VCE English and English as an Additional Language (EAL)  
Units 1 and 2: 2023–2027; Units 3 and 4: 2024–2027

Frequently asked questions

Personal response

What is a personal response to text?

The personal response to a set text provides students with the opportunity to read a text through the lens of their own experiences. They are encouraged to locate characters, key moments or central ideas that resonate with them, and respond to them through a written response. This response may contain a reflective element and may be presented in the first person. Students are still required to demonstrate analysis, that is the what, how and why about their personal connections with the text, but there is flexibility in the way this is presented.

What are examples of a personal response to text?

Examples of personal responses to text can be found in Meanjin, Southerly, Griffith Review, Australian Book Review, The Guardian and The Conversation. They can also be found on other websites Reading Australia.

These examples are written by reviewers, writers and teachers, so the quality can be quite high. Teachers looking for examples for classroom activities should consider using short extracts from published examples to inspire students in their own work.

From [*The Conversation*](https://theconversation.com/friday-essay-how-a-bengali-book-in-broken-hill-sheds-new-light-on-australian-history-121126), for example, teachers could explore the first section of this essay, considering the ways the writer makes personal connections with the book she finally begins to read. Students could explore situating their own reading experiences in a landscape, and how that landscape reflects the text.

From [*Reading Australia*](https://readingaustralia.com.au/essays/looking-for-alibrandi/), for example, teachers could read the first five paragraphs and begin a class discussion about how Pung connects her experience of young adulthood with the novel Looking for Alibrandi. Teachers could note how she links the behaviours of characters from the novel with the behaviours of members of her family, and the connects between the images of the text and the experiences of her life.

From [*Meanjin*](https://meanjin.com.au/review/if-were-all-the-same-bird-were-flying-forever/), for example, teachers could provide students with the first five or so paragraphs, and lead a discussion about how the self appears before the text, and how the reading or the engagement with the text complements the lived experience of the reader.

Text selection

What texts are required for Units 1 and 2?

In Units 1 and 2, text selection is a school-based decision, and must be made in accordance with the following instructions.

Where both Units 1 and 2 are undertaken, students must read and study at least five set texts. EAL students have the option of studying extracts of set texts for Unit 1, Outcome 1 and Unit 2, Outcome 1.

The term ‘set text’ refers to texts chosen by the school for Unit 1, Areas of Study 1 and 2, and Unit 2, Area of Study 1.

Where both Units 1 and 2 are undertaken:

* only one of the set texts may be a film or a graphic novel
* either one of the texts set for study for Unit 1, Outcome 1 and Unit 2, Outcome 1, or two of the texts set for study for Unit 1, Outcome 2 must be by Australian authors or creators.
* all texts should have literary merit and be worthy of close study
* no text studied in Units 1 and 2 can be studied in Units 3 and 4
* no idea from the Framework of Ideas listed for study at Unit 3 can be studied in Unit 1
* No mentor texts aligned with any idea in the Framework of Ideas (List 2 of the VCAA VCE English and EAL Text List) can be studied in Unit 1.

What texts are required for Units 3 and 4?

Students are expected to read widely in Units 3 and 4 to support the achievement of all outcomes.

In Units 3 and 4, text selection must be made in accordance with the following instructions.

Five texts across the Units 3 and 4 sequence must be selected from the annual VCAA VCE English and EAL Text List.

Only one of the selected texts may be a film or a graphic novel.

No text studied at Units 1 and 2 may be studied at Units 3 and 4.

Either one of the texts selected from List 1 or two of the texts selected from List 2 must be by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander or other Australian authors or creators that directly explore Australian knowledge, experience and voices.

For Unit 3, Area of Study 2, students must read and study three mentor texts aligned with an idea from the Framework of Ideas (List 2 of the VCAA VCE English and EAL Text List).

Crafting and Creating texts

Student writing

What role does the teaching of genre or text types play in these outcomes?

Teachers and schools are invited to explore creativity and writing as processes rather than as products. In senior secondary English and English as an Additional Language (EAL), there is emphasis on the application of knowledge and understanding of purpose, context and audience. The generic conventions learned in   
F–10 can be applied, but will likely be transformed to meet what is required in the context of the writing. Students can explore challenging generic conventions, can combine them into hybrid forms and, in doing so become skilled and empowered writers and communicators.

It is acknowledged that there will be many cohorts of EAL students (and some mainstream English students) who will continue to benefit from the explicit knowledge and application of generic writing forms and structures to support the creation of their own texts. Therefore teachers are encouraged to develop a teaching and learning program that is tailored to meet the specific needs of their cohort, and that provides the appropriate scaffolding to support writing development. However, the focus of the program must be on the consideration of purpose, context and audience, and not solely on generic text types.

What roles do context, purpose and audience play in these outcomes?

The concepts of audience and context are key to creating effective and cohesive writing. The writer needs to consider for whom they are writing, under what circumstances, and for what purpose. The purpose of the text is closely connected with audience and context, but has another dimension – why is the writer creating this text? It is about what the author sets out to achieve for the audience, when reading, listening to or viewing the text. When creating texts, the author always has at least one purpose. These include: to express, to explain, to reflect or to argue, and some texts may have more than one purpose, depending on the audience and context.

Students are invited to create and craft their own texts that are shaped by the careful selection of audience, purpose and context. The Framework of Ideas provides inspiration for their writing as students draw on their own experiences, memories, opinions and perspectives to develop original texts. In this Area of Study, there is a shift away from the knowledge of genre or content, instead the emphasis is on the student’s capacity meet their goals of the intended audience, context and purpose.

Mentor texts

What are mentor texts?

The mentor texts are selected to provide students with exemplars of effective and cohesive writing. They may include short stories, speeches or monologues (with transcripts), essays (comment, opinion, reflective, personal), podcasts (with transcripts), poetry/songs, feature articles (including a series of blog or social media postings) and memoirs and biography and can be entire texts or extracts. Students explore and revisit the mentor texts as inspiration for developing their own writing processes, for generation of ideas, and as models for effective writing.

What are examples of mentor texts?

Examples of mentor texts can be found in the Support Material for teachers and the on-demand videos and live webinar recordings on the implementation website of the *VCE English and EAL Study Design* page.

Who chooses mentor texts?

In Unit 1, mentor texts should be selected by teachers. They can also consult with their students in the selection of mentor text. In Unit 3, the mentor texts must be selected from List 2 of the VCE English and EAL text list. Teachers must select three of four texts listed but are welcome to teach all four texts.

How many mentor texts should be selected?

For both Units 1 and 3, a minimum of three mentor texts must be selected for teaching and learning.

What is a supplementary text?

The concept of a supplementary text is not a concept included in the *VCE English and EAL Study Design*.

However, it is a concept in use among teachers planning for these areas of study. In essence, a supplementary text is a text that can assist in contextualizing the key idea students will engage with in their writing. Supplementary texts could provide historical background to the idea or examples of how the idea has been received in different cultures. The idea of ‘Time’, for example, might have different meanings in different cultures and a supplementary text could provide that information. A supplementary text would not need to be explored in the same way a mentor text is explored.

The VCAA will not provide a list of supplementary texts for any of the ideas listed in the Framework of Ideas.

Should students refer to the mentor texts in their writing?

The mentor texts provide examples of cohesive and effective writing and are studied for the use of vocabulary, text structures, language features and conventions. Mentor texts will also provide ideas that will connect with the central idea set for study but that is not their primary function or role in teaching and learning. As such, students are not required to refer to any mentor text directly in their writing. The individual writing developed by students, however, should be built on the vocabulary, text structures, language features and conventions they have explored, experimented with and applied to their own work.

Ideas (Framework of ideas)

Can the ideas from the Framework of Ideas (Unit 3) be used in Unit 1?

No. Schools and teachers must choose an idea for their Unit 1 teaching and learning programs that is not listed in the Framework of Ideas in the VCE English and EAL Study Design.

What ideas can be used in Unit 1?

Teachers should select an idea that would be of interest to their cohort and could inspire interest, opinion and engagement. Students may provide input into the idea selected for study in Unit 1.

Assessment

How does drafting fit into assessment?

Drafting is part of writing processes and can be used to build students’ writing. Teacher can provide feedback and assistance on drafts in line with [*VCAA advice*](https://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/administration/vce-vcal-handbook/Pages/index.aspx).

‘acceptable levels of assistance include:

* the incorporation of ideas or material derived from other sources (for example, by reading, viewing or note taking), but which have been transformed by the student and used in a new context
* prompting and general advice from another person or source, which leads to refinements and/or self-correction

unacceptable forms of assistance include:

* use of or copying another person’s work, including their teacher’s work, or other resources without acknowledgement
* use of or copying sample answers provided by their teacher or another person
* corrections or improvements made or dictated by another person, including their teacher’

Please note: teachers are not required to formally sight drafts or record students’ completion of drafts unless it is a requirement of the VCE study design and/or for authentication purposes. Drafting can remain a part of a teaching and learning strategy, and students may do preliminary drafting for School-assessed Coursework; however, students and teachers must ensure they follow the VCAA authentication rules regarding acceptable levels of assistance in relation to providing feedback on the draft, in order to maintain the integrity of the School-assessed Coursework and ensure the authenticity of the student work.

How could Crafting texts and Creating texts be assessed?

Student writing should be assessed in consideration of its success as a cohesive and effective text within a context, audience and purpose. All student writing should be constructed within a context, audience and purpose and how those elements can shape a text should be part of the teaching and learning.

Rubrics for Unit 3, Outcome 2 will be published in the Support Materials to further assist teachers in assessment.

Exploring and analysing argument

The issue

How many issues can be selected for study?

One issue may be selected for study. Students analyse the use of argument and language, and visuals in texts that debate a contemporary and significant national or international issue.

Which issues are suitable for selection to study?

The texts must have appeared in the media since 1 September of the previous year and teachers are advised to work with their students to select an issue of relevance and interest to the cohort.

Texts

What are the parameters around the selection of contemporary media texts?

The texts must be authentic, and have appeared in the media since 1 September of the previous year and teachers are advised to work with their students to select an issue of relevance to the cohort. There are some issues that may be sensitive to study in specific settings, so teachers need to ensure that the issue selected is appropriate for the student demographic of the school.

Which different text types must be covered in this Area of Study?

Students read, view and/or listen to a variety of texts from the media, including print and digital, and audio and audio visual.

Comparison

What is the requirement for the comparison of texts?

There is no requirement for students to compare texts. They must provide analysis of argument and language in light of the effect on a reader or audience. Where the student is analysing more than one text, they provide individual analysis of each. They can, of course, providing some links between the two pieces:

‘In the second article, the writer provides a counter position to the first article.’

However, students are not required to provide comparison between the pieces.

Audio/audio visual texts

What is the role of transcripts in relation to the teaching of audio/audio visual texts in Unit 2 and Unit 4?

Transcripts will provide students with a hardcopy of the audio or audio visual text. Students can use the transcript to provide direct quotations from the text, and to refine their analysis of the text.

How can the analysis of an audio/audio visual texts be assessed?

The analysis of the audio or audio visual text would be assessed in the same way an analysis of a written text would be assessed. Students would need to show a clear understanding of the contention, sequence of supporting arguments and the language used by the speaker to create an effect in the audience. Students could include, in their analysis, the role of stress, tone, intonation and volume plays in developing argument, reinforcing language and creating effect. These additional elements should be reflected in any rubric used by a teacher for assessing and feedback.

Oral presentation

What are appropriate options for the oral presentation?

Students apply their understanding of the use of argument and language to create a point of view text for oral presentation. Through active listening, reading and viewing, students monitor and evaluate arguments on a topic of their choice, and then plan and develop their own point of view text on that topic. They present their points of view as a discussion, dialogue or debate, or in a presentation mode that best suits their context, purpose and audience.