You’re just the person to have when you’re in a corner.” (*Never Let Me Go*)  
Compare how the two texts illustrate the necessity of relying on others to survive.

**Pair 4** *Reckoning* by Magda Szubanski and *Brooklyn* by Colm Tóibín

- i. “For my father Australia was love at first sight.” (*Reckoning*)  
“... she knew that people would look at her and might have a view on her that was wrong if she were dressed up like this every day in Brooklyn.” (*Brooklyn*)  
Compare how each text explores the experiences of migration.

**OR**

- ii. Compare how each text explores the nature of love.



**Pair 5 *The Crucible* by Arthur Miller and *The Dressmaker* by Rosalie Ham**

- i. Compare the explorations of love and hate in *The Crucible* and *The Dressmaker*.

**OR**

- ii. “There is blood on my head! Can you not see the blood on my head!!” (*The Crucible*)  
 “She [Tilly] looked up at the heavens and smiled.” (*The Dressmaker*)  
 Compare the extent to which justice is achieved in both texts.

**Pair 6 *Photograph 51* by Anna Ziegler and *My Brilliant Career* by Miles Franklin**

- i. “You think if you gave an inch, we’d all take a mile, is that it?” (*Photograph 51*)  
 “He offered me everything—but control.” (*My Brilliant Career*)  
 Compare the ways in which the two texts explore the impact of social and personal prejudices.

**OR**

- ii. Compare the ways in which the two texts explore the complexities of pursuing personal and professional fulfilment.

**Pair 7 *The 7 Stages of Grieving* by Wesley Enoch and Deborah Mailman, and *The Longest Memory* by Fred D’Aguiar**

- i. Compare how the two texts explore the resilience of family.

**OR**

- ii. “... sometimes the joy of being there was enough to forget, even for the briefest moment, the reason.” (*The 7 Stages of Grieving*)  
 “I forget as hard as I can.” (*The Longest Memory*)  
 Compare the ways in which the two texts explore the roles of remembering and forgetting.

**Pair 8 *I Am Malala: The Girl Who Stood Up for Education and Was Shot by the Taliban* by Malala Yousafzai with Christina Lamb, and *Pride* directed by Matthew Warchus**

- i. “Freedom is not worth having if it does not include the freedom to make mistakes.” (*I am Malala: The Girl Who Stood Up for Education and Was Shot by the Taliban*)  
 “I hope one day we can be friends again, Mum.” (*Pride*)  
 Compare how the two texts explore the idea that freedom requires sacrifice.

**OR**

- ii. Compare how the importance of a sense of belonging is explored in the two texts.

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**SECTION C – Argument and persuasive language****Instructions for Section C**

Section C requires students to write an analysis of the ways in which argument and language are used to persuade others to share a point(s) of view.

Read the background information on this page and the material on pages 12 and 13, and write an analytical response to the task below.

For the purposes of this task, the term ‘language’ refers to written, spoken and visual language.

Your response will be assessed according to the assessment criteria set out on page 14 of this book.

Section C is worth one-third of the total marks for the examination.

**Task**

Write an analysis of the ways in which argument and written and visual language are used in the material on pages 12 and 13 to try to persuade others to share the points of view presented.

**Background information**

The Narrow Valley region comprises small rural towns that border a large regional city. A group of young musicians who live in Narrow Valley have decided they want more opportunities to perform in their area. The group has written an open letter to the Narrow Valley community, which has been published on social media and in the local newspaper. In addition, copies have been displayed in shops and businesses. The following text is this open letter with images added by the young musicians.

## **An open letter to the Narrow Valley community, young and old, who wish to see our region rejuvenated ...**

Please allow us to introduce ourselves!

We are a growing group of high-school music students, teachers and mentors from the five Narrow Valley secondary colleges. We are eager to seize opportunities to bring dynamic and long-overdue changes to our region through an inclusive, youth-driven, energetic and shiny new music festival. Our festival will provide a space for all budding musicians, regardless of age and abilities, tastes and styles to come together and enjoy music.

Our passion, talents and all-encompassing abilities enable us to experiment with, explore and master all types of music, including rock, pop, opera, hip-hop (to name just a few), which are all played by our various orchestras, ensembles and solo artists. We celebrate diversity in our local region and already have thousands of followers on social media, who are sharing our endeavours every day.

‘What?’, we hear you say. ‘An unrelenting cacophony disrupting the peace and quiet of our streets? Corrupting the impressionable? Shattering windows? Driving the dogs, cats and budgerigars crazy? What *type* of music did you say? *Another* music festival? The *cost*? And ... what about our Gorgeous Gardens Festival?’

Yes. What about our garden festival? Who doesn’t love a garden? Like music, gardens never fail to nourish the soul. However, our garden festival is tired. The number of visitors is dwindling – fast. Council data shows that the visitor numbers have dropped by 50 per cent over the past five years and it can only be expected that this trend will continue if we don’t plant some new ideas. With a decline of those proportions, the income from the festival is dwindling dangerously, too. It’s time for a change in tempo and style!



For generations, the same Gorgeous Gardens organising committee has done a remarkable job of planning and hosting this event – planting and replanting – but we now need some companion planting. Consider our proposed music festival as ‘festival fertiliser’ that will re-germinate interest and energy in our regional towns, otherwise stagnation will fully set in and we will end up in the compost bin.

Few music festivals enjoy the geographical advantages that our region offers. We have a natural amphitheatre overlooking the valley, which could provide not only perfect acoustics but also a stunning backdrop for performances, particularly at twilight. Imagine this cathedral-esque space with the surrounding trees lit up for an evening performance, casting light and shadow on our home-grown superstars. Imagine the sounds of melodic folk tunes wafting across the valley, of hard rock and metal exploding into the night, or the sounds of jazz sizzling under the summer sunset.

Like all semi-rural areas, we have buildings that have been standing silent and empty for a long time, including old town halls that could provide brilliant spaces for lessons, workshops and jamming. Our towns can proudly boast that our spaces are accessible to people of all abilities, so musicians and audiences alike can fully enjoy the festival offerings wherever they are staged. The district’s gardens could be opened for a different purpose – not just for admiration but also for musical events. Rock with your roses or mix some Mozart among the marigolds. Dare to put some tubas with your tubers! Melodious offshoots will enrich your world!

We know that our Narrow Valley region has seen some tough economic times lately and it might seem that a music festival is a frivolous

waste of money. However, we see it as an opportunity to establish innovative partnerships with regional businesses – including fresh food producers, cafes and delicatessens, local artisans and artists – as one solution to overcome financial concerns. Our student bodies don’t just include musicians who can be involved but also media students, foodies, technology gurus and writers. We are confident that we can entice visitors, tourists and music lovers from far and wide to stay, eat and explore. We can see only *increased* prosperity for our region.

Imagine, too, how a visitor to our festival will see new musicians not in the cutthroat world of television talent

shows but against the wholesome natural backdrops and the quaint historic buildings that abound in our regional towns. Visitors will eat fresh produce made into delicious meals and buy local. Visitors, residents and local businesses will all be much richer, and not just financially!

We are the youth of our region. Younger voices need to be heard so that our communities can find new energy, new purpose and new perspectives. It is time for generational change. We have talents that deserve to be seen and appreciated and nurtured – and not just on social media. Let’s share our triumphs. Let’s share our aspirations. Let’s provide opportunities for *all*.

We invite you, the residents of the Narrow Valley region, to our initial meeting, next Tuesday, in the Narrow Valley Botanical Gardens. The meeting will be followed by a performance by the Narrow Valley North College band. Please bring your ideas, your energy and even any concerns, so that we can begin our shared journey towards a new, prosperous future through our state-of-the-art music festival.

Yours, in harmony,

The Student Music Leadership Group, Narrow Valley

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### **Assessment criteria**

Section A will be assessed against the following criteria:

- knowledge and understanding of the text, and the ideas and values it explores
- development of a coherent analysis in response to the topic
- use of textual evidence to support the interpretation
- control and effectiveness of language use, as appropriate to the task

Section B will be assessed against the following criteria:

- knowledge and understanding of both texts, and the ideas and issues they present
- discussion of meaningful connections, similarities or differences between the texts, in response to the topic
- use of textual evidence to support the comparative analysis
- control and effectiveness of language use, as appropriate to the task

Section C will be assessed against the following criteria:

- understanding of the argument(s) presented and point(s) of view expressed
- analysis of ways in which language and visual features are used to present an argument and to persuade
- control and effectiveness of language use, as appropriate to the task

Sources: Rawpixel.com/Shutterstock.com (p. 12)

