

English & Literature Extension subject report

2022 cohort

February 2023



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Introduction

Throughout 2022, schools and the QCAA worked together to further consolidate the new Queensland Certificate of Education (QCE) system. The familiar challenges of flood disruption and pandemic restrictions were managed, and the system continued to mature regardless.

We have now accumulated three years of assessment information, and our growing experience of the new system is helping us to deliver more authentic learning experiences for students. An independent evaluation will commence in 2023 so that we can better understand how well the system is achieving its goals and, as required, make strategic improvements. The subject reports are a good example of what is available for the evaluators to use in their research.

This report analyses the summative assessment cycle for the past year — from endorsing internal assessment instruments to confirming internal assessment marks, and marking external assessment. It also gives readers information about:

- how schools have applied syllabus objectives in the design and marking of internal assessments
- how syllabus objectives have been applied in the marking of external assessments
- patterns of student achievement.

The report promotes continuous improvement by:

- identifying effective practices in the design and marking of valid, accessible and reliable assessments
- recommending where and how to enhance the design and marking of valid, accessible and reliable assessment instruments
- providing examples, including those that demonstrate best practice.

Schools are encouraged to reflect on the effective practices identified for each assessment, consider the recommendations to strengthen assessment design and explore the authentic student work samples provided.

Audience and use

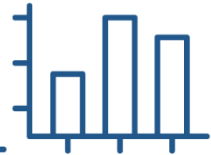
This report should be read by school leaders, subject leaders and teachers to:

- inform teaching and learning and assessment preparation
- assist in assessment design practice
- assist in making assessment decisions
- help prepare students for external assessment.

The report is publicly available to promote transparency and accountability. Students, parents, community members and other education stakeholders can use it to learn about the assessment practices and outcomes for General subjects (including alternative sequences (AS) and Senior External Examination (SEE) subjects, where relevant) and General (Extension) subjects.

Report preparation

The report includes analyses of data and other information from endorsement, confirmation and external assessment processes. It also includes advice from the chief confirmer, chief endorser and chief marker, developed in consultation with and support from QCAA subject matter experts.



Subject completion

The following data includes students who completed the General subject or AS.

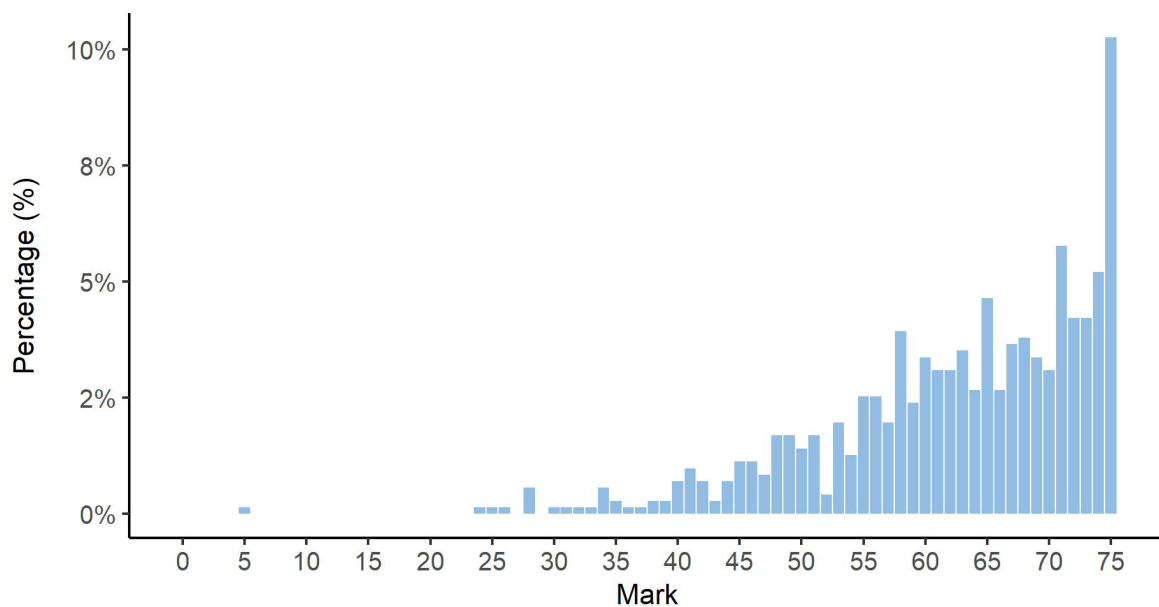
Note: All data is correct as at 31 January 2023. Where percentages are provided, these are rounded to two decimal places and, therefore, may not add up to 100%.

Number of schools that offered the subject: 68.

Completion of units	Units 3 and 4
Number of students completed	710

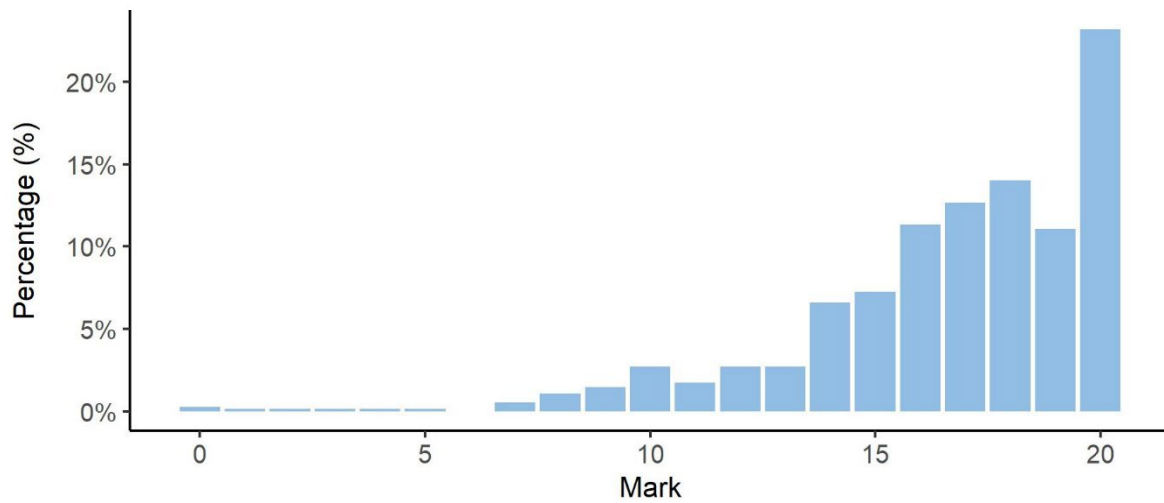
Units 3 and 4 internal assessment (IA) results

Total marks for IA

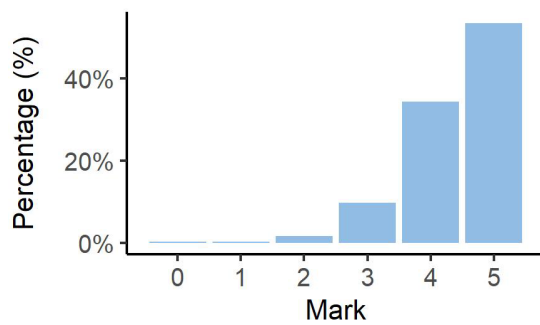


IA1 marks

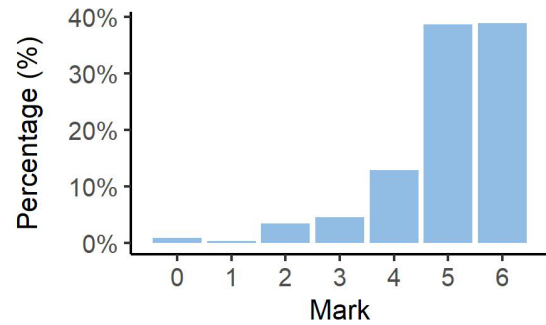
IA1 total



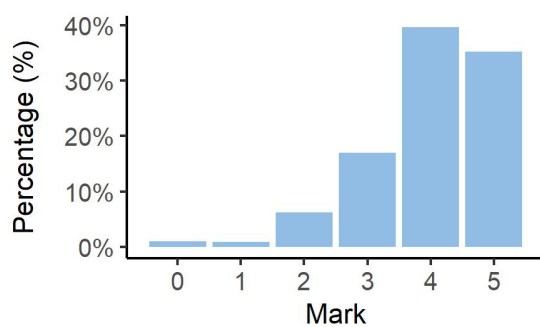
IA1 Criterion: Understanding and analysis of literary texts



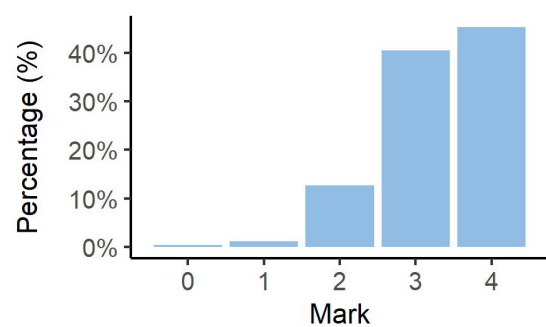
IA1 Criterion: Understanding and application of theories



IA1 Criterion: Evaluation and synthesis

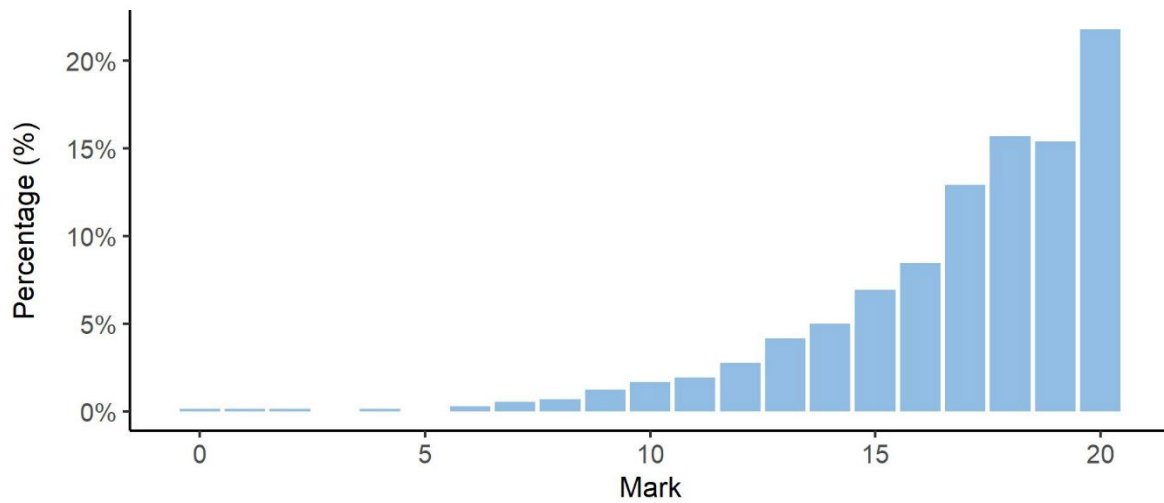


IA1 Criterion: Controlling textual features and conventions

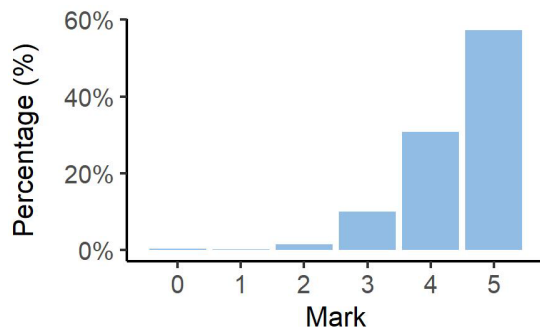


IA2 marks

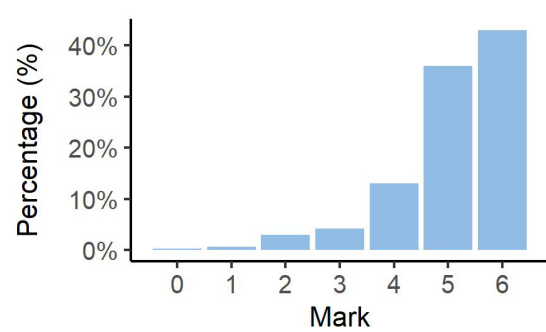
IA2 total



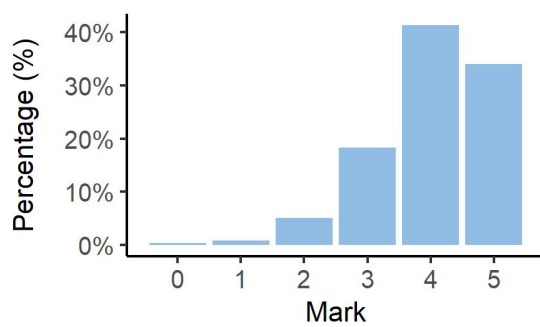
IA2 Criterion: Understanding and analysis of literary texts



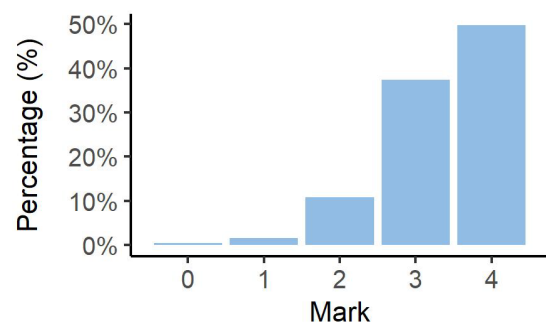
IA2 Criterion: Understanding and application of theories



IA2 Criterion: Evaluation and synthesis

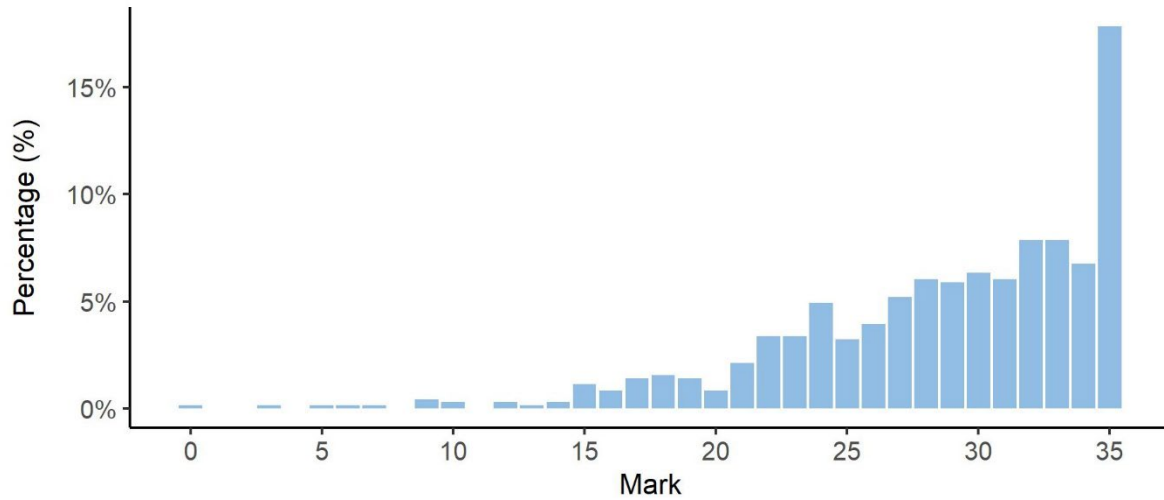


IA2 Criterion: Controlling textual features and conventions

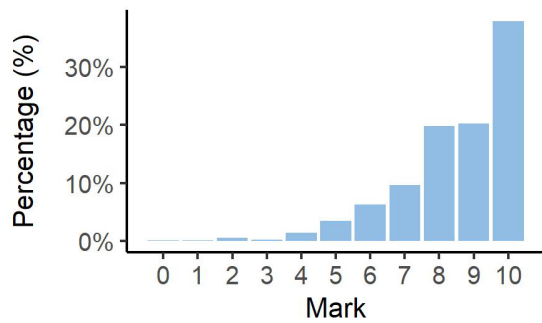


IA3 marks

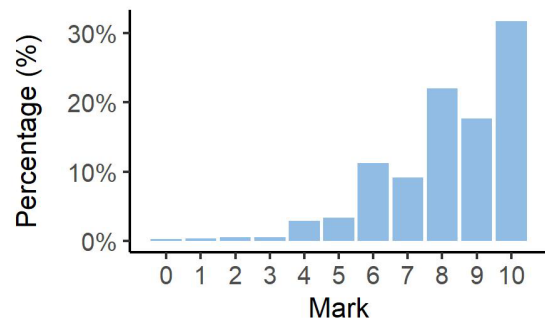
IA3 total



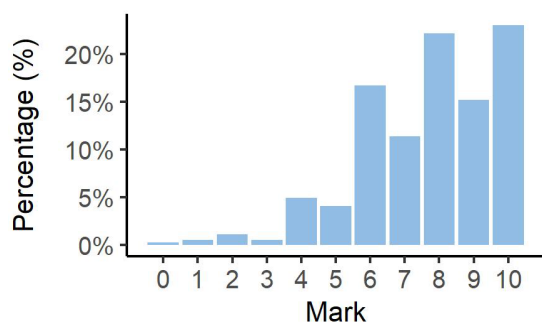
IA3 Criterion: Understanding and analysis of literary texts



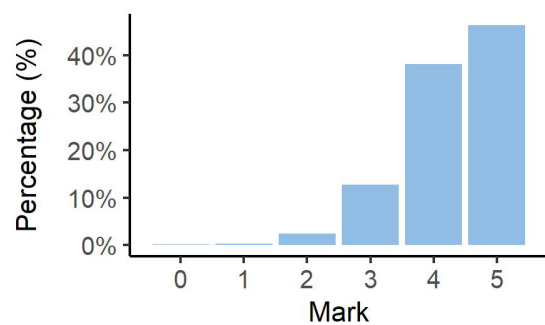
IA3 Criterion: Understanding and application of theories



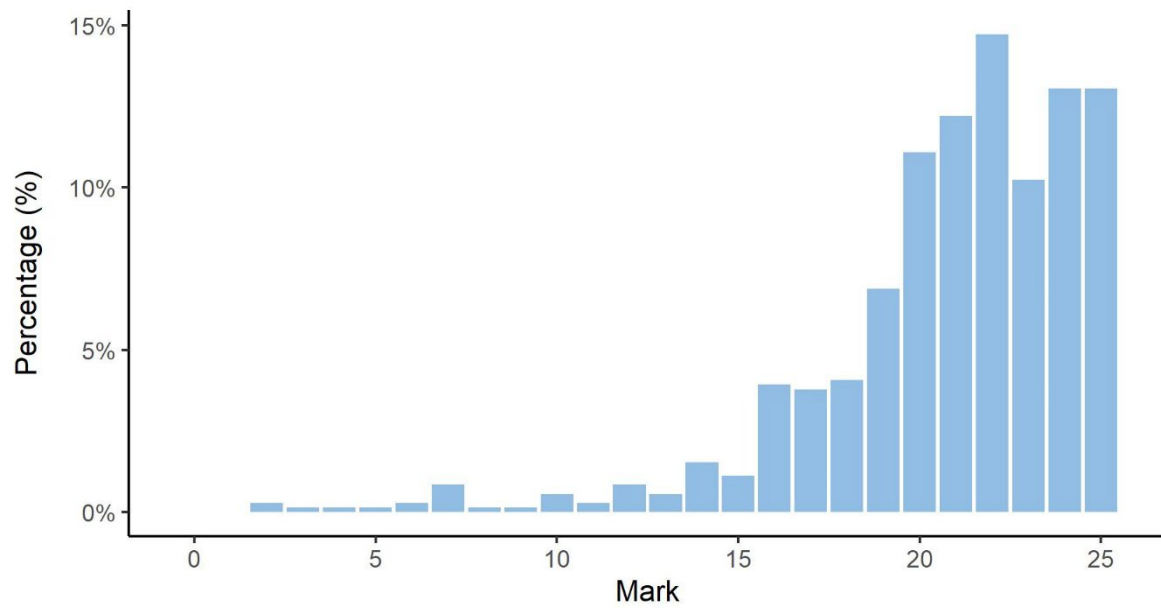
IA3 Criterion: Evaluation and synthesis



IA3 Criterion: Controlling textual features and conventions



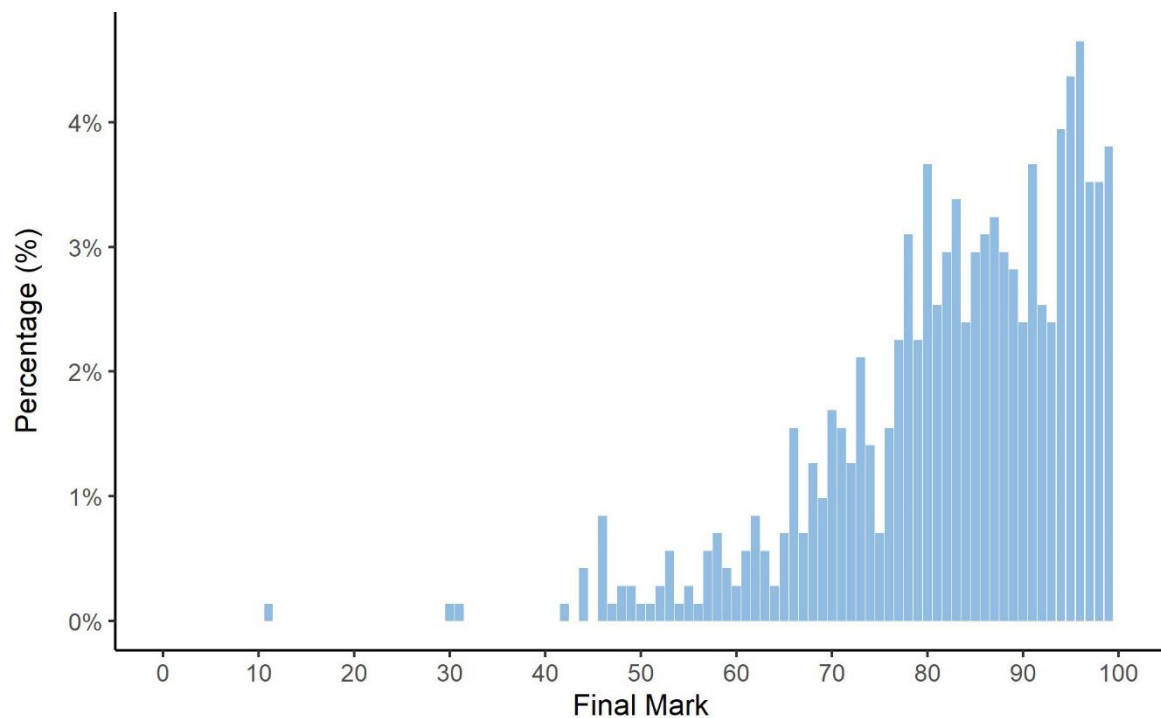
External assessment (EA) marks



Final subject results

Final marks for IA and EA

68



Grade boundaries

The grade boundaries are determined using a process to compare results on a numeric scale to the reporting standards.

Standard	A	B	C	D	E
Marks achieved	100–84	83–64	63–44	43–17	16–0

Distribution of standards

The number of students who achieved each standard across the state is as follows.

Standard	A	B	C	D	E
Number of students	397	255	54	3	1

Internal assessment



The following information and advice relate to the assessment design and assessment decisions for each IA in Units 3 and 4. These instruments have undergone quality assurance processes informed by the attributes of quality assessment (validity, accessibility and reliability).

Endorsement

Endorsement is the quality assurance process based on the attributes of validity and accessibility. These attributes are categorised further as priorities for assessment, and each priority can be further broken down into assessment practices.

Data presented in the Assessment design section identifies the reasons why IA instruments were not endorsed at Application 1, by the priority for assessments. An IA may have been identified more than once for a priority for assessment, e.g. it may have demonstrated a misalignment to both the subject matter and the assessment objective/s.

Refer to *QCE and QCIA policy and procedures handbook v4.0*, Section 9.5.

Percentage of instruments endorsed in Application 1

Number of instruments submitted	IA1	IA2	IA3
Total number of instruments	73	73	71
Percentage endorsed in Application 1	24%	30%	66%

Confirmation

Confirmation is the quality assurance process based on the attribute of reliability. The QCAA uses provisional criterion marks determined by teachers to identify the samples of student responses that schools are required to submit for confirmation.

Confirmation samples are representative of the school's decisions about the quality of student work in relation to the instrument-specific marking guide (ISMG), and are used to make decisions about the cohort's results.

Refer to *QCE and QCIA policy and procedures handbook v4.0*, Section 9.6.

The following table includes the percentage agreement between the provisional marks and confirmed marks by assessment instrument. The Assessment decisions section of this report for each assessment instrument identifies the agreement trends between provisional and confirmed marks by criterion.

Number of samples reviewed and percentage agreement

IA	Number of schools	Number of samples requested	Number of additional samples requested	Percentage agreement with provisional marks
1	68	380	8	88.24%
2	68	377	13	92.65%
3	68	374	0	92.65%



Extended response — reading and defence (20%)

The extended response focuses on applying particular aspects of either the reader-centred or author-centred theoretical approach to a text to produce a reading and an accompanying defence. In a reading, students make meaning of a literary text by applying interpretive strategies associated with a particular theoretical approach. In a defence, students analyse the reading they have produced, applying and evaluating aspects and strategies of the theoretical approach and explaining how the theoretical approach used has allowed them to make meaning of the text in particular ways.

Assessment design

Validity

Validity in assessment design considers the extent to which an assessment item accurately measures what it is intended to measure and that the evidence of student learning collected from an assessment can be legitimately used for the purpose specified in the syllabus.

Reasons for non-endorsement by priority of assessment

Validity priority	Number of times priority was identified in decisions*
Alignment	54
Authentication	0
Authenticity	1
Item construction	3
Scope and scale	0

*Each priority might contain up to four assessment practices.

Total number of submissions: 73.

Effective practices

Validity priorities were effectively demonstrated in assessment instruments that:

- used the task description and scaffolding directions to direct students to complete all assessment objective cognitions in the reading, e.g. *analyse*, and to direct how the genre, structure and textual features of the selected text supported the students' interpretation
- defined cognitions consistently throughout the task description and scaffolding, e.g. did not change *analyse* to *explain* in the task description or scaffolding
- used scaffolding to give practical steps for approaching the task, and did not repeat or redefine the task requirements, e.g. scaffolding offered a chronological way of approaching the preparation of both a reading and a defence

- followed the specifications in the syllabus to design the task and remain within scope and scale, e.g. students were directed specifically to complete a reading and defence as separate written documents
- contextualised the task to specify an audience with sufficient academic rigour, ensuring the ability to achieve Assessment objectives 6 and 7, e.g. tasks that name and define the publication details and audience for the reading and defence ensure students use textual features appropriate to a theorised, extended analytical response with appropriate patterns and conventions of academic genres and communication, including correct terminology, citation and referencing conventions.

Practices to strengthen

It is recommended that assessment instruments:

- specify that two types of evaluation are required to complete the task, e.g. in the defence, evaluate *both* those aspects of theory that were used to explore the reading of the complex literary text (Assessment objective 8) *and* the reading of the complex literary text, making explicit the aspects of the theoretical approach that underpin it (Assessment objective 9)
- specify that a reading requires students to analyse how the genre, structure and textual features of the selected complex literary text support a valid interpretation
- specify an academic audience for the reading and defence, e.g. a literary journal or a film magazine. The audience does not need to be the same for the reading and the defence
- provide opportunities for students to explore texts independently, e.g. offer direction in terms of the types of texts that are most suited to the task requirements, but permit independent text selection to allow for unique student responses
- use the language of the syllabus, e.g. 'reading' and 'defence'.

Accessibility

Accessibility in assessment design ensures that no student or group of students is disadvantaged in their capacity to access an assessment.

Reasons for non-endorsement by priority of assessment

Accessibility priority	Number of times priority was identified in decisions*
Bias avoidance	0
Language	3
Layout	0
Transparency	4

*Each priority might contain up to four assessment practices.

Total number of submissions: 73.

Effective practices

Accessibility priorities were effectively demonstrated in assessment instruments that:

- used task design to indicate the different cognitions and steps required for both a reading and a defence, e.g. tasks that clarify that the reading requires *analysis* and the defence requires *evaluation* under headings, such as 'reading' and 'defence'

- defined the purpose of a reading and a defence so that students can make language choices to meet that purpose
- used clear language and terminology that cued students to complete all assessable elements of the task.

Practices to strengthen

It is recommended that assessment instruments:

- use task design to provide clear steps for processes and clarify task requirements, e.g. avoid one block of writing to describe the creation of a reading and a defence
- use task design that separates the conceptual demands of the reading and the defence to indicate to students that the task has two distinct parts (which can have two audiences)
- describe the steps of scaffolding in a clear and chronological way, avoiding unnecessary repetition and jargon, particularly when the task description is brief and directly copied from the syllabus
- always include scaffolding.

Additional advice

- Explain the genre, specifying that a reading is not a review, and allowing opportunities to demonstrate Assessment objectives 6 and 7.
- Provide direction that specifies students write in first person (specifically for the reader-centred reading and the defences) to allow for opportunities to demonstrate Assessment objective 6.

Assessment decisions

Reliability

Reliability is a judgment about the measurements of assessment. It refers to the extent to which the results of assessments are consistent, replicable and free from error.

Agreement trends between provisional and confirmed marks

Criterion number	Criterion name	Percentage agreement with provisional	Percentage less than provisional	Percentage greater than provisional	Percentage both less and greater than provisional
1	Understanding and analysis of literary texts	94.12%	0%	5.88%	0%
2	Understanding and application of theories	91.18%	4.41%	2.94%	1.47%
3	Evaluation and synthesis	94.12%	2.94%	2.94%	0%
4	Controlling textual features and conventions	92.65%	2.94%	4.41%	0%

Effective practices

Accuracy and consistency of the application of the ISMG for this IA was most effective when:

- for the Understanding and analysis of literary texts criterion, judgments for the *discerning* performance levels in Assessment objectives 1 and 5 were matched to the following characteristics in student responses
 - readings that communicated and developed a perceptive overall interpretation of the selected complex literary text. This interpretation was a conclusion drawn about the text's meaning from either an author-centred or reader-centred approach to analysis. Often this was evident in the form of a thesis statement which was also used to synthesise ideas. Alternatively, it may have been arrived at in the conclusion of the reading, as a result of the exploration of the text.
 - readings that examined how genre, structure and textual features within the selected text support a distinctive interpretation, through the use of well-considered and detailed evidence
- for the Understanding and application of theories criterion, judgments for the *discerning* performance levels in Assessment objectives 2, 3 and 4 were matched to the following characteristics in student responses
 - reader-centred readings that explicitly connected interpretations of the text to the individual student (as the reader) and their context. In these readings, analysis of the text was constructed with recognition of how the reader's knowledge, experiences, habits, expectations, beliefs and/or values have developed a transaction between text and reader
 - author-centred readings that explicitly connected interpretations of the text to the author/s and their context. In these readings, analysis of the text was constructed with recognition of how the author's signature, biography, sociocultural and historical context, intentions (if available) and/or influences have shaped interpretations
 - defences that explicitly examined the way readings created interpretations of the text, using first-person analysis of the interpretive strategies associated with their theoretical approach
 - readings that enacted specific practices and interpretive strategies associated with the author-centred or reader-centred approach to generate an interpretation of the text. This subsequently enabled defences to develop a theorised examination of the reading, e.g.
 - in the reader-centred approach, a reading may have established and analysed the link between the text and the individual student's prior understanding and experiences with the text's genre. In the defence, this could be examined with concepts related to intertextuality and interpretive communities
 - in the author-centred approach, a reading may have established and analysed the link between the text and the author's sociohistorical context to generate an interpretation. In the defence, this could be examined with concepts related to New Historicism or idioculture
- for the Evaluation and synthesis criterion, judgments for the *discerning* performance levels in Assessment objectives 8, 9 and 10 were matched to the following characteristics in student responses
 - defences that made explicit the aspects of the theoretical approach underpinning the reading and evaluated how these affected interpretation. These defences used specific quotations from their reading to demonstrate the interpretive strategies and aligned these to theoretical concepts/quotations.

- defences that focused on the meta-knowledge of textual and reading practices, making judgments about the merit and usefulness of interpretive strategies associated with the chosen theoretical approach. Specific appraisal of the strengths, implications and/or limitations of these reading practices on the development of meaning allowed responses to demonstrate evaluation objectives at a discerning performance level. For example, defences might examine how
 - the reader-centred approach enabled the student to draw upon aspects of their cultural repertoire to fill gaps left in the text, but also subsequently question the extent to which their interpretation is ‘individual’ as a result of this discursively produced reading
 - the author-centred approach prompted the student to focus on the constructedness of the text to generate an interpretation, emphasising the author’s generic and stylistic signature. This focus may accentuate interpretations which align more to the author’s body of work than the individual text on its own
- readings and defences that were synthesised through the production of two separate, coherent extended analytical responses, in which
 - the reading drew together relevant analysis of a literary text and supporting evidence to produce an overall interpretation by enacting interpretive strategies associated with the reader-centred or author-centred approach
 - the defence drew together relevant analysis and evaluation of the reading’s theoretical underpinnings to produce an appraisal of the reader-centred or author-centred approach to interpretation. This was developed through the use of supporting evidence (e.g. alignment of quotations from the reading to theoretical concepts/quotations)
- for the Controlling textual features and conventions criterion, judgments for *discerning* performance levels in Assessment objectives 6 and 7 were matched to the following characteristics in student responses:
 - readings and defences used patterns and conventions of appropriate academic genres (such as the analytical essay) with consistency
 - defences used specific and accurate academic terminology that was selected for relevance to the theoretical approach and the concepts or aspects being applied.

Samples of effective practices

The following excerpt demonstrates precise and discriminating analysis of the text *Rebecca* through the reader-centred approach. The response employs a range of textual evidence to support a personalised interpretation, written in first person. Specific links are made to the individual reader’s context. The defence demonstrates precise and discriminating understanding of theory and application of specific aspects of reader-centred concepts to the reading, to produce a theorised examination of interpretive strategies. Evaluation is explicit throughout the response as it makes an appraisal of the implications of reader-centred interpretive strategies on meaning making.

Note: The characteristics identified may not be the only time the characteristics have occurred throughout a response.

Excerpt 1

Reader-Centred Reading – Rebecca

With twentieth century gender attitudes in mind, I expected Alfred Hitchcock’s *Rebecca* to stereotype its female leads in line with classic 1940s cinema. While correct in my prediction, the ambiguity of the characters’ intentions allowed for a deeper exploration of the unconscious behaviours of women. As a result, the film communicated to me that social comparisons between women encourages aesthetic and psychological competition, further stimulating unhealthy obsessions and destructive insecurities. To reach this understanding, I relied upon the personal, cultural and textual influences that have shaped my outlook on gender roles.

By responding to the text’s consistent misogynistic gibes, I extracted a parallel between the physical expressions of a woman and her vulnerability to humiliation and degradation. Mrs de Winter is made overtly aware of how she supposedly “lack[s]” the features the now-dead Rebecca was applauded for, listing “beauty” as her biggest insecurity. After watching this attitude dominate the film, I am troubled by how women continually fail to appreciate our own bodies, instead preoccupying ourselves with disproportionately “comparing” our “disadvantage[s]” to the assets of others. To this day, an ingrained culture of competition is maintained through beauty pageants, normalising the ‘objective’ judgement of the attractiveness of women. Media that I have absorbed in the past stimulated this philosophy, with *Insatiable*’s protagonist coerced into an eating disorder and murder to one-up her competitors. Similarly, Mrs de Winter is told by her own husband that “even in the same dress, you couldn’t compare,” exemplifying how a simple, hurtful barb promotes the commonly held view that the ‘body makes the woman.’ Ironically, however, the wife is told earlier that her own clothes give off the impression that she “doesn’t care a hoot” about appearances, leaving her trapped in an inescapable circle of mortification. Personally, I have fallen victim to these ‘who wore it better’ competitions in magazines. By pitting two successful female celebrities against one another, the scrutiny of women’s bodies is normalised for the benefit of entertainment. To me, *Rebecca* explores how unfair comparisons between women traps us in the pursuit of an intangible perfection – an ideal that symbolises how psychological competition leaves no winner.

My understanding of the double-standard constructed and enforced by men was not only supported by this film, but furthered. Mrs de Winter is continually critiqued for being a “placid little thing” with a tendency for docility, yet Rebecca’s character – who flaunted her sexuality confidently – is also punished by her husband for being ‘too’ assertive. Unable to overcome the contradicting standards, the two wives are pushed into an inescapable corner of judgement and condemnation. Considering this allows men to continue to dictate the features they desire in a woman, I am left infuriated by the acceptance of blatant, unchallenged sexism. In my 2022 context, the workplace criticises women who are either overtly ambitious or apathetic, contributing to the scarcity of female leadership positions. In doing so, a nasty rivalry is stimulated, further inhibiting professional development. While teenage entertainment programs such as *Gossip Girl* and *Mean Girls* encourage these bitter and vicious attitudes, the fictional young girls are ironically tormented by terms such as ‘bickering’ and ‘cat-fight,’ trivialising disagreements amongst women. Furthermore, Rebecca’s ghostly influence is both limited to and manipulated by the version of femininity upheld by her husband, making her an ever-present symbol of the patriarchy’s ideologies. Her power is further constrained by her intangibility – in being reduced to a “shadow”, her presence is rendered fleeting and insubstantial. Comparatively, by presenting herself as “funny, young and lost,” Mrs de Winter represents the very feminine subjectivity that threatens the ethereal, yet somewhat sinister image of Rebecca. By allowing men to dictate feminine values, we remain confined to damaging rivalries that merely support out-dated patriarchal stereotypes and restrict individuality.

Finally, *Rebecca* illustrates and affirms the female stereotype that we resort to hostility when challenged within a domestic sphere, allowing our actions to be controlled by jealousy. Mr de Winter permits Mrs Danvers’ hostile and “resentful” greeting to his new wife, accepting that she is “bound to be insanely jealous.” Considering the housekeeper actively manufactures competition, she is unintentionally upholding patriarchal ideologies out of resentment. Much like Love Quinn in the series *You*, the two women are steered by the rivalry they create psychologically, becoming possessive ‘gate-keepers.’ Mrs Danvers closely guards the “secretive and silent” symbol of Manderley, clinging to an embodiment of past patriarchal ideals. Driven to overcome the “shadow” of her predecessor, Mrs de Winter wholeheartedly subjects herself to this competition and thus jeopardises her marriage. This concept is mirrored within my high-school environment, where harsh insults and destroyed friendships become the by-products of a competition for the same guy. While the declaration that she is “Mrs

de Winter now” symbolises the protagonist’s newfound assertiveness, it contains a deep-rooted undertone of objectification – she is not an individual with agency, but rather a replacement wife who must fight for the likes of men. The silenced first-name of Mrs de Winter denies self-autonomy, while Rebecca’s embroidered initial on all household objects signifies the lingering, disruptive presence she maintains, echoed by modern-day obsessive text messages. Ultimately, jealousy appears to drive us women to damaging lengths to attempt to regain our agency – an objective that, while well-intentioned, often attracts immorality.

Considering my deeply ingrained feminist ideologies, it was inevitable that *Rebecca* would equip me with ammunition to further critique out-dated patriarchal views. It was my observation of other teenaged girls within a school setting, however, that led me to interpret femininity through a new lens. By excessively promoting aesthetic and psychological competition amongst women, men can better manipulate and uphold their understanding of femininity in the hopes of maintaining a semblance of control. That is, when we allow jealousy-fuelled rivalries and insensitive comparisons to overpower the goals of feminism, we are contributing to the insecurities that have plagued our gender for centuries.

Reader-centred Defence – *Rebecca*

By adopting a reader-centred approach to *Rebecca*, I determined that “aesthetic and psychological competition [stimulate] unhealthy obsessions and destructive insecurities.” However, in attempting to facilitate “personal connections with the text” (Routman cited in Bluestein, 2002, p. 431), I instead allowed the line between individual and cultural interpretation to be blurred. This prompted me to question the reliability of a subjective reader-response, as the arrival at personalised meaning is fluid and susceptible to external bias. To reach this determination, I relied upon various theories involving psychological, textual and sociocultural foundations.

When attempting to construct a personalised reader-centred response, I drifted between “different points on the efferent/aesthetic continuum” (Rosenblatt, 1982, p. 124) and thus exposed my “psychological complexity” (Castano, et al., 2016, p. 3) as an individual. Initially, I approached the film intending to “explor[e]...the unconscious behaviours of women” at a purely analytical level, aligning myself with Rosenblatt’s concept of the “efferent reader” (Rosenblatt, 1982, p. 124). By focusing “predominantly on what is to be retained after the reading event” (ibid), I suppressed the subjective relationship between the text’s “sound and rhythm” (Rosenblatt, 1991, p. 444) and my “unique reservoir...[of] past experiences” (Rosenblatt, 1982, p. 123). However, this cognitive attitude was ultimately overshadowed by the influence of my “memories of past events” (Beach, 1993, p. 129), including having previously “fallen victim” to competitions that normalise “the scrutiny of women’s bodies.” In gravitating towards recent events, my “experiential perspective” (ibid, p. 49) elicits irreplicable emotional responses such as “frustrat[ion]”, thus subjecting my interpretation to instability. Additionally, my experiences provoke “purely emotive” (Beardsley & Wimsatt, 1949, p. 32) responses that left me “infuriated by the acceptance of blatant, unchallenged sexism” within the text. As a result, I transitioned into a reliance upon the “inner tensions, sensations [and] feelings” (Rosenblatt, 1982, p. 124) that command the aesthetic reader. This surrender to the “psychological effects” triggered by *Rebecca* is governed by my “particular mood of the moment” (Rosenblatt, 1938, p. 30), thereby limiting my ability to “duplicat[e]” (ibid) these interpretations within the future. Consequently, the contingent nature of emotive interpretation prevents the formation of definitive meaning within the reader-centred approach, rendering my response a product of a distinct point in time.

After analysing the text with a reliance upon “media that I have absorbed in the past”, I concluded that personalised messages are dictated by the influence of external literature. In recognising how both *Rebecca* and “teenage entertainment programs...trivialis[e] disagreements amongst women,” I allowed the “relationality [and] interconnectedness” (Allen cited in Martin, 2011, p. 148) of fiction to influence my discoveries. In doing so, an intricate overlap is created between what analysis is purely ‘mine’ and what is heavily mediated by my prior engagement in literature. This reliance upon how “the similar can be known through the similar” (Eco, 1990, p. 24) resulted in the formation of a predisposed interpretation, rather than a reflective one. Furthermore, by exploring Mrs Danvers’ intertextual similarity to “Love Quinn in the series *You*,” their “interdependence” (Allen cited in Martin, 2011, p. 148) streamlined my conclusion that she is “unintentionally upholding patriarchal ideologies out of resentment.” As a result, the opportunity and scope for unique interpretation is seemingly prevented, as my predispositions narrow my ability to obtain meaning. Similarly, having approached the text with the pre-exposure to “classic 1940s cinema” of an “informed reader” (Fish cited in Bennett, 1995), I was able to reflect back on the “out-dated patriarchal views” within the novel. While this generational distance enabled my recognition of old-fashioned “stereotyp[ing]”, my dogged focus on evidencing these representations saw me assume a streamlined approach to the text. Resultingly, the openness of the reader-centred approach is extensively lost through my reference to and reliance upon a “mosaic” (Kristeva cited in Martin, 2011, p. 148) of fictitious sources.

Though the division between sociocultural and personal interpretation is “theoretically distinguishable” (Rosenblatt, 1938, p. 31), Rosenblatt emphasises that their close intersection renders them “actually inseparable” (ibid). While I intended to interrelate the text to myself as an individual, I was instead shaped by the “commonly held view[s]” that I absorb through the “changing array of interlapping, overlapping, and often contradictory cultural systems” (Attridge, 2017, p. 22) present in my “idioculture” (ibid). While Attridge emphasises that “individuality is not exhausted” (ibid) by this stimulus, my analysis is a product of both my upbringing and my social inclinations, thereby affirming the exclusivity of personal and cultural interpretation. Considering

“interpretive communities...share interpretive strategies [for] understanding literary works” (Fish, 1976, p. 483), *Rebecca* weaponised my condemnation of the “excessiv[e] promoti[on of] aesthetic and psychological competition amongst women.” However, the fluidity of my involvement in these various communities is characterised by the social context and values of the time, thus making my interpretation unstable and transient. Owing to my loyalty to these “prior ideological commitments” (Barry, 1995, p. 32-34), “I expected...*Rebecca* to stereotype its female leads...with twentieth century gender attitudes in mind.” In adopting Jaus’s “horizon of expectations” (Brooker, et al., 2005, p. 53), when adhering to the “criteria readers use to judge texts” (ibid), my pre-determined critical attitude confined my analysis to that of a narrow discourse. Ultimately, any personal interpretation founded through the reader-centred approach is discursive in nature and infused with sociocultural ideologies that are not exclusively ‘mine’.

In exercising various psychological, textual and sociocultural literary theories, my reading of *Rebecca* was moulded by factors that extended beyond my conscious intentions. Accordingly, forming a purely individualised interpretation of a text can be considered unfeasible, owing to our increasing susceptibility to the persuasion of external sources. When approaching a text through a reader-centred methodology, “dependen[ce] on social and political forces [generates] shifting, multi-faceted and ambiguous” (Barry, 1995, p. 34-35) analysis. As a result, readers must consider the tentative and intricate nature of this approach when analysing a text, as both individuals and literature are shaped by ever-changing ideologies.

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Practices to strengthen

To further ensure accuracy and consistency of the application of the ISMG for this IA, it is recommended that:

- when making judgments about the Understanding and analysis of literary texts criterion at performance levels 4 and 5, consideration should be given to the extent to which the reading demonstrates a distinct and valid interpretation of the text that has been developed through analysis of relevant genre, structure and textual features. Evidence for this criterion should be found in the reading and not in the defence. A response's understanding of theoretical approaches and their associated reading practices does not need to be considered when making judgments for this criterion
- when making judgments about the Understanding and application of theories criterion at performance levels 5 and 6, consideration should be given to the extent to which

- the reading enacts or demonstrates interpretive strategies associated with the reader-centred or author-centred theoretical approach and uses these strategies to generate an interpretation of the text
- the defence systematically explores the reading using meta-knowledge of reading practices. Evidence for this criterion should be found through the defence’s application of relevant aspects of theory to quotations from the reading. At *discerning* or *effective* performance levels, application of theory should move beyond establishing or proving links between the reading and theoretical concepts which underpin it. Instead, the defence should use these links purposefully to develop a theorised examination of the interpretive strategies used, which recognises the interrelationships between theoretical concepts
- when making judgments about the Evaluation and synthesis criterion
 - at performance levels 4 and 5, consideration should be given to the extent to which the student response demonstrates specific and explicit appraisal of how the reading practices associated with the author-centred or reader-centred approaches strengthened, limited or influenced interpretations. Evidence of this will be demonstrated through a student’s first-person examination of the significance, effect or impact of interpretive strategies on the development of meaning, and judgments about the merit or usefulness of the theoretical approach for the purpose of interpreting literary texts.
 - Evidence for Assessment objectives 8 and 9 should be found in the defence and not in the reading
- when making judgments about the Controlling textual features and conventions criterion at performance levels 3 and 4, consideration should be given to the extent to which the student response demonstrates each objective holistically. The best-fit approach should be used when assessing all objectives. Minor, infrequent errors in citation and referencing do not necessarily prevent a response from being discerning in Assessment objective 6, for example.

Additional advice

- Support students to
 - be clear that the two parts of the assessment response must be kept separate and should not be combined.
 - understand and know how to make the theoretical approach selected for the internal assessment clear and explicit in both the reading and defence
 - realise that 1500–2000 words is the total word range, including reading, defence and all quotations.
- Ensure students understand that the reading
 - if taking a reader-centred approach, should be written in first person without referring to an abstract or hypothetical reader’s possible interpretations. Instead, they should be specific and clear about how the interpretation of the text has been personally generated by the individual student, with recognition of a variety of personal influences (e.g. experiential, sociocultural and/or intertextual). A distinct interpretation of the text should be supported through textual analysis connected to the individual student and their context. Overemphasis of expectations prior to reading and levels of dis/engagement while reading the text can prevent students from generating specific interpretations of the text. Students should be encouraged to choose a text they find meaningful and can connect with on a personal level.
 - if taking an author-centred approach, should be written predominantly in third person. An author-centred reading should go beyond identifying the author within the text, and instead

generate an interpretation that stems from analysis of the ties between the text and authorship. Authorship does not need to be tied to a sole author and, particularly in the case of film texts, may consider the collaborative nature of authorship, or the ways that authors have been discursively influenced.

- Provide opportunities in the teaching and learning cycle for students to consider the syllabus glossary definitions for *interpret*, *evaluate*, *readings*, and *defence*, and how they are contextually relevant to IA1. In this context, it is important to note that *defence* does not imply the need to ‘defend’ or ‘justify’ aspects of the reading, but instead means to critically *analyse* and *evaluate* the reading and how a theoretical approach has been used to make meaning of the text in particular ways.
- Ensure students understand that the defence
 - whether author-centred or reader-centred, should be written in first person to provide students with the opportunity to explicitly refer to the reading practices and interpretive strategies they used within their reading, and evaluate how these affected meaning making.
 - is not designed to reanalyse the text and should not provide additional interpretations or duplicate analysis from the reading. Instead, the defence should analyse the reading that has been produced. This involves metacognition and meta-knowledge of reading practices, where students explain how meaning has been negotiated by citing key moments from their reading and exploring the theoretical underpinnings of these interpretive strategies. In doing so, a defence should evaluate the strengths, limitations or implications of the reading approach. It is important that during the teaching and learning cycle students practise this metacognitive analysis before preparing their IA1 response.



Extended response — complex transformation and defence (20%)

Students select a literary text suited to the demands of the assessment instrument (and different from the text selected for internal assessment 1). They select and apply aspects and strategies from text-centred and world-context-centred theoretical approaches to intervene in this selected base text, or part of the text, to create a complex transformation. In a complex transformation, the rewritten text invites alternative and/or resistant readings other than those the base text seems to invite. Alternative and resistant readings require students to move beyond merely inverting the base text's ideologies. Transformations must relate to repositioning the reader in a purposeful way and must be theoretically defensible.

Assessment design

Validity

Validity in assessment design considers the extent to which an assessment item accurately measures what it is intended to measure and that the evidence of student learning collected from an assessment can be legitimately used for the purpose specified in the syllabus.

Reasons for non-endorsement by priority of assessment

Validity priority	Number of times priority was identified in decisions*
Alignment	49
Authentication	1
Authenticity	5
Item construction	5
Scope and scale	5

*Each priority might contain up to four assessment practices.

Total number of submissions: 73.

Effective practices

Validity priorities were effectively demonstrated in assessment instruments that:

- specified the syllabus requirement for the transformation to intervene in the base text and produce a discursive shift, e.g. 'Alternative and resistant readings require students to make an ideological shift that moves beyond mere inversion'
- specified assessable cognitions in the task description and the scaffolding, e.g. used the cognitions (*analyse, apply, evaluate, synthesise*) when describing the task requirements
- prescribed an appropriate context and audience for the spoken defence, and the transformation, thus providing an authentic context for the demonstration of Assessment objectives 6 and 7

- used scaffolding to provide steps that direct students to the achievement of Assessment objective 3, i.e. how students can demonstrate an understanding of the relationships among and within text-centred and world-context-centred theoretical approaches.

Practices to strengthen

It is recommended that assessment instruments:

- specify an appropriate audience so that objective 7 can be demonstrated, e.g. a writers' festival audience, a literary panel or editorial panel
- specify the need for referencing, bibliographies and citations so that Assessment objective 6 is appropriately met. The mode of delivery (speech) does not exclude standard academic textual features
- use scaffolding that provides instructions for the achievement of objectives and a chronological explanation of steps to follow.

Accessibility

Accessibility in assessment design ensures that no student or group of students is disadvantaged in their capacity to access an assessment.

Reasons for non-endorsement by priority of assessment

Accessibility priority	Number of times priority was identified in decisions*
Bias avoidance	0
Language	1
Layout	0
Transparency	1

*Each priority might contain up to four assessment practices.

Total number of submissions: 73.

Effective practices

Accessibility priorities were effectively demonstrated in assessment instruments that:

- specified the need for three separate files to demonstrate all aspects of the task — a video of the spoken presentation of the defence, a script and the complex transformation
- specified the need for a discursive shift in the transformation, not a mere inversion, thus ensuring alternative and resistant readings (Syllabus section 2.5.2)
- specified that the defence is the assessed component of the task, e.g. language to clarify that the complex transformation is not the focus of the task
- used language and task design that communicated the key aspects of the assessment, e.g. 'This assessment has two parts: a written or multimodal transformation, and a spoken defence'.

Practices to strengthen

It is recommended that assessment instruments:

- use language in the scaffolding to contextualise the cognitions required, e.g. 'Analyse the way the genre, structure and textual features of your base text work together to shape

interpretation of the text' or 'Analyse how genre, structure and textual features have created textual meaning in transformation'

- utilise task design to separate the conceptual demands of the complex transformation and the defence, making the steps of the task clearer to students by using bullet points, headings and spacing
- ensure that scaffolding does not mislead students into producing reader-centred or author-centred readings of their base text.

Additional advice

- Provide opportunities for unique student responses by not mandating a base text. Authentication is best met through self-selected texts.
- Provide clear instructions that the complex transformation should not be spoken at the beginning of the presentation or as part of the defence.
- Make clear that transformations need to relate to repositioning the reader in a purposeful way and must be theoretically defensible (Syllabus section 2.5.2).

Assessment decisions

Reliability

Reliability is a judgment about the measurements of assessment. It refers to the extent to which the results of assessments are consistent, replicable and free from error.

Agreement trends between provisional and confirmed marks

Criterion number	Criterion name	Percentage agreement with provisional	Percentage less than provisional	Percentage greater than provisional	Percentage both less and greater than provisional
1	Understanding and analysis of literary texts	97.06%	1.47%	1.47%	0%
2	Understanding and application of theories	94.12%	4.41%	0%	1.47%
3	Evaluation and synthesis	94.12%	4.41%	0%	1.47%
4	Controlling textual features and conventions	98.53%	0%	1.47%	0%

Effective practices

Accuracy and consistency of the application of the ISMG for this IA was most effective when:

- for the Understanding and analysis of literary texts criterion, judgments for the *discerning* performance levels in Assessment objectives 1 and 5 were matched to the following characteristics in student responses

- defences communicated a perceptive overall interpretation of the selected base text, which provided the motivation for the complex transformation and its ideological shift
- detailed and perceptive analysis was produced of both the base text and complex transformation within the defence, through examination of how genre, structure and textual features supported distinctive interpretations. Further, these responses
 - were clear about how analysis of relevant aspects of the base text provided opportunities for intervention and the motivation to reposition the reader in a purposeful way
 - systematically analysed and compared features from the complex transformation to the base text
- for the Understanding and application of theories criterion, judgments for the *discerning* performance levels in Assessment objectives 2, 3 and 4 were matched to the following characteristics in student responses
 - defences that demonstrated precise and detailed understanding of aspects of text-centred and world-context-centred theoretical approaches, which were relevant to both the base text and the complex transformation. These responses moved beyond generalised application of theoretical approaches to apply more specific theoretical concepts, e.g.
 - within the text-centred approach, a defence may have applied specific theoretical concepts from structuralism and semiotics (such as binary oppositions and semiotic denotations and connotations) to the base text in order to reveal the need for textual intervention. These same concepts would then be applied to the transformed text to highlight how it has repositioned readers through an ideological shift (e.g. by challenging the power hierarchy found within a key binary opposition of the base text)
 - within the text-centred approach, a defence may have applied specific theoretical concepts from post-structuralism (such as slippage or trace) to the base text, in order to analyse its contradictions or connotations that prompt the need for an ideological shift. These concepts would then be applied to the transformed text to develop a discriminating comparison (for example, by purposefully foregrounding a trace signifier in the transformation that is implied by the base text, so that readers are positioned to reject it consciously)
 - within the world-context-centred approach, a defence may have applied specific theoretical concepts from the selected approach/es (feminism, Marxism, postcolonial criticism, ecocriticism, queer theory) to explore whose interests are served in the base text, and the political consequences of taking the base text's particular view of the world as natural or preferred. For example, within postcolonial criticism, a response may have applied the concepts of orientalism and subaltern to deconstruct the ways a base text others colonised cultures and identities. These concepts would then be applied to the transformed text to emphasise how readers have been repositioned to reject the representations and ideologies of the base text
- for the Evaluation and synthesis criterion, judgments for the *discerning* performance levels in Assessment objectives 8, 9 and 10 were matched to the following characteristics in student responses
 - defences that specifically evaluated how the text-centred and world-context-centred theoretical approaches allowed students to determine the invited and alternative reading/s of the base text, and the key assumptions and values underpinning these readings
 - defences that assessed the strengths or implications of the alternative reading position offered by the complex transformation, through specific and detailed discussion of how the

theoretical concepts and approaches underpinning their interventions repositioned audiences. This evaluation was discriminating when there was precise alignment between quotations from the base text, complex transformation and theory to emphasise the impact of the textual intervention on readers

- for the Controlling textual features and conventions criterion, judgments for the *discerning* performance levels in Assessment objectives 6 and 7 were matched to the following characteristics in student responses
 - defences used patterns and conventions of appropriate spoken academic genres (such as an academic lecture or presentation) with consistency
 - appropriate citation and referencing conventions were followed with consistency (e.g. in defence script and in presentation slideshow where appropriate)
 - defences used fluent spoken communication and academic register.

Samples of effective practices

The following excerpts demonstrate specific interpretations of the base text that act as motivations for textual intervention, informed by the world-context-centred approach of Marxism.

Excerpt 1 demonstrates precise understanding and application of structuralist concepts to the base text to identify its positioning of readers. These theoretical concepts are applied to the complex transformation to specifically highlight how readers are repositioned to challenge the ideologies of the base text. This excerpt demonstrates discerning understanding and application of text-centred theoretical approaches, which have been used to support the overall ideological shift.

Excerpt 2 demonstrates precise application of aspects of Marxist theory (e.g. hegemony) to the base text and transformation, evaluating how this allowed for the repositioning of readers. Text-centred theoretical concepts and approaches (narratology, focalisation and binaries) are used with precision and detail to support this ideological shift. The excerpt uses specific and frequent direct evidence from the base text and transformation, aligning this analysis to relevant theoretical quotations.

Note: The characteristic/s identified may not be the only time the characteristic/s has occurred throughout a response.

Excerpt 1Defence

The invited reading of *The Three Little Pigs*, as it is presented in *English Fairy Tales* written by Joseph Jacobs (1890), conveys that affluent individuals are worthy of their wealth. 1-1

The fairy tale initially establishes a hierarchy of three pigs with one triumphing over the others. However, the pigs are portrayed as being vastly similar. Each pig "met a man with" a certain material, "built his house," and then engaged in an identical exchange with the wolf (Jacobs, 1890). The only manner in which the text distinguishes the three pigs, besides their chronological appearances, is by the types of material used to construct their homes, namely "straw," "furze" and "bricks," and the outcomes of their encounters with the wolf (ibid). 1-1

These differences may be analysed by employing structuralism, which seeks to "[understand] the larger, abstract structures which contain [texts]" (Barry, 2017). Semiotics, for instance, conducts analysis through the broader structure of language. Ferdinand de Saussure, a prominent semiotician, indicates that words do not intrinsically hold meaning because they are arbitrary, and instead meaning is located in the differences between itself and "the other [words] that surround it" (Saussure, 1916). Because the three materials are "related in function and meaning" in the fairy tale, they form a "paradigmatic chain" wherein each word's "precise meaning [depends] on its position" (Barry, 2017). While the three materials without context may not usually garner comparison, within the context of construction, dissimilarities in, for example, durability are where the significance of their meaning in the text arises. It is apparent that brick is stronger in relation to straw and furze. This notion is reinforced as the wolf failed to "blow [down] the house" made of bricks whereas he "blew [down] the house[s]" made of straw and furze (Jacobs, 1890). Consequently, the text appears to privilege the third pig as he survives in his brick house whereas the first and second pig were "[eaten] up" by the wolf, indicating the importance of the materials (ibid). 2-1 2-3 3-1

To further explore the significance of these materials, I used Barthes' semic code, which "operates through the nuances of individual words and phrases" to show "flickers of meaning" (Barry, 2017). It "draw[s] inferences from context," thus building upon Saussure's concept of language being relational within a structural network (ibid). By taking this approach, it is apparent that brick is associated with higher wealth than straw and furze, being a comparatively stronger and industrial material. Therefore, the materials may be considered themselves signifiers of wealth, and the fairy tale promotes the need for wealth to succeed. Moreover, the text establishes that the pigs had been "sent... out to seek their fortune," implying that attaining wealth is the model for success (Jacobs, 1890). Hence, the materials are signifiers of wealth and wealth equates to success, as the third pig is successful compared to his brothers due to using bricks. 2-1 2-2 1-1

Excerpt 2

This invited reading is revealed to be problematic using Marxist criticism, which examines the “class struggle” in texts which often arises through the “exploitation of one social class by another” (Barry, 2017). Marxist critic, Raymond Williams establishes the concept of hegemony, which is a “whole body of practices and expectations,” and a “lived system of meanings and values” constituting a “sense of reality for most people” (Williams, 1977). The implication that circumstances are irrelevant is problematic because, being entrenched in hegemony, people view wealth inequality as natural and indeed inevitable since it arises from a “natural inequality of talents and inclinations” (Marx, 1867). Hegemony operates like “an internalised form of social control” as people become “complicit in their own domination,” and consider it ultimately their fault for lacking the willpower, conscientiousness or ingenuity to ascend the socioeconomic ladder (Barry, 2017; Nguyen, 2022). Additionally, the notion that it is inherently wrong to challenge the rich, as promoted by the story’s binary, is entrenched in hegemony. Internalising these viewpoints prevents affluent individuals from being confronted as they are perceived as being worthy of their wealth, which enables cycles of exploitation by the rich to continue indefinitely.

Hence, it is necessary to reject such hegemonic views because they perpetuate the toleration of socioeconomic inequality. Therefore, my transformation challenges the invited reading by establishing an alternative reading that affluent individuals are not necessarily worthy of attaining their wealth, as socioeconomic position is heavily dictated by circumstances and the rich often exploit those who are poorer. This alternative reading coincides with Karl Marx’s theory that unequal opportunity disenfranchises individuals due to “exploitation veiled by... illusions,” thus reiterating William’s concept of hegemony. By revealing the absence of the circumstances of each character, and deconstructing the binary between the third pig and the wolf, post-structuralism has enabled two opportunities for intervention into the fairy tale to reposition audiences.

Firstly, by employing narratology, my transformation was able to better highlight the circumstances which disenfranchise the characters. Unlike Propp, Gérard Genette’s focalisation and narrator types enabled me to identify how the fairy tale’s discourse, rather than story, contributes to meaning. The text utilises predominantly “external focalisation” such that the “thoughts and feelings” of the characters are unknown, with the only exceptions being the wolf “[feeling] very angry,” and the pig and wolf being “frightened,” which were irrelevant to the characters’ circumstances or motives (Genette, 1972; Jacobs, 1890). This external focalisation promotes the invited reading, since it enables the omission of the underlying reasons for the pigs’ difference in wealth by virtue of silencing the thoughts of each character. Thus, my transformation shifted from using a single extradiegetic-heterodiegetic narrator, that is “a narrator in the first degree who tells a story [they are] absent from,” to using intradiegetic-homodiegetic narrators, which are “narrator[s] in the second degree who tell [their] own story” (Genette, 1972). In this manner, my transformation makes each character the narrator of their own story. For example, in my transformation, the two poorer pigs, James and Jones, demonstrate that they are struggling due to the “rough times for the economy” and being “swindled” by the richest pig, Jeremy. Given a voice, James reveals that he is poor compared to Jeremy despite “work[ing] tirelessly day in and day out.” Hence, my transformation supports the alternative reading, that the rich are not inherently worthy of their wealth, by changing the narration to demonstrate that wealth is not acquired through merely one’s own volition.

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Practices to strengthen

To further ensure accuracy and consistency of the application of the ISMG for this IA, it is recommended that:

- when making judgments about the Understanding and analysis of literary texts criterion at performance levels 4 and 5, consideration should be given to the extent to which the defence demonstrates specific and detailed analysis of genre, structure and textual features within the base text and the complex transformation, with direct references and quotations from each. An overreliance on general or indirect evidence such as plot and characterisation can prevent responses from demonstrating discerning or effective analysis
- when making judgments about the Understanding and application of theories criterion at the performance levels of 5 and 6, consideration should be given to the extent to which the defence demonstrates
 - understanding and application of both text-centred and world-context-centred theoretical approaches. Assessment objectives 2, 3 and 4 require relevant aspects of both approaches to be used in the defence
 - specific and detailed understanding and application of aspects of text-centred theoretical approaches that are relevant to their base text and transformation. These could include aspects of structuralism, post-structuralism, narratology, psychoanalytic criticism and/or other text-centred approaches. While the analysis of the base text and the subsequent complex transformation is motivated by the need for an ideological shift (and therefore prompted by the chosen world-context-centred theoretical perspective), responses should apply specific theoretical concepts from text-centred approach/es to explore how assumptions and values are encoded within the base text. These same concepts can then

be analysed within the complex transformation to explain how it realised the potential repositioning of audiences

- application and understanding of specific theoretical concepts related to the chosen world-context-centred approach/es. An overreliance on the general tenets or ideological purpose of the chosen approach without subsequent application of specific concepts can prevent responses from demonstrating effective or discerning understanding and application. For example, responses that generally discuss the sexism of a base text but do not apply specific and relevant feminist concepts (such as gender performativity, male gaze or essentialisation) limit their ability to demonstrate the *discerning* performance level
- when making judgments about the Evaluation and synthesis criterion at performance levels 4 and 5, consideration should be given to the extent to which the defence demonstrates specific and explicit appraisal of how the selected text-centred and world-context-centred theoretical approaches helped to determine the invited/alternative readings of the base text and to reposition readers within the complex transformation. Responses should clearly assess how the complex transformation has realised the potential repositioning of audiences and how the theoretical approaches enabled this intervention
- when making judgments about the Controlling textual features and conventions criterion, consideration should be given to the extent to which the spoken defence demonstrates textual features, patterns and conventions of academic genres and communication intended for academic audiences. Spoken delivery and the role of the speaker are assessed within Assessment objectives 6 and 7. While further evidence of citation and referencing conventions is provided through the defence script, this criterion is predominantly assessed through the spoken delivery. While the defence script and spoken delivery should match, in cases where they do not (e.g. a student expands on details in spoken delivery where their script was incomplete), the spoken delivery must guide teacher judgments on the ISMG.

Additional advice

- Students should not read their complex transformation aloud in their spoken response. They can assume their academic audience is familiar with both the base text and the complex transformation prior to listening to their defence. In their spoken defence, students should instead use direct evidence and examples from both the base text and transformation that allow them to analyse and evaluate how readers have been repositioned in relation to the base text's ideologies.
- World-context-centred approaches focus on political ideologies that underpin the historical, social, cultural, economic and discursive contexts that govern texts. These include approaches such as feminism, Marxism, postcolonial criticism, queer theory and ecocriticism. These theoretical perspectives seek to question whose interests are being served within texts, focusing on the political consequences of particular worldviews that have been naturalised or preferred, and how other groups or perspectives have been silenced.
- Psychoanalytic criticism is a text-centred theoretical approach, as it predominantly focuses on the linguistic construction of consciousness. While it can be paired with world-context-centred theoretical approaches successfully, it does not constitute a world-context-centred approach on its own, because it does not foreground or seek to question socio-cultural structural inequalities.

- Students should be guided to select a base text which has targeted scope and scale to respond to the task specifications. Longer texts, such as films and novels, can limit opportunities for students to focus their analysis and evaluation and could lead to overreliance on generalised or indirect evidence, such as plot. As outlined in the syllabus task specifications, part of a text could be used as the base text in order to control the scope and scale of what is being analysed and transformed. Alternatively, students could be guided to select shorter texts that will allow for more specific analysis of text structures and features.
- Selecting a generalised storyline instead of a specific publication can limit students' opportunities to specifically analyse textual features of the base text. This becomes especially important for texts where there have been multiple retellings, e.g. fairy tales and fables.
- The syllabus task specifications state that there should be a clear relationship between the complex transformation and its defence. When choosing a base text, students should ensure that their selection features specific aspects and details that provide motivation for an ideological shift, informed by their chosen world-context-centred approach/es. If the base text has only tenuous links to the political ideologies their selected world-context-centred approach seeks to challenge, this can limit opportunities for the complex transformation to specifically intervene in the text to reposition audiences purposefully.
- Schools may set parameters around whether spoken responses are presented live or are pre-recorded by students. In either case, it is important for students to consider their academic audience. Complementary features such as a slideshow are not required by the syllabus. However, this is a convention of academic communication that is appropriate for the task and its audience and can assist in emphasising points of the spoken defence.
- As IA2 is a spoken assessment task that requires a continuous response, students cannot redact a response to meet the required length after the assessment is submitted, as outlined in *QCE and QCIA policies and procedures handbook v4.0*, section 8.2.6.



Extended response — academic research paper (35%)

Students explore different way/s of reading their selected complex literary text/s through the application of at least two theories or aspects of theories to produce an academic research paper. These theories may be drawn from different theoretical approaches, or from the same theoretical approach. The selected complex literary text/s must be different from those selected for internal assessment instruments 1 and 2. Students use these theoretical approaches to produce a close reading of at least one selected complex literary text and to explore a focus question. The focus question should allow them to evaluate how effective these theoretical approaches have been in exploring and producing the close reading. Students may use class time and their own time to develop a response.

Assessment design

Validity

Validity in assessment design considers the extent to which an assessment item accurately measures what it is intended to measure and that the evidence of student learning collected from an assessment can be legitimately used for the purpose specified in the syllabus.

Reasons for non-endorsement by priority of assessment

Validity priority	Number of times priority was identified in decisions*
Alignment	23
Authentication	0
Authenticity	0
Item construction	1
Scope and scale	0

*Each priority might contain up to four assessment practices.

Total number of submissions: 71.

Effective practices

Validity priorities were effectively demonstrated in assessment instruments that:

- used the specifics of the syllabus task description to clearly state all task requirements, e.g. directed students to explore a focus question that allowed them to evaluate how effective the theoretical approaches were in exploring and producing a close reading
- included all cognitions in either the task description or the scaffolding, specifically the need to *analyse, apply, evaluate* and *synthesise*
- used scaffolding to help students manage scope, e.g. directed students to evaluate and apply aspects of theory, prompting a specific and achievable focus question and close reading

- directed students to complete all aspects of the task, e.g. selection of complex text/s, focus question, evaluation of theories and their suitability in providing a close reading, and used the scaffolding to assist in understanding how to achieve each aspect.

Practices to strengthen

It is recommended that assessment instruments:

- use the scaffolding to explain how to demonstrate the cognitions
- cue students, in making their close reading, to consider the ways chosen theories work together, either in contrast or tandem, and to evaluate the ways theories have produced a theorised interpretation of the text/s
- maintain the language of the syllabus by using the cognitions consistently throughout the task description and scaffolding, e.g. do not change *analyse* to *explain* in the task description or scaffolding.

Accessibility

Accessibility in assessment design ensures that no student or group of students is disadvantaged in their capacity to access an assessment.

Reasons for non-endorsement by priority of assessment

Accessibility priority	Number of times priority was identified in decisions*
Bias avoidance	0
Language	1
Layout	0
Transparency	0

*Each priority might contain up to four assessment practices.

Total number of submissions: 71.

Effective practices

Accessibility priorities were effectively demonstrated in assessment instruments that:

- followed the rules of Standard Australian English and were not overly jargonistic.

Practices to strengthen

There were no significant issues identified for improvement.

Additional advice

- The provision of an appropriate context helps students identify audience and write in consideration of the audience, e.g. a context that requires the academic tone of an extended academic research paper helps ensure that Assessment objectives 6 and 7 are met.
- The explanation that when choosing film texts, a close reading of the film requires the analysis of the film's genre, structure and filmic features helps students to demonstrate Assessment objective 5.

Assessment decisions

Reliability

Reliability is a judgment about the measurements of assessment. It refers to the extent to which the results of assessments are consistent, replicable and free from error.

Agreement trends between provisional and confirmed marks

Criterion number	Criterion name	Percentage agreement with provisional	Percentage less than provisional	Percentage greater than provisional	Percentage both less and greater than provisional
1	Understanding and analysis of literary texts	94.12%	0%	4.41%	1.47%
2	Understanding and application of theories	92.65%	2.94%	1.47%	2.94%
3	Evaluation and synthesis	92.65%	2.94%	1.47%	2.94%
4	Controlling textual features and conventions	95.59%	1.47%	2.94%	0%

Effective practices

Accuracy and consistency of the application of the ISMG for this IA was most effective when:

- for the Understanding and analysis of literary texts criterion, judgments for the *discerning* performance levels in Assessment objectives 1 and 5 were matched to the following characteristics in student responses
 - analysis of the selected complex literary text/s that demonstrated intense scrutiny of the text’s characteristics to understand how the stylistic and formal aspects contribute to meaning, in line with the syllabus glossary definition of *close reading*. Often responses were more successful in developing a discerning close reading when they selected a particular concept to control the scope of their analysis, providing a specific purpose for their focus question.
 - interpretations of the text that were developed through frequent and perceptive analysis of relevant generic, structural and textual features. Responses that used detailed direct evidence of the text’s language and structures were able to draw more specific conclusions to produce a valid close reading
- for the Understanding and application of theories criterion, judgments for the *discerning* performance levels in Assessment objectives 2, 3 and 4 were matched to the following characteristics in student responses
 - a specific, signposted focus question that was complex in nature and necessitated the application of at least two selected theories to a text to be answered or explored

- exploration of how the chosen theoretical approaches complement one another and/or clash through communication and demonstration of specific differences, similarities or relationships
- application of specific and detailed theoretical concepts, quotations and citations to the complex literary text/s. These responses selected concepts within the two chosen approaches for their relevance to explore the focus question and produce a close reading of the text
- for the Evaluation and synthesis criterion, judgments for the *discerning* performance levels in Assessment objectives 8, 9 and 10 were matched to the following characteristics in student responses
 - specific evaluation of theories used to produce close reading/s, through appraisal of the strengths, implications and/or limitations of these to explore the focus question and produce interpretations of the text
 - deliberate use of the focus question to synthesise and structure ideas within the academic research paper. These responses linked back to their focus question in arguments to systematically evaluate the merit, value or significance of the theorised analysis produced
- for the Controlling textual features and conventions criterion, judgments for the *discerning* performance levels in Assessment objectives 6 and 7 were matched to the following characteristics in student responses
 - controlled use of the patterns and conventions of academic genres suited to an extended research paper, including consistent use of referencing conventions
 - academic terminology and language choices that contributed to precision of analysis and were selected for relevance to the selected theoretical approaches and purpose for analysing.

Samples of effective practices

The following excerpts demonstrate discernment in all four criteria. The introductory paragraph of the response demonstrates a precise focus question (phrased as an investigative statement) which provides a specific purpose for analysis and necessitates the application of two theoretical approaches.

These excerpts demonstrate precise and discriminating understanding and application of aspects of Marxist theory to explore the focus question and develop specific interpretations of the text.

The extent to which Marxist theory can answer the focus question is evaluated explicitly, and the response then applies psychoanalytic criticism, acknowledging the relationships between the theoretical approaches and how they blend.

The conclusion of the response demonstrates discerning synthesis of ideas, as conclusions are drawn about the 'American Dream' that summarise the close reading/s developed and address the focus question.

Note: The characteristic/s identified may not be the only time the characteristic/s has occurred throughout a response.

Excerpt 1

F. Scott Fitzgerald's 1925 novel, *The Great Gatsby*, has consistently presented itself as a source of literary contention, stumping critics as to whether the novel depicts the American Dream with an air of "shallowness...or miraculous depth" (Sehgal, 2020). At the time of publication, antagonistic perceptions were commonplace, with critics such as H. L. Mencken detailing the novel as "a glorified anecdote" that "[was] obviously unimportant" (Mencken, 1925). Following this, Ruth Hale scathingly claimed that Fitzgerald's canon "seemed to [her] to be terrible" and declared that she could not "find...one chemical trace of magic, life, irony, romance, or mysticism in all of 'The Great Gatsby'" (Hale, 1925). Conversely, these contemptuous accusations were directly countered by more amicable critics, such as Gilbert Seldes, who affirmed *The Great Gatsby* as "one of the finest of contemporary novels" – though Seldes' friendship with Fitzgerald must be considered here. Similarly, T.S. Eliot labelled the book as "the first step that American fiction has taken since Henry James." Such conflicting debates over *The Great Gatsby's* place in the literary canon have persisted for nearly a century, though as society progresses, the novel is more favourably appreciated as not only an "embod[iment]...of the American Dream," but an "illustrat[ion of] its limitations" (Anderson, 2021). However, it is the fierceness of the initial controversy that sparked my interest in the matters of Gatsby, prompting me to investigate – through the lenses of Marxist and psychoanalytic criticism – whether *The Great Gatsby* is truly a meaningful representation of the American Dream.

Excerpt 2

Discerning understanding of ways of reading the selected text

Ultimately, Gatsby's communal displacement acts as a catalyst to communicate the more corruptive, unfavourable qualities of the American Dream. This relies on the Marxist theory of commodification, which is "the act of relating to objects or persons in terms of their exchange value or sign-exchange value" rather than appreciating them for "what [they] can do (use value)" (Tyson, 2006). Exchange value is an object's monetary value – or, their economic worth – and sign-exchange value is an object's usefulness in signalling status – or, their social worth. Gatsby, like the rest of the bourgeoisie, falls prey to immoral, gluttonous commodification; though his character is described by Nick as "all right at the end," he is still maintained as "everything for which [Nick] ha[s] unaffected scorn" – or, a man who views the world through an avaricious, commodifying lens. This is a hunger that seized a hold of Gatsby's class consciousness – his awareness of being 'lesser.' Subconsciously or not, as Gatsby immerses himself into wealth and the American Dream, he begins to appreciate Daisy not for her personality but for her aristocracy – he desires her as a commodity rather than as a person. Daisy's sign-exchange value – her metaphorical "voice...full of money" – will immerse Gatsby into the leisure class, negating his proletariat roots, and thus will award Gatsby's societal acceptance...and, paradoxically, the ability to vie for Daisy's hand.

Discerning application of theory to produce close reading

However, in the climax of the novel, Daisy establishes that she does not wish to marry

- Discerning analysis of the structure of the selected complex literary text to support discriminating interpretations

Practices to strengthen

To further ensure accuracy and consistency of the application of the ISMG for this IA, it is recommended that:

- when making judgments about the Understanding and analysis of literary texts criterion at the 9–10 performance level, consideration should be given to the extent to which the response demonstrates
 - intense scrutiny of the text’s characteristics to understand how the genre, structure and textual features help generate meaning, through the use of frequent direct evidence that generates and supports valid interpretations
- when making judgments about the Understanding and application of theory criterion at the 9–10 performance level, consideration should be given to the extent to which the response demonstrates
 - a complex focus question that is communicated explicitly and explored deliberately throughout the response
 - theoretical concepts, quotations and citations that are selected for specific relevance to the focus question and are applied with precision to the complex literary text/s. Succinct contextualisation of theoretical ideas allow for the application of theory to be prioritised. Student writers should assume their academic audience is familiar with the selected theoretical approaches to avoid unnecessary or textbook-like introductions to theories and their historical contexts, which can limit the response’s ability to demonstrate the *discerning* characteristic
- when making judgments about the Evaluation and synthesis criterion at the 9–10 performance level, consideration should be given to the extent to which the response demonstrates
 - purposeful synthesis of analysis, theories and interpretations with the focus question, which should drive the academic research paper’s exploration and evaluation
 - evaluation that makes specific and deliberate appraisals of the merit, value or significance of the theoretical approaches in producing interpretations that explore, answer or partially answer the focus question
 - explicit evaluation of the close reading/s developed, through weighing up the strengths and/or limitations of interpretations and conclusions drawn from the text. For *discerning* or *effective* characteristics, interpretations of the text should be inherently theorised (i.e. conclusions that rely on underpinning theories and cannot be drawn without them).

Additional advice

- The theoretical approaches selected for the internal assessment should be clear and explicit. The syllabus specifies that at least two theories or aspects of theories should be used, allowing students to control the scope of their response to suit the text/s and purpose of their focus question. Theoretical approaches may be broader critical perspectives (such as Marxist criticism, Feminist criticism, psychoanalytic criticism, post-structuralism) or can be specific schools of thought within approaches. For example, a response may apply Lacanian psychoanalysis and Freudian psychoanalysis, evaluating how these particular approaches complement one another and/or clash. As aspects of psychoanalytic criticism with distinct differences, this could be a valid approach to responding to the task, producing close reading/s of the text.
- Explore various theoretical approaches (text-centred, world-context-centred, author-centred and/or reader-centred) for IA3 with students, and how to apply them in ways that develop a close reading, using frequent and direct references to the text, including that

- overemphasis on reader/author context can limit opportunities for students to develop detailed and specific analysis of the selected literary text/s, by giving attention to its language and structures, e.g. lengthy discussion of a reader's expectations prior to reading, or biographical information about the author can lead to the text itself being neglected.
- students need to be discerning when selecting theoretical concepts within author-centred and/or reader-centred approaches, noting that the academic research paper has a different purpose from IA1's reading and defence. It may not be fitting to reuse particular aspects of these approaches that were used in IA1 if they inhibit the ability to produce a close reading of the text.
- Support students to create effective focus questions for their responses, by explaining that
 - as the focus question is a prominent part of Assessment objectives 2, 3, 4 and 8, students should be careful to ensure that their focus question is communicated clearly to readers
 - a question format specifically prompts exploration and evaluation, more effectively than a contention or thesis statement
 - closed thesis statements with predetermined conclusions are best avoided, as they may limit a response's opportunities to explore and evaluate.
- Explicitly teach students that, if they plan to use an author-centred and/or reader-centred theoretical approach for IA3, they should be careful to develop a complex focus question which will assist in developing a close reading, by considering the following
 - a focus question such as 'What differences will be evident when *Never Let Me Go* is analysed with reader-centred and author-centred approaches?' limits opportunities to evaluate the effectiveness of theories to produce a close reading, as it focuses on broad comparison between approaches without a specific purpose for analysis
 - to enable more theorised analysis aligned to a specific purpose, the focus question above could be refined to ask 'What will be revealed about the nature of human identity in *Never Let Me Go* when it is analysed through reader-centred and author-centred approaches? To what extent do reciprocal hermeneutics add depth to understandings gained from the text?'
 - Because this revised focus question features a specific purpose for analysing (an exploration of the nature of human identity), it allows greater opportunities to develop a close reading of specific details of the text, drawing specific conclusions. Additionally, it can prompt deeper evaluation of the strengths and limitations of the approaches in addressing this specific purpose, and how they complement one another and/or how they clash.
 - The second focus question uses theorised terminology of aspects of the approaches (reciprocal hermeneutics) which can prompt more focused exploration and application of theory. For example, the response might consider how the author and reader's own identities influence interpretations of the text's construction of the nature of human identity.

External assessment



External assessment (EA) is developed and marked by the QCAA. The external assessment for a subject is common to all schools and administered under the same conditions, at the same time, on the same day.

Extended response — theorised exploration of unseen texts (25%)

Assessment design

The assessment instrument was designed using the specifications, conditions and assessment objectives described in the summative external assessment section of the syllabus.

Conditions

- Time: 2.5 hours, which includes 30 minutes for planning time
- Length: 800–1000 words (excluding quotations)
- Other: selection of three unseen short texts of comparable complexity provided in the examination.

The examination assessed subject matter from Units 3 and 4. The question was derived from the context of Unit 4 (Area of study: Theorised exploration of texts).

The assessment required students to use their knowledge of text-centred and world-context-centred reading practices and interpretative strategies to construct a theorised exploration of an unseen short literary text.

The stimulus comprised three original short texts of comparable complexity. These texts were written for the purpose of the examination and were designed to elicit a unique student response that was a theorised close reading. The three unseen texts were:

- Stimulus 1 — Zooplankton
- Stimulus 2 — Too Clever By Half
- Stimulus 3 — Wobbly.

Assessment decisions

Assessment decisions were made by markers by matching student responses to the external assessment marking guide (EAMG). The external assessment papers and the EAMG are published in the year after they are administered.

Effective practices

Overall, students responded well to:

- the opportunity to apply aspects of feminist and Marxist theoretical approaches to the stimulus text *Too Clever By Half*, the most popular among the subject student cohort. Aspects of Marxist and ecocritical theoretical approaches were commonly applied to *Zooplankton*, the second most popular stimulus text, to produce a theorised reading. While *Wobbly* was not

chosen as frequently, students usually applied aspects of Marxist theory and feminist theory to respond effectively to this text

- the requirement to generate an interpretation of the chosen stimulus text, drawing conclusions about its meaning.

Criteria: Understanding and application of theories AND Understanding and analysis of literary texts

Effective student responses:

- communicated a clear and precise theorised interpretation of the stimulus text that relied on understanding of text-centred and world-context-centred theoretical approaches. Typically, this overall theorised interpretation was evident within the thesis statement and subsequently developed in arguments and conclusions. The following interpretations for each stimulus text are examples that represent a perceptive and judicious understanding of theoretical approaches, used to draw an overall conclusion about the text and its resolves. These interpretations use specific terminology relevant to theoretical approaches
 - *Zooplankton* criticises the interconnected relationship between consumerism and anthropogenic domination of the environment
 - *Zooplankton* highlights the alienation, disconnection and ecological destruction that is caused by commodification
 - *Too Clever By Half* critiques gendered double standards in the workplace, and their use to reinforce patriarchal hegemony
 - *Too Clever By Half* questions internalised gender stereotypes and honours female resistance against patriarchal norms, even if this subversion is subtle
 - *Wobbly* exposes the psychological consequences of celebrity idolisation and consumerist culture
 - *Wobbly* positions audiences to be critical of celebrity worship, which reinforces class division
- applied a range of relevant theoretical concepts from both text-centred and world-context-centred approaches to the stimulus text to explore meaning and draw conclusions about the text's results and effects. To achieve the highest mark for 'applying theory to explore meaning', a response must demonstrate discerning application of aspects of text-centred and world-context-centred approaches to the stimulus and use a complex range of relevant strategies for theorised exploration. *Complex* is defined in the syllabus glossary as 'composed or consisting of many different and interconnected parts or factors'. Responses that applied an involved combination of relevant and specific aspects of the theoretical approaches to develop and explore an overall theorised interpretation were awarded full marks in this assessable element. The use of specific and relevant theoretical terminology assisted in achieving this. Examples of this discerning application included where students
 - applied the following world-context-centred theoretical concepts
 - for *Zooplankton*, Marxist criticism concepts, such as commodity fetishism, commodification, use and exchange value, reification, base and superstructure, class struggle and criticism of consumerist ideology. Ecocritical concepts such as greenwashing, anthropocentrism, biocentrism, dominion theory and anthropomorphism, were also applied to this text effectively

- for *Too Clever By Half*, feminist criticism concepts, such as gender performativity, misogyny, essentialisation and patriarchy. Marxist criticism concepts, such as class struggle, alienation and hegemony, were also applied to this text effectively
 - for *Wobbly*, Marxist criticism concepts, such as hegemony, classism, alienation, sublime objects of ideology, commodification and techno-feudalism. Feminist criticism concepts were also applied to this text effectively
- applied the following text-centred theoretical concepts effectively to stimulus texts
- structuralist, semiotic and post-structuralist concepts, such as binary oppositions, signification, denotation and connotation, discourse theory and aporia
 - psychoanalytic criticism concepts, such as desire, lack, the other, jouissance, repression, sublimation, Jungian archetypes, the symbolic order, ego, superego and id
 - postmodernist criticism concepts, such as simulacrum and hyperreality
 - narratological concepts, such as external and internal focalisation, diegesis, narrative distance and perspective. These concepts were applied effectively when they were selected for relevance to the theorised interpretation of the text
- analysed how specific examples of the writer’s generic style, structure or textual features shaped the text to prompt critical and emotional responses in readers. Responses that examined the text in depth were able to develop and strengthen an overall interpretation. By scrutinising particular events, words, symbols, stylistic devices and moments from the text, responses were able to draw conclusions about how the text was shaped to position readers. At the discriminating level, responses perceived differences or distinctions within the text with precision and insight. These responses recognised layers of meaning and cause-and-effect patterns and paid specific attention to details such as word choices and their connotations. For example, when responding to *Zooplankton*, some discriminating responses considered the connotations implied by word choices such as ‘seemed’, ‘lumped’ and ‘thing’, drawing conclusions about how these shaped the text to position readers
 - recognised the chosen stimulus text as a construct designed to position readers and their ways of thinking about the world, providing a discriminating understanding of its complexities. For example, when responding to *Too Clever By Half*, effective responses explored how the text represented patriarchal and misogynistic hegemonic ideologies of the early 1960s, but recognised the text was positioning audiences to be critical of these. Additionally, effective responses acknowledged the nuances of the text’s representations. For example, when responding to *Wobbly*, some discriminating responses considered the ironies inherent in Sophia’s feelings of self-worth during her second celebrity encounter, as they still relied on the validations of an external ‘authority’.

Criterion: Synthesis

Effective student responses:

- communicated a discriminating and thoughtful thesis, usually in their introduction. This thesis typically served as the response’s overall theorised interpretation of the text
- constructed arguments that supported the thesis, giving it greater credibility by providing evidence and exploring intricacies of the text through the application of aspects of theory
- drew conclusions about the results and/or effects of the text. These conclusions were substantiated by arguments, flowing logically from detailed analysis of the text and application of theory. Discriminating conclusions articulated more specific theorised interpretations that expanded on particular aspects of the thesis. They caused the thesis to become more intricate

or complex through the exploration of the consequences, effects, or results of the theorised interpretation

- selected a discriminating range of evidence from the stimulus text, which was explicitly and purposefully used to support the reading's theorised interpretations.

Criterion: Controlling textual features and conventions

Effective student responses:

- used specific and relevant theorised terminology from text-centred and world-context-centred theoretical approaches. These included specific theoretical concepts and terms within approaches, which were contextualised clearly and applied to the stimulus text to add complexity to analysis and interpretation.

Samples of effective practices

Excerpt 1 has been included to illustrate:

- a discriminating theorised interpretation of the stimulus text
- discerning application of aspects of text-centred and world-context-centred approaches to the stimulus and a complex range of relevant strategies for a theorised exploration
- how the writer's generic style, structure or textual features shape the text
- a discriminating understanding of the complexities of the chosen stimulus.

Excerpt 1

Ideologies present within the text are discernable as being ^{forced, albeit blissful,} the servitude within capitalist society and the entrapment of social roles, or as shown in the text, even goes so far as to affirm a caste system ^{in support} of these roles. This is evidenced when, as the DVD describes with the absence of emotion: ⁶⁶ 'I became a 'thing' in the eyes of the people when I was pressed into a DVD tray and sold at a supermarket. There are hundreds of thousands of other copies just like me.' ⁹⁹ (Stimulus 1). This excerpt demonstrates that the DVD, as a class, are dominantly viewed as 'things' by the humans, and are commodities for the free market exchange: affirming the transcendental nature fundamental to commodity fetishism. The primary ^{value} form of profit is entrenched as the sole aspiration of society, whereby competition predominates at the expense of environmental responsibility, whereby the DVD ⁶⁶ ... had

no chance to biodegrade. Even though the company said my pants were biodegradable." (Stimulus 1) is condemning the exploited DVD to an outcome not previously negotiated by its company, while glorifying the accumulation of wealth from this method of marketing and exploitative 'employment'.

Excerpts 2 and 3 have been included to illustrate:

- a discriminating thesis that develops arguments to strengthen the thesis across the reading and defensible conclusions based on the arguments
- discerning selection of evidence from the stimulus used explicitly to support the theorised reading.

Excerpt 2

Set across two decades of the twenty-first century, the short story titled 'Wobbly' follows the journey of a middle-class mum's ^{chance} encounters with celebrities whilst on vacation. The simultaneous application of text and world-centred theory helps expose how the blind adoration of celebrities unintentionally upholds the same class system that exploits the middle-class family unit. While structuralism, psychoanalysis, and postmodernism emphasise the problematic dichotomy between rich and poor, Marxist reading uncovers the real-world consequences of such idolisation.

By applying text-centred theory, the damaging internalisation of classist stereotypes is made apparent. Through juxtaposing the characterisation of the "gawky fangirl" and that of "Australian music royalty", a clear binary materialises between the poor and the wealthy. This structuralist concept explores how the pairing of terms is often hierarchical - in this case, Melody Rhode's "presence" is privileged over the mum's behaviour, which she describes as

Excerpt 3

being "like a clown on roller skates." In using a simile, the author compares their protagonist to a ditsy performer, purposefully exploiting the connotations of silliness and childishness behind the signifier 'clown'. Defined as the socio-cultural and personal associations of a word, the connotations within this instance uphold the myth that everyday humans cannot help but be reduced to "stream-of-consciousness word vomit" ^{when} humbled by the mere presence of a superstar's "aura." Furthermore, a psychoanalytical reading of 'hobbly' uncovers how ~~the~~ ^a middle-class individual is defined by their ^{perceived} 'lack' in relation to ~~the~~ ^{the} rich. The protagonist finds herself reduced to a self-declared "mere mortal mum mumbling," employing the alliteration of the 'm' sound to reinforce her inability to present herself in a sophisticated manner when compared to the "grace" of Melody. In doing so, she internalises classist stereotypes and thus idolises celebrities in what Lacan deems her field of "neurotic passion." Finally, the postmodernist concept 'simulacrum' helps expose how making celebrities "queen[s]" has pushed the upper-class into the sublime.

Excerpt 4 has been included to illustrate:

- use of vocabulary with discrimination to develop ideas, including correct terminology and use of register appropriate for a close reading with discrimination.

Excerpt 4

Such an assumption highlights the outdated notion that intelligent, hardworking women are a threat, a concept which must remain in place to maintain the male-dominated hegemony. When compared with the characterisation of Wendy, this ideology becomes increasingly evident. Unlike Edith, she is constructed as "meek" and the very embodiment of the "gossipy, unfocused female worker." She banters with Kane, speaks with sour "hmphs," and is described as "[speaking] her mind without delay." Thus, she is not regarded as suspicious, as her behaviour as a "meek" female does not threaten the male-dominated power structure within the workplace. The

revelation that Wendy was indeed the secret agent turns this ideology on its head; the shrewd woman (Edith) does not hold ulterior motives, and the ~~the~~ woman who seemingly reinforces ^{"stupid"} ~~weak~~ feminine stereotypes had been ~~outsmarting~~ outsmarting them all along. Therefore, the misogynistic stereotypes which underpin the treatment of these two women within the narrative are highlighted and criticised, encouraging the reader to ~~also~~ examine the manner in which femininity is demonised when it does not fit ^{its} ~~the~~ hegemonic attributions.

Practices to strengthen

It is recommended that when preparing students for external assessment, teachers consider:

- assisting students to further develop their skills for the following assessable elements within the Understanding and application of theories criterion and the Understanding and analysis of literary texts criterion
 - understanding what makes an interpretation 'theorised'. A theorised interpretation uses knowledge and understanding of theoretical approaches to draw conclusions about the meaning of the stimulus text. Some responses provided interpretations that were not theorised or recounted the issues in the text rather than interpreting its meaning or how it prompts critical responses from audiences. This limited opportunities for some responses to provide evidence for the Understanding and application of theories assessable elements, which are equally weighted with Understanding and analysis of literary texts. An example of an interpretation of a text that is not theorised would be the summation that *Zooplankton* communicates how people and things are judged by their usefulness. To improve this and demonstrate an understanding of relevant theoretical approaches, a response could develop a more effective theorised interpretation that *Zooplankton* reveals the tension between the market forces of use and exchange value, and how this tension generates a waste culture that has permanent effects on the environment. This improved interpretation draws upon understanding of aspects of Marxist theory and Ecocriticism to develop a conclusion about the meaning of the stimulus text
 - applying specific theoretical concepts within chosen theoretical approaches to the stimulus text so that a range of strategies are used for a theorised exploration. To make this range complex, the theoretical concepts should be selected for relevance and should be interconnected. Some responses applied aspects of narratology to their stimulus text to discuss general effects on the reader, e.g. they may have discussed how the third-person internal focalisation of *Too Clever By Half* was used to prompt reader empathy with Edith. By focusing on broader effects, these responses did not tie this application to more specific theorised interpretations, preventing the development of a complex range of strategies to explore the text. To improve this and demonstrate the interconnected nature of a theorised

reading, a response could have discussed how the third-person internal focalisation of Edith serves to reveal the vast disconnection between the social interpretation of gender roles with reality, as her quiet and unemotional demeanour is interpreted as surreptitious. Access to Edith's thoughts reveal how she is entrapped within essentialising notions of female identity with 'no option available to her [which] would convince Kane' otherwise. By connecting this application of narratology more specifically to an overall theorised interpretation, a response is able to generate an involved combination of theorised ideas. Similarly, many responses focused on identifying and listing a range of binary oppositions found within the text. These were not always selected for relevance to the theorised interpretation, however, and were not analysed to draw conclusions about the text and its meaning. When discussing binary oppositions, students should be careful to ensure that these are contextually relevant to their theorised interpretation and thesis

- understanding the syllabus glossary definition of *aspect* and how this is contextually relevant to the external assessment and application of theory. An *aspect* is 'a particular part or feature of something; a facet, phase or part of a whole', necessitating particular components or concepts of text-centred and world-context-centred theory. Some responses explored more generalised issues, such as environmental damage, sexism or classism, but did not subsequently apply specific aspects of theoretical approaches that explore these issues (ecocriticism, feminism or Marxism). For example, exploring environmental damage in *Zooplankton* is not in itself enough to suitably demonstrate understanding and application of ecocriticism. Specific concepts, including (but not limited to) anthropocentrism, greenwashing, pastoralism and anthropomorphism could be applied to develop this exploration of environmental damage in a more theorised way
- recognising and analysing how the writer's generic style, structure or textual features are used to shape the text for specific cultural, social or aesthetic purposes, to prompt audiences to generate critical and emotional responses to the issues in the text. It is important to understand how inclusion of particular ideologies within a text does not necessarily mean that the text is upholding these ideals, and may instead be inviting readers to reject them. For example, *Too Clever By Half* explores patriarchal hegemony of the 1960s, but does not condone or naturalise it. Some responses confused Kane's perspective with the intentions of the text. To improve this, students should practise recognising the nuances between the text's issues and effects, to demonstrate more effective understanding of the complexities of a stimulus text. For example, many effective responses recognised that, while the narrator of *Wobbly* is never critical of celebrities and instead idolises them, as a construct the text prompts readers to criticise this unquestioned worship because of the effects it has on the narrator's sense of self-worth
- assisting students to further develop their skills for the following assessable elements within the Evaluation and synthesis criterion
 - communicating a clear thesis statement which is developed in later arguments. It is recommended that students use an overall theorised interpretation of the text as their thesis statement
 - developing the thesis in arguments by exploring its complexities or adding detail to it. Arguments might focus on particular aspects of the thesis, and examine the text through application of a range of relevant text-centred and world-context-centred theoretical concepts
 - providing specific conclusions based upon the thesis and arguments. It is recommended that conclusions are drawn in each argument as well as in the final paragraph of the response. These conclusions detail the effects, consequences, impacts and/or results of the text on the reader, and can strengthen the thesis by adding detail and fullness to it.

Students should avoid having a static thesis which is repeated in the same way throughout their response, as this can affect development of ideas

- using evidence explicitly to support interpretations and theorised exploration of the text. Students should refer to the syllabus glossary definition of *close reading* and how this is contextually relevant to the external assessment. A *close reading* entails ‘intense scrutiny of a text’s characteristics’ with ‘as much care and attention as possible to what the words on the page are doing’. An overreliance on plot summary and recount can prevent responses from generating a close reading and achieving high marks in the Evaluation and synthesis criterion
- synthesising their application of text-centred and world-context-centred approaches to create a whole interpretation of the text (usually in the form of a thesis statement). This can be demonstrated by connecting arguments, ideas and conclusions drawn from the text, together with cohesive devices that are used to develop the overall interpretation
- assisting students to further develop their skills for the following assessable elements within the Controlling textual features and conventions criterion
 - using specific vocabulary and theorised terminology relevant to the text-centred and world-context-centred theoretical approaches used to explore the stimulus. It is important that theoretical terms are used with clarity, to express complex ideas in ways that maintain appropriate register and do not affect development of ideas. Use of complicated or verbose terminology that is not clearly contextualised or made relevant to the theorised exploration of the text can affect clarity and development of ideas.

Additional advice

- The *Unit 4: Text-centred and world-context-centred strategies for short literary texts* resource on the QCAA Portal is a guide and starting point for teachers to prepare students for the external assessment. It is not intended to limit the scope of possible aspects of text-centred and world-context-centred theoretical approaches that students can apply to external assessment stimulus. Students can bring and apply their knowledge of a range of specific text-centred and world-context-centred strategies that they developed through Units 3 and 4, many of which may go beyond what is mentioned in this resource. Strategies and theoretical concepts should be selected for relevance to the chosen stimulus text.
- While markers make every effort to decipher handwriting, students should be encouraged to consider the legibility of their writing. In addition to this, when making edits and annotations on their own work, students should be careful to ensure that legibility is maintained. Strategies such as leaving allocated space on the page for editing or additional analysis could assist readability.
- When preparing for the external assessment, it is important that students revise a range of world-context-centred theoretical approaches and do not limit themselves to only one specific approach. While the range of stimulus texts accommodates a variety of world-context-centred approaches, students should apply aspects of theory that are relevant and applicable to the stimulus they select. In some cases, it may be appropriate to apply aspects of more than one world-context-centred theoretical approach, e.g. many responses to *Zooplankton* used aspects of ecocriticism and Marxism together, along with text-centred approaches such as structuralism.