



# Analysing characters

Sample responses



# 9

## English

Queensland Comparable  
Assessment Tasks  
(QCATs) 2010

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## A 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>◀ Selects valid examples from the text including figurative language, and supports explanations about characters.</p> <p>◀ Chooses some relevant examples from the text including a simile and/or metaphor. Makes generalisations about characters.</p> <p>◀ Lists examples from the text.</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>◀ Identifies how a theme or message is explored through the 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>◀ 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>◀ Uses evocative language to develop Dale's character through the deliberate sequencing of images and ideas that are cohesive in structure.</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> <p>◀ Uses descriptive language to explore Dale's point of view. Maintains active voice, and controls grammar, punctuation and spelling. Structure is evident.</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> <p>◀ Recounts events.</p>

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Draws insightful conclusions about characters. Selects valid examples including figurative language. Rewrites a sentence using passive voice.

Justifies how the writer's choice of subject matter positions the reader to favour Miss Wilson. Justifies how a theme is conveyed through the characters' different views of education and the world. Justifies how the writer uses subject matter and informal language to develop the relationships between student readers and Dale.

Uses evocative language including adverbs and adjectives to develop Dale's character through the use of inner speech and descriptions of actions, thoughts and feelings. Cohesive in structure and well-controlled use of grammar, punctuation and spelling.

### Overall grade

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

## Reading for meaning

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

- "She doesn't believe ... in the value of listening to the bush"
- "the smell of the Dry Season is clear.."
- Evidence of a "tankstand" in the schoolyard - collect rainwater
- "... at this time of year, when everyone is setting fires to clean up the country"

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

Simile: "She loves the sound of the chalk ... a little floating in the air like dust"

Metaphor: "... children are clean blackboards and she is the white chalk."

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

Miss Wilson is physically described as having sharp shoulders, "see-through blue" eyes and neat brown hair. Her appearance shows she is a teacher who likes to be in control of her class and traditional "all knowledge can be written down".

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 white chalk filling the empty space" (Thinks she is teaching them the right things.)  
 "Miss Wilson thinks the way to change the world is to educate children" (thinks she is making a change)

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

Miss Wilson sees Dale as a smart child who would achieve great academic success if only he would concentrate on his studies. Dale sees Miss Wilson as someone who imprisons him inside all day, as opposed to being out in the bush where he wants to be and is not interested in the academic success.

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.

The playground is guarded by Miss Wilson at smoko and lunchtime to make sure that 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 because it shows her passion for her students and teaching - "Miss Wilson thinks the way to change the world is to educate children." She wants to make the world a better place by educating children. The reader gets to feel her love of teaching through description like "loves the sound of chalk." This creates sympathy for her as a teacher.

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

Theme/message: The traditional view of education <sup>not</sup> always works in the <sup>classroom</sup>

Explanation: The story contrasts different perspectives about education, Miss Wilson's and Dale's. Miss Wilson's traditional view is that students should copy down work and learn it, while Dale wants to be learning in the real world outside the classroom. It shows that tradition doesn't work because Dale is just daydreaming and not "thinking, concentrating" as Miss Wilson thinks he is.

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 allows the reader to relate to Dale on a personal level through the subject matter and vocabulary. All students have experienced that feeling of wishing they could escape from school. "He just wants to get out of the classroom." Similarly, everyone has had a strict teacher: "I have eyes in the back of my head" she says, reminding students of teacher that watch them. The casual language used by Dale is every-day language that also helps the reader to easily like Dale "he reckons" and "Gotta go, but how."

## A 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.

He knows, in the back of his mind, that Miss Wilson only wants the best for him, for all of the students, but on a scorching day<sup>like today</sup> being in the classroom is like a prison<sup>beginning</sup>. He can almost hear the crickets<sup>calling</sup>, almost feel the wind in his hair, the sun's warmth touching his skin. Gotta get out, but how? Finally, his forehead uncreases and he smiles. He has a plan.

"Miss, miss, I think I'm going to be sick!" shrieks Dale.  
"Good heavens Dale, calm down!" exclaims Miss Wilson.  
"We'll get someone to take you over to sick bay. With a bit of rest you'll be as fit as a fiddle."  
"Aw, thanks miss," says Dale, feigning sincerity. Freedom. Out the door. Freedom. Across the road. Freedom. Behind the tankstand. Freedom. Over the fence. FREEDOM AT LAST!

Dale stumbles over the<sup>crusted</sup>, cracked earth, but today it feels like gliding. Maybe he can meet up with his older brothers, follow the animal tracks, swim in the billabong. There is so much to do, Dale doesn't know where to begin! He reaches the bush and the leaves crunch beneath his feet. He hears a bird calling.

## A Sample: Response 1

Without blinking, he knows it's the kookaburra. Maris is right. Some things cannot be learned in the classroom. Although he feels slightly guilty, Dale pushes it out of his mind. For now, the whole world is his. Any amount of trouble at school is worth that.

The next day, Miss Wilson is furious. "How could you!" she screams. "You are a smart boy, you could really be successful, but instead you choose to pull stupid stunts like this!" Miss Wilson talks and talks and talks. Throughout it all, Dale is silent. Finally she stops, leans against the blackboard, thinks. She sees Dale's face and for a moment Miss Wilson understands. "Yes," says Dale simply, looking her in the eye. "Yes, it was."

## A Sample: Response 2

### Guide to making judgments — Year 9 English

Name .....

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<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>◀ Selects valid examples from the text including figurative language, and supports explanations about characters.</p> <p>◀ Chooses some relevant examples from the text including a simile and/or metaphor. Makes generalisations about characters.</p> <p>◀ Lists examples from the text.</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>◀ Identifies how a theme or message is explored through the 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>◀ 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>◀ Uses evocative language to develop Dale's character through the deliberate sequencing of images and ideas that are cohesive in structure.</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> <p>◀ Uses descriptive language to explore Dale's point of view. Maintains active voice, and controls grammar, punctuation and spelling. Structure is evident.</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> <p>◀ Recounts events.</p>

A

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E

Draws insightful conclusions about characters using clear explanations. Valid examples from text chosen except for "blackboard". Rewrites a sentence using passive voice.

Justifies how the writer's choice of subject matter positions the reader to favour Dale. Well-justified explanation of a theme developed through the characters' different view of each other as teacher and student. Justifies how the choice of subject matter and use of informal language position the reader to relate to Dale.

Uses some evocative language to develop Dale's point of view such as "like a golden ribbon" and "white walls of gums". Well-developed images and cohesive structure.

### Overall grade

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



## Reading for meaning

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

- The smell of the 'Dry Season' (season in the bush)
- Guards the playground during 'smoko' (used by people in the bush)
- Everyone is 'setting fires to clean up the country' (burning back)
- shiny 'black board' (use whiteboards in the city)

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

"She loves the sound of the chalk ..."

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

Metaphor: "children are clean blackboards and she is the white chalk"

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

Miss Wilson thinks that she knows what is best for her students. She believes knowledge must be written down which is why she fills the blackboard

Her lack of understanding of the world outside her classroom is shown when she talks about the dangers of burning back the bush.

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 believes that she can 'fill the empty space with knowledge' and 'change the world' by educating students in the classroom. she guards the playground during the breaks in case any student escapes because she thinks that school is the best place for them to be.

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

Miss Wilson and Dale view each other differently. Miss Wilson thinks that Dale has the potential to be a good student and she can make a 'scholar' out of him. In reality, Dale does not enjoy her teaching because she doesn't understand his interests or love of the bush.

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.

The playground was guarded by Miss Wilson during smoko and lunchtime, who watched to make sure no one escaped.

## 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 because it evokes empathy in the reader for her. Such descriptions as "Her heart fills with pride" and "He's a smart one that child" indicate her concern for Dale while the text also positions the reader to understand that, at times, her well-intentions are misunderstood by students.

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

Theme/message: Teachers do not always know what is best for their students.

Explanation: Teachers like Miss Wilson, can be waisting their time filling the blackboard with work when students are not interested in learning. Students, like Dale, can be sitting quietly, but not learning. This text shows teachers may not really understand what is important to students like Dale, who would rather be outside in the bush than sitting in a classroom.

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 familiar setting of a school classroom helps to develop a relationship with students immediately. Students will relate to Dale whose head is 'aching with frustration' because many of them will have also thought about escaping from a classroom when they are bored. Miss Wilson may remind students of a teacher who doesn't understand them. Simple language choices such as 'bad' and 'good', the use of informal language such as 'gotta go' and the use of simple sentences keep students engaged in the text and connected to Dale's character.

## A 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.

Miss Wilson continues her class discussion and Dale finally solves his dilemma. He remembers the old, dirt pathway that runs parallel with the timber fence that keeps the students trapped like prisoners. Miss Wilson doesn't guard the pathway anymore. It has been out-of-bounds since the incident with the soccer ball. Mavis in a fit of anger knocked out a whole bunch of wooden posts.

As soon as the students leave the classroom for smoko, Dale sneaks off down the far stairs before everybody else. He is immediately elated by the sudden urge to express his freedom. While the students take their food out of their backpacks, Dale scoops up his bag and heads past the few children who had begun to play. The old pathway stretches out like golden ribbon, a road to freedom, in Dale's mind.

Often he would find Mavis and Lizzie, his best friends, and decide where they were going to hang out. He keeps walking, head down, hoping nobody will talk to him. Great flocks of cockatoos seemed to be flapping in his chest. He is giddy with a sense of release. He

## A Sample: Response 2

takes large strides now, the sound of playground noise, growing strangely hushed. He smells the sun, warming the dry grass beside the school fence.

He can see the hole in the fence now, where finally he can make his great escape. He starts to jog towards the white wall of gum trees. His foot merely steps through the boundary line and instead of feeling the clean, fresh air, he feels a strong, firm arm on his shoulder. He turns in fear and sees Miss Wilson staring directly at him. Miraculously she had beaten him there. She knew exactly what he was thinking. Once again, his mind-reading teacher was one step ahead of Dale.