Supporting students in the English IA3

Examination — imaginative written response

This assessment allows you to demonstrate your skills in creating and writing imaginatively.

Purpose

Your task is to:

- write an imaginative response to a literary text
- which demonstrates your knowledge of the craft of writing
- and prompts critical and emotional responses in the reader.

General advice

1. Although you are using a literary text as a springboard for idea creation, the focus of this assessment instrument is on imaginative writing.
2. Rather than direct analysis, you are developing, creatively, an aspect of the text. Depending on the specific wording of your assessment instrument, you may be
   - transposing, challenging or reinforcing a value, attitude or belief from the text
   - offering new insight into an aspect of the text
   - offering a different interpretation of a perspective or representation from the text.
3. While it is important that you have a strong working knowledge of the literary text, you must seek to develop an imaginative response that ‘stands alone’. This means that a reader who has no, or limited, knowledge of the literary text should still be able to:
   - recognise the imaginative genre
   - find meaning in your response.

Key definitions

Use these definitions to further guide your understanding of the assessment.¹

• **Literary text:** past and present texts across a range of cultural contexts that are valued for their form and style, and are recognised as having enduring or artistic value

• **Language features:** linguistic elements that support meaning, e.g. sentence structure, noun group/phrase, vocabulary, punctuation, figurative language

• **Representation:** textual constructions that give shape to ways of thinking about or acting in the world

• **Perspective:** a point of view or way of regarding/thinking about something

• **Style:** the way in which aspects of texts are arranged and how they affect meaning

• **Stylistic devices:** examples could be narrative viewpoint, approaches to characterisation, lexical choice

### Key advice: Assessment objectives

Exploring the assessment objectives gives you a checklist for what this task requires and allows you to better understand how your work will be assessed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment objectives</th>
<th>Implications: you need to</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1, 2</td>
<td>Create a <strong>structure</strong> and <strong>style</strong> which is appropriate to the imaginative genre and gives you the opportunity to prompt <strong>critical and emotional responses</strong> in your readers.</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Within that structure, plan a response that creates a perspective in accordance with the task guidelines.</td>
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<td>4, 5</td>
<td>As you develop your response, ensure that you are making use of:</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• the ways the literary text is underpinned by <strong>cultural assumptions, attitudes, values and beliefs</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td>• <strong>aesthetic features</strong> and <strong>stylistic devices</strong> to enhance your response.</td>
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<td>6, 7</td>
<td>Select and organise your subject matter to support both your interpretation of the literary text and <strong>your imaginative purpose</strong>, and to prompt critical and emotional responses in your readers.</td>
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<td>8, 9, 10</td>
<td>Use a writing <strong>style</strong> (derived from your choices of syntax and language) which is appropriate to the imaginative genre and enables you to fulfil the purpose of the task.</td>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Ensure that <strong>written features</strong>, such as spelling and punctuation, are accurate, appropriate to the imaginative genre, and used as a way of enhancing the organisation and readership of your response.</td>
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### Key advice: Assessment conditions

Exploring the implications of the conditions for this examination provides a method for approaching this task.

**Notice of topic (1 week)**

Carefully consider your planning process and allow time for:

• developing an idea which
- stems from the springboard text
- is an imaginative response to the task

- developing and auditing your structural choices, to ensure that
  - the imaginative genre is coherent and identifiable
  - readers will be able to find meaning in the response
- reviewing the potential critical and emotional impact of your work upon readers, and developing this as required.

Response length of between 800–1000 words
- Ensure that your planning allows you to write a completed response within these limitations.

Examination timing (2 hours and 15 minutes)
- Allocate time to create your plan, working on
  - regathering your ideas from the earlier preparation phase of this task
  - mapping the focus and content of each segment of the response
- draft your response, leaving enough time for editing your response, seeking (and amending where necessary)
  - evidence that you have constructed a completed response of between 800–1000 words, which fully addresses the requirements of the task and the assessment objectives
  - evidence of a structure which is appropriate to genre
  - evidence of your unique, imaginative style
  - evidence of the purposeful inclusion of aesthetic features and stylistic devices
- leave enough time for proofreading your response, seeking (and amending where necessary):
  - textual errors, e.g. grammar, spelling, punctuation.

Writing imaginatively

Your imaginative writing, and the development of perspectives and representations in your work, can be significantly enhanced with the use of well-crafted stylistic features. The model below is an excerpt from a student’s narrative, titled *The Dying Breed*. It is based upon *The Turning*, an anthology of short stories by Tim Winton.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Excerpt</th>
<th>Commentary</th>
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<tr>
<td>He climbs the riverbank slowly, knees creaking, the dull black metal of his rifle heavy on his shoulder. Everyone had always assumed that the ‘Di’ was short for ‘Diane’ or ‘Diana’. But no. He’d only heard of one other person called her name. Diamantina. The moment he heard it, he knew he would bring her here. To the river. The Diamantina River. Dry now. Once an artery pumping its precious life blood of water, now a wide brown gash. A long scar snaking its way through the land, like the angry red scar surgery</td>
<td><strong>Character arc</strong>  The character’s journey is physical (moving along the riverbank) and metaphysical (the journey being undertaken by his sick wife, Di, and the impact of her illness upon the man’s life). This technique allows the narrative to act as a metaphor for the mortality of all living creatures, a writing decision that adds significant depth to our understanding of concept and character.</td>
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had left at the nape of Di's neck, that had coiled its way beneath her shoulder blade and into her armpit.
The ancient river gums, their roots exposed like gnarled fingers. Clawing and digging through the bank, blindly searching for moisture. Crows cawing. He follows their guttural clicks and grunts along the empty riverbed. Knowing he won't like what they've found.

“P--- off, ya mongrels!”
Hopping sideways, just out of reach. Their sleek black feathers and yellow eyes, watchful. Patient.

A soft spot in the riverbed. The horse has broken through the pattern of mud crack and peeling crust layers. His struggles have buried him gut deep.

“Oh, mate.” He slowly crumples to the dust next to Di's horse. A small puff of dust. Leathery hands caress the velvet soft muzzle. They stroke the horse's mud-stiff hair and feel the thrum of blood pulsing in his neck. faintly.

“How did you get yourself into a pickle like this?” Him or the horse, he wonders.


Strangely comforting.
The loud crack of the rifle splits the heavy air.

Momently silence. The sounds of the bush return.

Crows cawing.

### Stylistic devices

The writer uses syntax to great effect, mixing well-organised, longer sentences with short, sharp fragments. As well as adding to the development and maintenance of narrative tension, this enables the reader to see, hear and feel whatever the character is seeing, hearing and feeling.

There is minimal dialogue, but it is used to great effect, indicating the man's shifting emotions.

### Aesthetic features

This is a highly visual piece of writing, with many simple, potent images of the bush. The analogy of the riverbed with the wife's scar is especially strong.

The association of 'Di' with the Diamantina River maintains the structure of the narrative and offers an ironic juxtaposition: the beauty of the river and his wife's eyes contrasted with the horror of impending death, both that of the horse and, potentially, the man's wife.

The climax of the story is designed to prompt an emotional response from readers.

### More information

If you would like more information, please visit the QCAA website [www.qcaa.qld.edu.au/senior/senior-subjects/english/english](http://www.qcaa.qld.edu.au/senior/senior-subjects/english/english). Alternatively, email the English and Language learning area at english@qcaa.qld.edu.au.

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