



Analysing characters

Sample responses



9

English

Queensland Comparable
Assessment Tasks
(QCATs) 2010

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B Sample: Response 1

Guide to making judgments — Year 9 English

Name

Focus: Interpret how language elements and textual features can position an audience to view characters and ideas in a particular way.

Knowledge and understanding	Interpreting texts	Knowledge and understanding Constructing texts	
<p>Uses comprehension strategies to identify evidence in the text and to make inferences about the characters and setting.</p> <p>Uses passive voice to change the subject and focus in a sentence.</p> <p>Questions 1–6</p>	<p>Interprets and analyses how language elements and textual features position an audience to view characters and ideas in a particular way.</p> <p>Questions 7–9</p>	<p>Manipulates language elements (figurative language, adjectives, adverbs, punctuation, spelling) and textual features (active voice, third-person narrative) to construct a text that develops a character's point of view.</p> <p>Question 10</p>	
<p>◀ Draws insightful conclusions about the characters using valid examples and clear explanations. Rewrites a sentence using passive voice to change subject and focus.</p>	<p>◀ Justifies how the writer's choice of subject matter and either vocabulary or clause construction position an audience to view characters in a particular way. Well-justified explanation of how a theme or message is developed through the characters.</p>	<p>◀ Uses evocative language to develop Dale's character through the deliberate sequencing of images and ideas that are cohesive in structure.</p>	A
<p>◀ Selects valid examples from the text including figurative language, and supports explanations about characters.</p>	<p>◀ Identifies how a theme or message is explored through the characters.</p>	<p>◀ Develops characters through speech, and descriptions of actions, thoughts or feelings. Maintains active voice and third-person narrative. Well-controlled use of grammar, punctuation and spelling.</p>	B
<p>◀ Chooses some relevant examples from the text including a simile and/or metaphor. Makes generalisations about characters.</p>	<p>◀ Identifies how language choices and/or subject matter position an audience to view characters in a particular way. Identifies how an idea is explored through the characters.</p>	<p>◀ Uses descriptive language to explore Dale's point of view. Maintains active voice, and controls grammar, punctuation and spelling. Structure is evident.</p>	C
<p>◀ Makes generalisations about the language choices or subject matter in the text. Describes an idea explored through the characters.</p>	<p>◀ Restates messages from the text.</p>	<p>◀ Develops characters using descriptive language, actions, speech or thoughts and feelings. Lapses in structure, grammar, punctuation or spelling intrude but do not detract from meaning.</p>	D
<p>◀ Lists examples from the text.</p>		<p>◀ Recounts events.</p>	E
<p>Draws insightful conclusions about characters. Selects valid examples of a simile. Rewrites a sentence using passive voice.</p>	<p>Identifies how the writer's choice of subject matter positions the reader to favour Miss Wilson. Identifies that a theme is conveyed through the characters' different views of education and the world.</p> <p>Identifies how the writer uses informal language to develop the relationships between students and Dale.</p>	<p>Uses descriptive language choices to evoke images such as "stumbles over the cracked earth" to develop Dale's relationship with the bush. Uses figurative language including a simile, metaphor and personification to create a sense of place. Ideas are cohesive in structure except for the resolution.</p>	

Overall grade

This response demonstrates a high level of achievement across all assessable elements. On balance, it is judged to be a B.

Reading for meaning

1. List evidence from the text that shows this story is set in the Australian bush.

- She doesn't believe, as Mavis does, in the value of
- - even behind the truckstand ^{listening to the bush}
- The smell of the Dry season
- When everyone is setting fire to clean up ^{the country}

2. Identify a metaphor and a simile from the text that help to create tone, mood or atmosphere.

Simile: Her eyes are really blue, like see-through blue

Metaphor: She even has special glasses that let her see ^{out the back of her head}

3. Describe Miss Wilson, using evidence from the text.

Her shoulders are sharp at the edges and her hair is neat and brown like she is a strict teacher in control.

4. Paragraph 2 states that Miss Wilson "believes what she does is good". Give two other examples from the text that explain why she believes she is a good teacher.

- She is white chalk filling the empty space with knowledge

- We'll make a scholar out of you yet, Dale ^{Murphy}

5. How do Miss Wilson and Dale view each other? Explain your answer.

Miss Wilson views Dale as a very bright boy who she wishes to 'make a scholar out of'. However, Dale sees Miss Wilson as a very strict teacher who knows absolutely everything about everyone and you can never outsmart her.

6. This sentence from the text uses active voice. Rewrite the sentence using passive voice to change the subject and focus of the sentence.

Miss Wilson guards the playground during smoko and lunchtime, watching to make sure no one escapes.

During smoko and lunchtime, the playground is being guarded by Miss Wilson to make sure no one escapes.

Interpreting texts

7. Who does the text favour: Dale or Miss Wilson? Miss Wilson

Justify your answer using evidence from the text.

The text favours Miss Wilson as the author has properly introduced her to the readers, using detailed descriptive phrases such as "her shoulders are sharp at the edges" or "her hair is neat and brown". It then goes on to describe how much she loves to teach so that the reader believes it.

8. Identify a theme or message explored in the text. Explain how this theme is explored through the characters.

Theme/message: The need for escape.

Explanation: This theme is supported by the fact Dale's head is 'aching with frustration' and he is trying to plan his escape. This is easy to relate to. We all feel like escaping sometimes.

9. Explain how the writer makes deliberate language choices to develop the relationship between the reader and Dale. Consider subject matter, vocabulary, grammar and punctuation. Use examples from the text to support your explanation.

The writer uses certain language devices which enable the target audience to relate to Dale. It is the use of "Dale's head was aching with frustration. He just wants to get out of the classroom" that the audience can feel familiarity with these emotions. The author is simply using the way many students feel about school, and use this in her story so the audience can relate.

B Sample: Response 1

This passage from the text may help get you started:

Dale's head is aching with frustration ... He just wants to get out of the classroom. He lifts his face and the smell of the Dry season is very clear in his nostrils. *Gotta go, but how?* He pretends to listen and take notes about the discussion while he thinks about how to get out of the school yard without being seen. What excuse can he make for being gone for the rest of the day? He'll have to get Lizzie's help with that! His eyes are slitted and his forehead wrinkles with concentration. He watches everyone as they talk and pretends to write down their ideas.

Dale slowly
rips some paper from the back of his
book and places it carefully and quietly
on the table. ~~He then~~ The pencil
scrapes loudly against the wooden desk.
Lizzie, *Escape Plan?*
He scrunches the note in his hand and
coughs to get Lizzie's attention. When this
fails he drums his fingers on the table
in frustration. Lizzie turns angrily to
Dale but relaxes when she sees him
stretching his arm towards her. She
quickly grabs the note in her cramped
hand and drops it into her pencil case.
Dale's hand drops in relief to the desk
and the sound echoes through the
classroom. He breathes in sharply
when Miss Wilson turns around.
'I'm so dead' ... Something
snapped in his head. Dale panicks and
jumps up from his desk sending his
books skidding across the floor. He looks

around wildly and finds his escape. His prize. The window. The trophy

He sprints to the window ignoring his classmates shouts and pushes it open, the glass rattling and dust showering down on him. He climbs through and jumps, narrowly missing the edge of the water tank, Sprinting off towards the tiny town, Dale tries not to think about the consequences he would face on Monday. Pain engulfs his foot as it makes contact with a rock. He swears and falls unceremoniously, just in time to hear the school bell ring softly in the distance.

Dale moans as he realises what that means. He pumps the ground with his fist angrily and tries to block out the voice in his head;
Idiot! If you'd waited in that classroom for one more minute you would have been let out anyway.
And from that day on, Dale wore a watch.

B Sample: Response 2

Guide to making judgments — Year 9 English

Name

Focus: Interpret how language elements and textual features can position an audience to view characters and ideas in a particular way.

Knowledge and understanding	Interpreting texts	Knowledge and understanding Constructing texts
Uses comprehension strategies to identify evidence in the text and to make inferences about the characters and setting. Uses passive voice to change the subject and focus in a sentence. Questions 1–6	Interprets and analyses how language elements and textual features position an audience to view characters and ideas in a particular way. Questions 7–9	Manipulates language elements (figurative language, adjectives, adverbs, punctuation, spelling) and textual features (active voice, third-person narrative) to construct a text that develops a character's point of view. Question 10
◀ Draws insightful conclusions about the characters using valid examples and clear explanations. Rewrites a sentence using passive voice to change subject and focus.	◀ Justifies how the writer's choice of subject matter and either vocabulary or clause construction position an audience to view characters in a particular way. Well-justified explanation of how a theme or message is developed through the characters. ◀ Identifies how a theme or message is explored through the characters.	◀ Uses evocative language to develop Dale's character through the deliberate sequencing of images and ideas that are cohesive in structure. ◀ Develops characters through speech, and descriptions of actions, thoughts or feelings. Maintains active voice and third-person narrative. Well-controlled use of grammar, punctuation and spelling.
◀ Selects valid examples from the text including figurative language, and supports explanations about characters.	◀ Identifies how language choices and/or subject matter position an audience to view characters in a particular way. Identifies how an idea is explored through the characters.	◀ Uses descriptive language to explore Dale's point of view. Maintains active voice, and controls grammar, punctuation and spelling. Structure is evident.
◀ Chooses some relevant examples from the text including a simile and/or metaphor. Makes generalisations about characters.	◀ Makes generalisations about the language choices or subject matter in the text. Describes an idea explored through the characters.	◀ Develops characters using descriptive language, actions, speech or thoughts and feelings. Lapses in structure, grammar, punctuation or spelling intrude but do not detract from meaning.
◀ Lists examples from the text.	◀ Restates messages from the text.	◀ Recounts events.

Selects valid examples from the text including figurative language and supports explanations about characters. Rewrites a sentence using passive voice.

Justifies how the writer uses subject matter to position the reader to favour Miss Wilson. Identifies how an idea is explored through the characters. Justifies how the use of informal language is used to develop the relationship between the students and Dale.

Uses descriptive language to explore Dale's point of view about school and Miss Wilson. Maintains textual features and controls grammar, punctuation and spelling. Structure is mostly controlled.

Overall grade

This response demonstrates a high level of achievement across all assessable elements. On balance, it is judged to be a B.

Reading for meaning

1. List evidence from the text that shows this story is set in the Australian bush.

• She doesn't believe, as Mavis does, in the value of listening to the bush.
 • "...at this time of the year, when everyone is setting fires to clean up the country"

• He lifts his face and the smell of the dry season is clear in his nostrils.

2. Identify a metaphor and a simile from the text that help to create tone, mood or atmosphere.

Simile: "... a little floating in the air like dust".

Metaphor: 'dropping to the floor in a tiny rain-shower'

3. Describe Miss Wilson, using evidence from the text. Miss Wilson is a strict teacher. This is shown by how quiet the class is out of fear. We know she enjoys teaching because when she sees them working she feels a sense of pride.

4. Paragraph 2 states that Miss Wilson "believes what she does is good". Give two other examples from the text that explain why she believes she is a good teacher.

• In her mind, children are clean blackboards and she is the chalk (thinks she helping student to learn)

• Her heart fills with pride (She thinks she is doing a good job)

5. How do Miss Wilson and Dale view each other? Explain your answer. Dale views Miss Wilson as a strict teacher and as someone who knows everything because she can always tell when he isn't paying attention in class. Miss Wilson views Dale as someone with a lot of potential when she thinks, "He's a smart one, that child."

6. This sentence from the text uses active voice. Rewrite the sentence using passive voice to change the subject and focus of the sentence.

Miss Wilson guards the playground during smoko and lunchtime, watching to make sure no one escapes.

To make sure no one escapes, Miss Wilson guards the playground during smoko and lunchtime.

Interpreting texts

7. Who does the text favour: Dale or Miss Wilson?

Justify your answer using evidence from the text. The text favours Miss Wilson because the reader is positioned to feel empathy for her. The readers sees that Miss Wilson is strict, but only so that the children get the best possible education. This is evident in the line: "Miss Wilson thinks that the way to change the world is to educate the children so that when they grow up, they will do the right thing"

8. Identify a theme or message explored in the text. Explain how this theme is explored through the characters.

Theme/message: Teachers don't always know what is best

Explanation: Miss Wilson is an educator who is teaching children the knowledge, she believes, will help them to do the right thing when they grow up. Dale is a student being educated by Miss Wilson but he doesn't want to learn the knowledge in the classroom, but wants to be outside in the bush. She doesn't really know what is best for him like my teachers.

9. Explain how the writer makes deliberate language choices to develop the relationship between the reader and Dale. Consider subject matter, vocabulary, grammar and punctuation. Use examples from the text to support your explanation.

The writer of this text uses informal language, such as 'like' and 'he reckons' to develop a relationship between Dale and the audience. The words 'Gotta go, but how?' are used in this text and are very effective in connecting with young readers because they are informal. The word 'gotta' is a slang term for 'got to' which most young readers would be aware of. By using informal language and slang, the audience can relate to the character.

B Sample: Response 2

This passage from the text may help get you started:

Dale's head is aching with frustration ... He just wants to get out of the classroom. He lifts his face and the smell of the Dry season is very clear in his nostrils. Gotta go, *but how?* He pretends to listen and take notes about the discussion while he thinks about how to get out of the school yard without being seen. What excuse can he make for being gone for the rest of the day? He'll have to get Lizzie's help with that! His eyes are slitted and his forehead wrinkles with concentration. He watches everyone as they talk and pretends to write down their ideas.

As he pretends to write down ideas, Miss Wilson approaches the blackboard to fill one section still left black with more dusty, ^{white} chalk. This is my chance, thought Dale. He quickly scribbled down a note to pass to Lizzie, and just as he was about to lean over and hand Lizzie the note, Miss Wilson turned around and returned to her seat, behind her neat and tidy desk. 'Oh no, my one opportunity lost, thought Dale.

This was not a rare scenario for Dale, it always seemed to happen to him. Just as he is about to do something he shouldn't be doing, the teacher turns around, only this time he didn't get caught. It was like Miss Wilson could read Dale's mind and as soon as she sensed his excitement, she turned around.

This just made Dale even more frustrated. The frustrated aching in his brain turned to burning as he longed to be outside, running among the trees and bushes. Dale reckoned Miss Wilson didn't remember what it's like to be a kid. She didn't understand that kids, especially Dale don't like the smell of chalk all day and copying from a board. Kids prefer fresh air and the sound of trees swaying in the breeze. Instead of copying words from

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a dusty old chalkboard, Dale preferred to copy the moves of his favourite sports star as he kicked a footy around with his mates.

On this thought, Dale remembered something Miss Wilson had told them on one of her first days. "I grew up in the city, full of buildings and very few trees. People rushing here and there, and no one stopping to relax and reflect." Perhaps this was the reason Miss Wilson was oblivious to the words fun and outside. For the first time ever, Dale stopped to think how Miss Wilson was feeling. She did not know the joy and pleasure that comes with running through fields and exploring creek banks. In Dale's mind, Miss Wilson had not lived. Maybe this was the reason she was so strict, she had forgotten the meaning of the word fun.

It was at this point that Dale actually felt sympathetic towards Miss Wilson. Dale felt so sympathetic that he decided he was going to help Miss Wilson understand the meaning of fun.