

Essential English 2025 v1.2

IA4 A-standard annotated sample response

December 2025

Extended response — written response

This sample has been compiled by the QCAA to assist teachers in developing assessment and matching evidence in student responses to the characteristics described in the instrument-specific standards.

Instrument-specific standards (ISS)

Knowledge application	Organisation and development	Textual features	Grade
The student response has the following characteristics:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • effective construction of representations of an identity, place, event and/or concept in a written response to achieve purpose/s • effective use of opinions and/or ideas to influence meaning about an aspect of an Australian popular culture text in a written response to achieve purpose/s 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • effective use of genre, integrating media where appropriate • control of the role of the writer to influence audiences to accept perspectives about an aspect of an Australian popular culture text • purposeful selection and sequencing of relevant subject matter, using written cohesive devices to construct a coherent response 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • controlled choice of language informed by an understanding of purpose, audience and context • consistent use of written language features to achieve purpose/s 	A
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • appropriate construction of representations of an identity, place, event and/or concept in a written response to achieve purpose/s • appropriate use of opinions and/or ideas to influence meaning about an aspect of an Australian popular culture text in a written response to achieve purpose/s 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • appropriate use of genre, using media where appropriate • some control of the role of the writer to influence audiences to accept perspectives about an aspect of an Australian popular culture text • appropriate selection and sequencing of relevant subject matter using written cohesive devices to construct a coherent response 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • appropriate choice of language informed by an understanding of purpose, audience and context • appropriate use of written language features to achieve purpose/s 	B
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • uneven construction of representations of an identity, place, event and/or concept in a written response to achieve purpose/s • uneven use of opinions and/or ideas to influence meaning about an aspect of an Australian popular culture text in a written response to achieve purpose/s 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • use of genre, including media where appropriate • use of the role of the writer to influence audiences to accept perspectives about an aspect of an Australian popular culture text • in the main, relevant subject matter selected and sequenced using written cohesive devices to construct a coherent response 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • in the main, appropriate choice of language informed by an understanding of purpose, audience and context • in the main, use of written language features to achieve purpose/s 	C

Knowledge application	Organisation and development	Textual features	Grade
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • narrow construction of representations of identities, places, events and/or concepts in a written response • narrow use of opinions and/or ideas in a written response. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • uneven use of genre • some establishment of a relationship with an audience • some relevant subject matter selected and unevenly sequenced using some cohesive devices. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • inconsistent choice of language with some demonstration of understanding of purpose, audience and context • some use of written language features, with frequent lapses. 	D
The student response does not match any of the descriptors above.	The student response does not match any of the descriptors above.	The student response does not match any of the descriptors above.	E

Context

In this unit, we have engaged with representations of people in a range of autobiographies, including *Mao's Last Dancer*. We have explored concepts and the stories of others — migrant groups and Australian youth — and focused on using blog posts in a meaningful way to communicate our values and beliefs.

Task

Write a series of blog posts (two to three) about one or two individuals studies in *Mao's Last Dancer* for the *Aussie Reviews* website.

In each blog post, focus on how studying these individual/s has taught you about one of the following concepts:

- overcoming adversity
- success
- embracing change
- family.

In your blog posts, refer to your selected individual/s and position audiences to accept your perspectives about this concept and help them understand why you feel the way you do.

Sample response

Criterion	Result
Knowledge application Assessment objective/s 3, 4	A
Organisation and development Assessment objective/s 1, 2, 6, 7	
Textual features Assessment objective/s 8, 9	

The annotations show the match to the instrument-specific standards.

<p>Use of opinions and/or ideas to effectively shape representations of an aspect of an Australian popular culture text</p> <p>Controlled choice of language</p> <p>Control of the role of the writer to influence audiences to accept perspectives of an aspect of an Australian popular culture text</p> <p>Purposeful selection and sequencing of relevant subject matter to construct a coherent blog post</p> <p>Consistent use of written language features</p> <p>Use of opinions and/or ideas to effectively shape representations of an aspect of an Australian popular culture text</p> <p>Consistent use of written language features</p> <p>Purposeful selection and sequencing of relevant subject matter to construct a coherent blog post</p> <p>Controlled choice of language</p> <p>Consistent use of written language features</p> <p>Use of opinions and/or ideas to effectively shape representations of an aspect of an Australian popular culture text</p> <p>Controlled choice of language</p> <p>Effective use of genre</p>	<p>Blog 1: Undeserved adversity</p> <p>Li Cunxin has suffered, endured and succeeded. His inspiring story is one that is similar to many migrants' experiences, teaching us that life's circumstances aren't always fair, that adversity can occur through no fault of our own and that we can do more than survive it. <u>We can excel and find happiness.</u> Li, a Chinese–Australian, is a remarkable individual whose story has taught me a lot about overcoming adversity. In his case, adversity came from being born in a place where growing enough food to survive is difficult — Li is the sixth son of Chinese peasant farmers and their income depended on the weather and luck. One year there was such a severe drought that many villagers struggled to survive. <u>It's difficult to imagine such poverty, but Li shows grit and tenacity, both in China as a child and here in Australia as an adult.</u></p> <p>Li was born in the same year as my mum (1961) and despite adversity, he is now successfully leading the Queensland Ballet. It's such an intense, physically demanding job, but having endured so much hardship growing up, it makes sense that he'd be tough enough now to operate at a high level. <u>By contrast, my mum was fortunate. She was an only child and grew up in the Brisbane suburbs. Where Mum had three meals a day, Li's family were at risk of starving, often going hungry and sometimes eating bark to survive. While his family planted wheat in winter, and other crops in summer, Mum played piano and hockey.</u> Li's story is an example of adversity through no fault of his own, and like many migrants, he excels. That's determination.</p> <p>Blog 2: Li's fables as lessons for approaching diversity</p> <p>Li uses fables to help himself understand the world around him, which has also made me realise how powerful stories can be. <u>He connects with them and now so do I. The story about the frog in the well really shows the importance of the choices we make.</u> Like the frog suggests, we should look around at the horizon above and beyond the well, rather than just accept our own reality. <u>If we never take the time to look up past our daily existence, we risk missing out on opportunities. Li shows us that even in times of adversity, we aren't bound by our current reality, but that the choice is ours.</u></p> <p>Li also has a choice and despite his dad telling him to accept a fate of poverty because there is no way out, <u>he jumps high enough to leave the well.</u> Many migrants have a similar determination to not only survive but to succeed. Li's determination leads to a choice of not toiling in the fields, but on stage. <u>He takes a risk, believes in himself and persists.</u></p> <p><u>At Madame Mao's Beijing Dance Academy, Li has to submit to spine-snapping training until his teachers release him. This is another form of adversity, and to meet such challenges to a standard of excellence, he decides to strap sandbags to his ankles and train when everyone else is asleep. This teaches me that even when you find yourself in a situation not of your own choosing, you might feel trapped, but you aren't. As Li and other migrants do, listening to the frog and jumping as high as you can, offers its own rewards.</u></p>
---	---

Blog 3: Boldly facing adversity

When Li arrives at the Dance Academy in Beijing, he talks about feeling 'adrift', a sign of heartache, which I'm sure many migrants experience. Li's homesickness in the first few months means he cries himself to sleep, and to ease it, he uses his Niang's quilt to tell himself that everything will be okay. That's a good strategy. I too, can relate to homesickness because I had to adapt to boarding school, and I'm not keen on change. It's interesting how despite different ages and cultures, missing family feels the same.

Everything being different is another form of adversity. Li has to roll his blanket in military style and jog around open fields. The freezing dance studios had frosty window panes, the barre was high and exercise so frequent his hamstrings would often tear, but he was forced to train and forced himself to train hard. Nothing was easy and the world wasn't kind, but Li persevered.

Li's determination is real strength. Just like Li and the frog, we all have challenges, but Li is proof that character is formed when we face adversity with boldness.



© State of Queensland (QCAA) 2025

Licence: <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0> | **Copyright notice:** www.qcaa.qld.edu.au/copyright —

lists the full terms and conditions, which specify certain exceptions to the licence. | **Attribution:**

© State of Queensland (QCAA) 2025 — please include the link to our copyright notice.