

Supporting students in the Literature IA3

Extended response — imaginative written response

Purpose

Your task is to:

create an original **literary text** using any imaginative genre

which demonstrates your knowledge of the craft of writing

and prompts critical and emotional responses in the reader.

General advice

1. The task requires you to draw on your understanding of a range of stylistic features you have studied throughout the course, such as point of view, narrative voice, plot structure, non-linear narrative, focalisation, characterisation, symbolism, use of motifs, setting, dialogue, and mood.
2. Determine a clear purpose/s for writing the text, whether it be to engage, to explore, to celebrate, to critique, to inspire, to satirise, to question, to move, to disconcert, to subvert, or to entertain.
3. Consider how your imaginative text will shape perspectives and representations to position audience in relation to cultural assumptions, attitudes, values and beliefs.
4. Decide on subject matter and a genre that best suits your purpose/s, e.g. you could write a short story, a memoir, interior monologue, a chapter for a novel, a drama script, a screen for a short film.

Key definitions

- **Create:** to bring something in being or existence; produce or evolve from one's own thought or imagination¹
- **Craft:** (transitive verb) to make or produce with care, skill, ingenuity²
 - **Literary text:** the definition of what constitutes a literary text has several facets. While the nature of what constitutes literary texts is dynamic and evolving, they are seen as having **personal, social, cultural and aesthetic** value.³



- The classification of texts as ‘literary’ changes over time and across **cultural contexts**, and texts considered non-literary in some contexts are considered literary in other contexts, e.g. a film may be regarded as non-literary in the context of its simple storyline but literary in its use of sophisticated narrative and filmic techniques.
- Literary texts are valued for their form and style and are recognised as having enduring or **artistic value**. This implies that the author of a literary text must closely consider their deployment of structure and use of **aesthetic features** and **stylistic devices**.
- Literary texts include a broad range of forms such as novels, poetry, short stories, plays, fiction, multimodal texts such as film, and nonfiction. As stated earlier, this assessment task must be written as **predominantly prose**.

¹ Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority 2019, *Literature General Senior Syllabus 2019 v1.4*, QCAA, Brisbane, p. 52, www.qcaa.qld.edu.au/senior/senior-subjects/english/literature.

² Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary 2021, Merriam-Webster Incorporated, www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/craft#:~:text=transitive%20verb,a%20carefully%20crafted%20story.

³ *Literature General Senior Syllabus 2019 v1.4*, p. 58.

- **Stylistic and aesthetic features:** literary texts are defined as having artistic value. Much of this will be derived from your choice of stylistic features and their impact on the narrative.

Characterisation	choices that include protagonist, antagonist, object of desire, confidant, foil character, receiver (of the action), observer (of the action), minor character
Cohesive devices	features of vocabulary, syntax and grammar that bind different parts of a text together e.g. connectives, ellipses, synonyms ⁴
Complementary features	features that contribute to the meaning and impact of written texts, e.g. graphics, symbols, images, design elements ⁵
Design	selection, organisation and use of particular elements in the process of text construction for particular purposes, e.g. linguistic (words), visual (images), spatial (arrangement on the page)
Dialogue	direct or reported: used to develop conflict, plot, character
Figurative language	the use of (poetic) features such as similes, metaphors, allusions, personification, hyperbole, assonance, alliteration and idiom
Focalisation	what is 'privileged' by the narrative; in other words, what is told or not told, whether deliberately or unwittingly, by the narrator and/or characters
Lexical choice	choosing the 'best fit' word/s for particular effects, e.g. a heightened group of qualifiers to describe an emotionally charged scene
Mood	emotions intended, by the writer, to be created in the reader
Motifs	dominant or recurring ideas in writing, e.g. a story about young love has a green, springtime motif
Narrative viewpoint	choice and type of narrator, e.g. the angry protagonist, the revengeful victim, the judgmental observer
Non-linear narrative	fractured timeline, e.g. the use of flashbacks or flashforwards, moving from external direct action to internal character reflection
Plot structure	traditional narrative structure features: exposition – conflict – rising action – climax – denouement
Point of view	external point of view (looking at the narrative from the outside) or internal point of view (looking out from the inside) 1st, 2nd or 3rd person writing
Setting	setting can be a powerful provider of meaning, e.g. a dystopian story might be set in a desert, implying spiritual emptiness
Symbolism	giving objects or characters an extra layer of meaning to suggest powerful ideas; a drama script about old age features a ticking clock in every scene

⁴ *Literature General Senior Syllabus 2019 v1.4*, p. 50.

⁵ *Literature General Senior Syllabus 2019 v1.4*, p.51.

Key advice

Carefully consider your planning process and allow time to:

- choose your approach to the task, including
 - thinking about people, places and concepts that interest you

Are you interested in contemporary life or a historical period? Is there a specific social issue that intrigues you? Is there an aspect of human behaviour that you would like to explore further? Do you have a strong connection to a specific place such as a beach, a town, a house or a forest?
 - considering a purpose that appeals to you

Are you interested in engaging or exploring? What about celebrating, critiquing, inspiring, satirising, questioning, moving, disconcerting, subverting or entertaining? When you read or view literary texts, which of these purposes do you most enjoy?
 - considering your potential audience

This is a significant decision because audience choice will influence your language choices. Ask yourself: if your work was published, who would be most likely to read it, e.g. children or adults, your peers, people interested in specific concepts, people with specific cultural values?
 - thinking about writing genres that interest you, and that you might enjoy writing

Do you enjoy reading, watching or performing in plays because you love to analyse dialogue? Have you ever read a short story written in a form that changed the way you view narrative writing? Do you like to experiment with narrative structure, or do you prefer to write in a more traditional, directed form?
 - considering other imaginative written genres such as a short story, memoir, monologue, novel chapter, drama script or screenplay
 - having established a purpose, audience and genre, considering how your response might create perspectives and representations to position that audience in relation to cultural assumptions, attitudes, values and beliefs
- gather your ideas into a plan, including
 - developing your key characters

Narrative structure demands that at least the major character has an arc; their development from one point in their life to another. What change/s will be evident in the character/s? Why have these changes occurred; how do they link to the former lives of the characters, and what are their implications for the future?
 - considering your plotline

Having established character arcs, determine how these will occur as a series of stages. Consider backward mapping, working from the story's climax to the opening scene as a way of ensuring tightness of structure
 - experimenting with your point of view
 - Which characters are likely to be the most interesting and engaging for your audience? Will the narrative be more effective if seen through the eyes of a major or a minor character? Why?

Writing imaginatively

The following is an excerpt from a student's imaginative written response, titled *Beneath the Mighty Redwood*.

Note: Teachers should be aware that this excerpt contains content that may be of a sensitive nature and are advised to consider this before introducing it to students.

Student response	Features
<p>The sparse treetops swayed in the crisp winter breeze. Rays of warmth streamed through the dark, lush canopy of the redwood forest, scattering streaks of gold across the sugary winter soil. A white speckled canvas that seemingly stretched on for eternity due to the thick and ominous fog. In every direction, the giant redwood's roots consumed and disrupted the earth, thriving off their surroundings. This was no ordinary forest. The tamped-down soil and thick winter mulch hid the sinister underbelly, the trees like guards standing at attention, protecting the secrets that lay <i>beneath the mighty redwood</i>.</p> <p>She was buried in the midst of winter before the leaves of the redwoods had blossomed. Off the common path, so no one noticed the upturned soil, stomped down by his heavy boot. Nor did they see the wild brown mushrooms that sprouted from her body soon after. Weeks passed without worry or disruption, the seasons changed, and the leaves of the giant, whose roots she fed, bloomed an even brighter scarlet that year.</p> <p>"Help!" She called. "Is anyone out there?" But even after just a few days, the frost had settled back over, and mushrooms covered, she was just as indistinguishable as the rest. No one noticed her, buried <i>beneath the mighty redwood</i>.</p> <p>"I know we argued, but I loved her, and I would never do anything to hurt her." He'll say in his melodious tone. A tone he rarely used with her, only the bellowing growls of repercussion is what she heard. Never in the wrong, he would be remorseless and unrepentant. "He makes me a better person," she would tell everyone.</p> <p>When in reality, he whittled her down to the perfect size, perfect figure. He clipped her wings like a gardener trimming off stray twigs. For months she was left wondering <i>beneath the mighty redwood</i>.</p> <p>Autumn came as she listened to its sweet breath chill the lonely landscape. She watched as the amethyst flower bloomed under the gold faltering light and silver-spun clouds. The grass grew back, greener than ever before, and the roots of the redwood snaked through her ribs. The bugs returned, and so did he - autumn was his favourite month, so it was not a surprise to her. He stood tall and proud, the same man she had known in her lifetime before, although he acted with caution - a side of him she had never seen.</p> <p>[...]</p>	<p>The following excerpt demonstrates the Knowledge application criterion through a clearly established and developed concept and perspective across the response.</p> <p>The response shows a discerning use of aesthetic features and stylistic devices by contrasting violent imagery with the imagery of nature. The death of the antagonist at the site of his crime is a stylistic device that prompts critical and emotional responses and shows discerning use of patterns and conventions of the imaginative genre to demonstrate the Textual features criterion. By repeating the time and place, the response shows discerning selection and synthesis as the character's narrative moves along while she stays in the same place.</p> <p>The language choices and changes in tense are used purposefully to show the passing of time. While some sentences are grammatically inaccurate, some inconsistencies in the grammatical structures are appropriate as they reflect the position of the protagonist's loss of time in death as well as the changing seasons.</p>

He stood there still, about ten paces to the north of her, he did not look lost, but at the same time, he could not seem to find his destination. She wondered what he had come for... closure, possibly forgiveness? Do the soulless crave these things?

He leaned against his cane, wondering ... A soft, solemn breeze grew, rattling through the bare winter branches of the forest. Slowly tickling the hairs on his exposed neck, sending a creepy chill down his spine. He trudged through the thick mulch once again in search, unknowingly passing over the grave several times. He seemed panicked, disturbed. He stumbles on one of her thick roots and falls - hard.

For a moment, he lays there, seemingly assessing his condition. He scrambles for his cane, but it is nowhere in sight; it had slid down the slope when he fell. He begins to groan and whimper as he attempts to push himself up onto his knees. His hands sink deep into the damp soil. He pulls and yanks, trying to free them. Eventually, he does, both fists full of shattered brown bones.

He jumps, tossing them away in a panic and lets out a disturbed cry. She watches and waits, now towering over him. Him old and crippled; her tall and strong. The scars he left on her, now healed with skin as thick as bark. She watches from above.

"Help!" He calls. "Is anyone out there?"

But no one hears him. He continues to repeat himself, with each cry becoming more and more desperate. His breath begins to fade, and his cries turn into sobs.

"If a tree falls in a forest and no one is around to hear it, does it make a sound?"

The answer had never been clearer to her than now.

He had fallen with no one to hear him.

No one to notice him, his soulless existence at best conjecture; *off the common path, surrounded by wild brown mushrooms*, reunited in the forest, *beneath the mighty redwood*.

More information

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



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