

# VCE English Unit 1 Assessment Advice

Reading and Exploring.



VICTORIAN CURRICULUM  
AND ASSESSMENT AUTHORITY



# Acknowledgement of Country

The VCAA respectfully acknowledges the Traditional Owners of Country throughout Victoria and pays respect to the ongoing living cultures of First Peoples.



# Welcome

This on demand video

- is presented by experienced senior English teacher Helen Billett
- will explore assessing the new area of study in Unit 1 – Reading and exploring texts through the perspective of a teacher
- will offer some ideas and suggestions about assessing including creating rubrics
- is advice only

# Assessments should be:

- Valid
- Reasonable
- Equitable
- Balanced and efficient



# Assessment must be:

- based on the Key Knowledge and Key Skills outlined in the Study Design
- be consistent with the outcome as specified by the Study Design



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# Unit 1 Reading and exploring – the familiar and the new

In this area of study, students engage in reading and viewing texts with a focus on personal connections with the story. They discuss and clarify the ideas and values presented by authors through their evocations of character, setting and plot, and through investigations of the point of view and/or the voice of the text. They develop and strengthen inferential reading and viewing skills, and consider the ways a text's vocabulary, text structures and language features can create meaning on several levels and in different ways.

Students' exploration of texts involves understanding and appreciating the role of vocabulary, text structures and language features in creating story and meaning. They contemplate the ways a text can present and reflect human experiences, and how stories or aspects of stories resonate with their own memories and lives. Students are encouraged to share their experience and understanding of the world, and make connections with key ideas, concerns and tensions presented in a text. They also explore the cultural, social and historical values embedded in the text, and can compare these values with their own. It is through these moments of connection that students engage more closely with the reading experience, and draw parallels with their own observations of the world.

Through participation in discussions about their own experiences and the ways they make connections with a text, students develop their own thinking and engage with the ideas of others to extend their understanding of a text. They draw on personal experience and understanding in developing writing about a text, and work to shape their ideas and knowledge into formal essay structures.

*From the VCE English Study Design (2023-2027).*



# Focus on assessment of skills and understanding in Reading and exploring/responding through the Study Design.

- Unit 1 – focus is on understanding that readers personally engage with ideas and values presented in a text
- Unit 2 - focus is on understanding that texts convey ideas and values in many ways and learning to recognise and articulate how an interpretation is developed in response to this. Formal structure of essays needs to be understood.
- Unit 3 – focus is on students being able to recognise and respond to previously unseen topics and distinguish between relevant and irrelevant information as they construct sequenced responses.
- Unit 4 – focus is on students applying the inferential reading skills they have been developing in response to texts to topics and to create more complex responses because of this deeper understanding of the implications of the essential topics they are presented. Formal writing, unseen topics and time constraints.





# Unit 1 Reading and exploring Key Knowledge

- inferential reading and viewing strategies
- ideas, concerns and tensions in a text
- vocabulary, text structures and language features in a text
- personal and analytical writing in response to a text
- small group and whole class discussion, including ways of developing constructive and collaborative interactions and building on the ideas of others
- the conventions of discussion and debate
- the conventions of syntax, punctuation and spelling of Standard Australian English.

# Unit 1 – Reading and exploring Key Skills

- develop strategies for inferential reading and viewing
- consider and explore:
  - ideas, concerns and tensions presented in a text
  - characters, settings and plot, and point of view and voice
  - how vocabulary, text structures and language features create meaning
- engage productively in small group and class discussion, including listening to others
- develop, share and clarify ideas with peers and teachers employing appropriate strategies for discussion and debate
- plan and develop personal and analytical writing about a text, including the use of appropriate metalanguage to discuss vocabulary, text structures and language features
- use textual evidence, where appropriate, to support writing
- use appropriate strategies to review and edit writing
- apply the conventions of syntax, punctuation and spelling of Standard Australian English.



# Outcome 1

On completion of this unit the student should be able to make **personal connections** with, and **explore the vocabulary, text structures, language features and ideas** in, a text.

# Using Key Skills to produce a possible for Outcome 1

- 1 Engagement with the ideas and values presented in the text.
- 2 Knowledge and understanding of how the text presents views and values
- 3 Use of textual evidence to support a personal reading of the text
- 4 Capacity to use language to communicate clearly



|  | Level 1   | Level 2   | Level 3   | Level 4   | Level 5   |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| Engagement with the ideas and values presented in the text       | Identifies key ideas central to the text.               | Describes key ideas central to the text and relates to own experience | Discusses ideas presented in text and discuss ways in which these ideas manifest themselves in own experience | Explains how ideas interconnect in text and explains why these complex ideas resonate with own experience | Examines complex interconnecting ideas in text and explores how specific features of the text impacts their understanding of these ideas. |
| Knowledge and understanding of how the text conveys ideas/values | Identifies literary features of the text.               | Is able to describe the purpose of the literary feature identified.   | Selects and discusses relevant literary features to consider how meaning is created.                          | Explains how literary features interconnect to convey meaning.  | Deconstructs interconnected literary features to present a detailed examination of how meaning is created at different levels.            |
| Use of textual evidence to support point-of-view                 | Identifies general evidence from text                   | Describes elements of the text juxtaposes them to point-of-view       | Discusses textual evidence to demonstrate understanding   | Explains textual evidence to support point-of-view  | Examines textual evidence to elaborate on and expand point-of-view  |
| Capacity to use language to communicate clearly                  | Uses language that identifies text and textual elements | Uses language to describe the text.                                   | Selects language that discusses a clear understand of point-of-view   | Uses language with control and accuracy to explain complex ideas.   | Uses language with precision construct and examine a rich point-of-view with clarity.   |



# Exploring how Key Skills can be manifested.

Eg. “Engagement with the ideas and values of a text ”

**Level 1** The student is able to identify key ideas the text considers

“*Jane Eyre* is a book about the life journey of a young girl.”

**Level 2** Describes key ideas central to the text and relates to own experience

“Growing up and finding out who you has always been hard. *Jane Eyre* finds life to be harsh as many people do.”

**Level 3** Discusses ideas presented in the text and links this to their own experience

“Jane faces intense loneliness when she lives with the Reid family. She feels as if she doesn’t belong. There was a boy at my primary school who must have felt that way. When I read about Jane feeling so frustrated and alone after she was bullied by John, I remembered the frustration on Trevor’s face after we laughed at him.”



**Level 4 Explains how ideas interconnect in the text and explains why these complex ideas resonate with their own experience.**

"I was interested in the feeling of 'otherness' that Jane I was feeling within the Reid family. This was not just because of Mrs Reid's cruelty towards her, but the way that this cruelty was justified by Bessie. Even though I could see that Bessie is trying to help Jane understand her 'place' and her lack of power. Jane looks to find an ally in Bessie because they are both disempowered. I feel the same resentment that Jane felt when a group of girls explain to me that I have to accept being put down by a group of boys. I know they are trying to help me survive in a harsh society, but like Jane I am enraged that they refuse to see and fight injustice. . I admired Jane's independence and belief in her values and her capacity. This was inspirational."

**Level 5 Examines complex interconnecting ideas in text and explores how specific features of the text impacts on the interpretation of those ideas.**

"It is not just that Jane Eyre's suffering is intensified by her limited capacity to see and articulate her feelings. As a reader I recognise and remember the frustration of being both socially powerless as a child but equally the child is rendered powerless by a limited capacity to explain feelings. Jane sees injustice in the way that God is used to terrorise young girls into accepting cruelty at Lowood School but cannot articulate the unjust distribution of power. Her pert retort when threatened with hell as a punishment if she is not 'good' that "I must keep in good health and not die," is her way of refusing to accept the limitations placed on her. Bronte's use of a young narrator speaking in the present tense evokes memories of the strong sense of justice that we hold as children and all we see beaten out of people. Bronte's use of the character Jane, with her capacity to identify and subvert the irresponsible use of power must have been liberating for her women readers. Isn't it sad that women still need Jane Eyre to encourage them to call out the injustices of society, particularly those pertaining to young women".



# Global assessment

- Students are unlikely to develop all skills in perfect parallel.
- Communication is a rich web that cannot be reduced to simple mathematics.
- Need to reflect upon and edit rubrics to improve them.





# We need to assess what is in the Study Design

- Avoid, where possible ‘adding’ constraints and challenges to students.
- Ensure feedback focuses on what students can achieve and need to do next.
- Feedback should recognise any aspects of the task that constrain student performance.
- Be aware that students may demonstrate skills and knowledge differently.



# Rubrics are the assessment tool not the assessment rule.



# Contact

- **Dr Annelise Balsamo**
- Curriculum Manager: English
- T: 03 9059 5141
- M: 0429 924 972
- E: [Annelise.Balsamo@education.vic.gov.au](mailto:Annelise.Balsamo@education.vic.gov.au)

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