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Criterion 1 — Knowledge and control of texts in their contexts

Characteristics of good responses

Success in this criterion is achieved when candidates show an awareness of how meanings in texts are shaped by purpose, cultural context and social situation. Candidates were rewarded for demonstrating their ability to:

- discriminate in the selection of subject matter
- exploit the conventions of genres for particular purposes
- substantiate analysis with appropriate and well-balanced evidence
- analyse texts, ideas and issues
- respond to the demands placed on them through the roles and relationships adopted when responding to particular questions.

Suggestions

Candidates should:

- go beyond recounting the plot of texts and provide genuine analysis and evaluation of texts
- make work responsive to the nuances and demands of the tasks provided
- understand that there are particular patterns and conventions required for their chosen genres and use these patterns and conventions
- write to the required word limit
- take advantage of the full suite of tasks provided and possible evidence.
Criterion 2 — Knowledge and control of textual features

Characteristics of good responses
Success in this criterion is achieved when candidates show an awareness of appropriateness of textual features for purpose, genre and register.

Candidates were rewarded for demonstrating their ability to:
- organise and arrange ideas logically and cohesively
- control spelling, punctuation and paragraphing
- use clause and sentence structures for effect
- maintain grammatical accuracy
- use a wide range of vocabulary including figurative uses.

Suggestions
Candidates should:
- integrate and synthesise direct evidence within responses for the purpose of analysis
- be fluent with the language of the syllabus (specifically the terms from the glossary)
- avoid common mistakes with run-on sentences, fragments, basic punctuation and spelling
- allocate time to perform a careful proofread.

Criterion 3 — Knowledge and application of the constructedness of texts

Characteristics of good responses
Success in this criterion is achieved when candidates show an awareness of the ways in which texts are selectively constructed and read.

Candidates were rewarded for demonstrating their ability to:
- make choices that invite the reader to take up intended positions
- analyse how readers are invited to take up positions
- evaluate representations
- shape representations
- examine how cultural assumptions, values, beliefs and attitudes underpin texts.

Suggestions
Candidates should:
- provide analysis of and evidence specific to the topics in the examination
• analyse and evaluate texts
• make purposeful choices that invite the reader to take up positions about texts
• evaluate the positions readers take in response to texts
• consider cultural assumptions, values, beliefs and attitudes
• make deliberate language choices when shaping and evaluating character representations.

Sample response

The following response met the A standard as defined by the assessment criteria. It has been reproduced exactly as written and therefore includes any spelling or grammatical errors made by the candidate.

NB: ALTHOUGH THIS TEXT IS THE “AUSTRALIAN VERSION” THE TRANSLATION IS DONE IN STANDARD US ENGLISH. THEREFORE I HAVE SPENT CERTAIN WORDS ACCORDINGLY.

Back from where I have just come, I hear the jangling of keys as my client's cell door is locked. My starched collar is soaked; my suit is dark with sweat; my tie feels unusually tight. Now my head is spinning with bewilderment. I have to get out of here! I cannot believe what I have just been through talking to that chap. Less than an hour ago, sitting down with my client, I was confident of success. Yes I knew the case would be tricky. After all, what jury would believe that the sun's heat and glare could be the sole reason to kill another man. But, it still should have been an open and shut case nonetheless. For what Algiers jury would convict a Frenchman for murdering an Arab? None!

However, I had assumed that I would be dealing with a civilized chap who
would be prepared to lie if circumstances dictated. My clients usually do lie if I deem it necessary. But why not him? I cannot understand why this chap will not lie to see himself set free? Is his freedom not worth more than the truth? Surely "saying more than what is true", or saying "more than one feels", is not lying. That is just saying what others want to hear. We all do it, every day, to make life simpler. What is the difference between "I probably loved mother" and "I loved mother"? Nothing! No, that is not lying: that is just playing the game. But this chap appears almost physically pained at the prospect. It's frustrating. It's quite absurd!

No, it will not take much for the prosecution counsel to come up with a strong case - for which I will have nothing to reply! I can hear my colleague now, "Gentlemen of the jury will take note. Before you stands a man who did not cry at his mother's funeral. And what was his excuse for this callous crime? That he 'controlled his feelings that day'? No! He has appalled the court today by saying that 'naturally' he drank coffee at her midnight vigil before he was 'tired and his back was aching'. That a man could put his own need for physical comfort before respect for his dead mother is nothing but the abominable act of a soulless creature and a heartless criminal. Such an immoral person has no place in society!"

Oh yes. That is just what I will be up against. And, I know exactly what the jury will think. I know, because I think it too. I find him slightly disgusting I must admit. There just seems no discernible reason for his actions. Does he not realize how very unpleasant things may get for him? And he thinks this better than telling a lie? Is he some misguided martyr?
How can this chap not think there is any link between his not crying at his mother’s funeral and him killing an Arab? Why can’t he see this? To say it doesn’t matter that he fired four more shots when the Arab was dead anyway. To say it doesn’t matter that he never cried at his mother’s funeral because she was old and her death was inevitable anyway. It doesn’t matter? It doesn’t matter? How can it not matter? I don’t know if this chap’s ignorance of the legal system is a cause for pity or disgust. Either way, there will be no mercy for him.

He cannot be put into that dock if he’s not prepared to lie. My only chance of winning this case will be to exclude him from the proceedings. His fate would best be decided without anyone asking his opinion. I will speak on his behalf and reduce him to insignificance. And I will say more than what is true. If only this chap would lie - surely that is not too much to expect!

A warder swings open the door. The tension in my mind seems to fade as I take a deep breath. At last, fresh air!
Paper One Part B

Question 2 — Drama: Persuasive/reflective response to literature suitable for a public audience

Topic chosen: 2A

The Importance of Being Earnest, by Oscar Wilde

There was a time when I thought I would never see this day. Six months to the day have passed since that perfectly awful afternoon when Gwendolen was banished by her mother to wait in the carriage. That was a time of my life I had never thought to even think about, let alone tell anyone about. And there I was left with the lordly Lady Bracknell. Great-breasted and fierce, with her bustled behind bulging, she sailed across Lane's perfectly polished tiles. As she sat her skirts folded and fell around her, daring to form nothing less than a perfect corrugation, I could not bring myself to sit, despite her offer. I had gained a solid sense of security in standing that day: if only to allow my escape!

She had surprised me in retrieving a worn notebook from her handbag. "Now down to business", she had said. How utterly unromantic! With aristocratic arrogance she informed me that I was not on her list of eligible young men. I was hardly surprised; she has the exact same list as the Duchess of Bolton. "A matter that could easily be rectified", she advised, should my answers be "what a really affectionate mother requires".
I had fared quite well on the more serious matters, although suffice it to say that I felt quite perplexed to see her taking notes. I sensed that she had already conceded on the more important matters of my substance and that my occupations kept me busy and useful. She seemed pleased that I smoked and was perfectly satisfied that I knew absolutely nothing. But her mask of manners soon faded as we moved on to more trivial matters. She peered over her spectacles, exerting her influence and commanding my attention, "Who was your father? He sounds respectable as he was evidently a man of some wealth".

My mind raced as I hastily considered my options. My immediate thought had been to concoct some false, high-flying, identity. I was so seriously in love, I would have done anything in the world to ensure Gwendolen's happiness! But on a matter as trivial as marriage, how could I have risked not being earnest and telling Lady Bracknell that I did not know whom my father was?

I am glad now that I had not been more resolute with her when I told her of my beginnings in a bag, although I found her reaction at the time perfectly unbearable. Little wonder I still don't like that Gorgon to this day - even if
she is my own Aunt Augusta! Her haughty tone harassed my ears when she enquired as to the locality where the handbag was found. That she could not even remember if my dear late guardian's name was "Thomas" or "James"! I had been determined, in spite of myself, to bolster my case by providing her with the details: "In the cloakroom at Victoria Station, on the Brighton Line". She was clearly unimpressed, and surprised me when she denounced the details of my lineage as "immaterial", and later suggested that my origin was a "terminus". I was perfectly bewildered as I felt this information should have been quite enough to satisfy her.

But instead, her heavy corsetry was like a knight's impenetrable shield, fiercely protecting her only daughter's privileged place in London society. I was bemused - and somewhat amused - at her censuring me for assuming that I would think myself the kind of man suitable for her daughter. "No", she said, "Such a man would have risen from the ranks of aristocracy, or at the very least been born in the Purple Commerce"! Until that moment I had always considered the mystery of my birth as perfectly romantic!

She swished her skirts past me on her way out the door as if she had achieved some sort of victory. She continued her triumph, "I would strongly
advise you, Mr Worthing, to try and acquire some relations before the
season is quite over. You can hardly imagine that I and Lord Bracknell
would allow our only daughter to marry into a cloakroom." Needless to
suggest I was incensed by her remarks. For Heaven's sake, how could she
have expected one to conveniently produce an acceptable parentage
unless one had an acceptable parentage to conveniently produce? All I
could produce was a handbag: a somewhat large, black leather,
wooden-handled handbag. I was infuriatingly distraught for I truly thought
that I had lost all chances of a happy life with my sweet perfect Gwendolen.

But little did I know how easy it would be. Had I not been so earnest about
the trivial things that day, and Lady Bracknell not so steadfast in rejecting
my willingness to produce the bag as evidence of my standing, things
would be very different for me today: and I always have a private wry smile
at the thought. This afternoon, Miss Gwendolen Fairfax will become Mrs
Ernest Moncrieff.

Looking back to that afternoon from today, my own wedding day, I have
never told Lady Bracknell I find it perfectly ironic that it was in fact her, and
not I, who had fulfilled her impossible task and "acquired" me some
respectable relations. I have now discovered that I do, in fact, belong to a
worthy family, and my name is, in fact, Ernest. And I can reveal that I would
never have become the truly trivial man that I am today!

Welcome fellow book club members. Tonight I will be speaking about this month’s book Angela’s Ashes, and in particular how Frank McCourt has represented a somewhat significant issue in the invited reading.

At almost 400 pages, it has been quite a read, hasn’t it? You may not know this but when the book was published in 1996 McCourt was severely censured by the people of Limerick, who accused him of stretching the truth and being blatantly biased to the large and lucrative American market at their expense. I can see by some of your wry smiles that you see the humour in such a reaction. After all, why would anyone expect a life-writing to be anything other than partly fiction: and how could you expect an American not to seek to privilege America in anything he writes? Having read the book several times now, I feel there is no doubt that by foregrounding Americans as generous, tolerant, and egalitarian - and the Irish as miserly, bigoted, and class conscious - McCourt does position the reader to accept America as a better place to live than Ireland. Because we all have different backgrounds, I know that not everyone here tonight may
agree with my producing this invited reading, and suggesting that this is the intrinsic issue he is portraying. However, I feel that there are several key textual features McCourt collectively employs to convey his issue and position the reader to accept this through his invited reading: the issue being of course that Ireland is a backward, intolerant, and miserly country in general - and to prove this he uses the benchmark of America. But how exactly does he manage to do this?

Firstly, let us look at the narrator himself. McCourt has exploited the genre of autobiography, using a first person narrative voice and a succession of 'selves', to restrict the reader to his biased and limited point of view, as you might expect. As his retrospective adult self, McCourt uses the exposition to set up the invited reading for the text. Using past tense, he employs his distant adult voice to complain right at the outset: "My (parents) should have stayed in New York ... where I was born. Instead they returned to Ireland when I was four". I feel that these words really set the tone for the text and betray his biased perspective to the reader: after all, McCourt considers himself an American and thus he naturally resented being taken to live in Ireland. Further, by employing graduation for intensity, McCourt foreshadows the events he begrudges from his life in Limerick: "Worse than the ordinary miserable childhood is the miserable Irish childhood, and worse yet is the miserable Irish Catholic childhood". This accentuates also the level of involvement that the Catholic Church has in being complicit in the poverty and misery in Ireland. From this, the reader knows he is an unreliable narrator right from the start and consequently expects a negative representation of the Irish. Did you?
Secondly, let us look at setting. McCourt carefully constructs the settings as contrasts, and by employing the aesthetic simultaneously with the ideational, he positions the reader to favour the optimism of New York over the incessantly miserable Limerick. For example, he uses visual imagery and hyperbole, "great sheets of rain ... settle forever in Limerick", to construct an atmosphere of unabated gloom and confinement: he has endowed the rain here symbolically with the enduring entrapment of the class-system in Ireland. This is in stark contrast to New York where McCourt creates an exhilarating atmosphere, using imagery and allusion, charging the New York skyline with the ideational notions of the 'American Dream', with "the lights of America twinkling". You remember this from The Great Gatsby last month, don't you? Given McCourt’s representations of New York and Limerick, where would you rather live?

Thirdly, consider the characterisation. As with the setting, McCourt carefully constructs the characters as polar opposites, but this time uses evaluative language to elicit emotional responses and value judgements from the reader. For instance, McCourt depicts New York’s grocer Mr Diminio as "Italian", generous, and tolerant - "He tells Mam to take whatever she likes" and overlooks his father, for "he as a problem ... but ya gotta a nice mother". On the other hand, he constructs Limerick’s shopkeeper Mrs McGrath as dishonest - "she cheats you" - and discriminatory - "She is pleasant ... till Mam shows her the St Vincent de Paul docket". The reader feels sympathy for Mr Diminio, appreciating the multiculturalism and valuing his decency; and feels antipathy for Mrs McGrath, disapproving of her demeanour and her morals - or, lack thereof. The juxtaposition operates to foreground and highlight the misery and ‘evil’ nature of the Irish. He also depicts the priests of Ireland as arrogant, discriminatory, and dishonest.
Whenever someone gives the Jesuits money for Mass, "it goes straight toward buying a new car or bottle of wine instead": and who can forget when Frank McCourt tried three times to join the Christian Brother's school and institutions, they "shut the door in (his) face", because "he (was) from the lanes" and not "from the high streets".

It is for this reason, I believe, that McCourt employs quite a powerful silence in Chapter Eighteen: "I'm seventeen, eighteen, going on nineteen". Given the context, McCourt clearly has done things in these years (like stealing and writing threatening letters) that are in conflict with the values and beliefs privileged by his text. By silencing these events McCourt manages to maintain the privileged status of his New York characters, with whom he identifies, and maintains the relegated status of his Limerick characters with whom he does not want to be associated with. Although clearly a key positioning strategy, I feel this silence is very disruptive - given the genre - and accentuates him more as an unreliable narrator. What do you think?

I believe McCourt has been really quite expert at manipulating the textual features of narrator, structure, setting and characters to construct his compelling version of reality which positions the reader to accept the invited reading and highlight his issue that Ireland is a backward, intolerant, and miserly country: have I managed to convince you?

In closing, may I say that I thoroughly enjoyed Angela's Ashes. Frank
McCourt has written his memoir employing all the literary techniques we would expect of, funnily enough, a fiction writer, thoroughly engaging his reader with the images and emotions he evokes which reflect on the issue he puts forward. Despite the relentlessness of his family's struggle with poverty, McCourt’s often humorous take on the abhorrence and heartbreak makes it both insightful and entertaining reading. Thank you for listening.

Any questions?
Paper Two Part A

Question 1 — Imaginative and reflective writing

Topic chosen: 1C — Eulogy

Ladies and gentlemen, we are gathered today to celebrate the life of a truly great man: a soldier, a gentleman, a son, a father, and a very special friend, Keith Nankervis.

Standing here, looking out at the sea of faces before me, I cannot help but smile at what I know would have been Keith’s reaction. He would have wondered why so many of us were sitting around here this morning wasting our time talking about him, and not down at the pub enjoying ourselves as he always said people should. He would have wondered if we had nothing better to do. That is because Keith was such a modest man, and I do honestly believe that he was never truly aware of the impression he made on the people he met, the differences he made in the lives of those who knew him, and the impact he had on the happiness of those he helped.

Like many of us here today, I had the good fortune to have Keith as my Legacy Foster-Father. My family had been so devastated by my father’s tragic death in the Vietnam War. Then, Keith Nankervis stepped into our life.

I still remember the first day I met Keith. I was eight. He told my brother and
that every boy needs a Dad in his life, and because we had lost ours, he
would be a fill-in Dad. Every second Sunday at nine o'clock sharp Keith
would pull up in our driveway with some new adventure planned for the day.
He took us hiking, fishing, camping, and sometimes just stayed at home. I
will never forget the day that we built a go-cart and how angry our mother
was when she got home to find we had used the wheels off her clothes
trolley. We blamed Keith: after all, it was his idea, and we knew that Mum
would never be angry with him.

Keith also always knew whenever something was wrong. He knew
everything - and it was like we were made of glass. We spent hours lying
on the trampoline looking up at the sky wondering which fluffy white cloud
Dad was living on. Keith would tell us that our father was a hero. Two years
ago, at his seventieth birthday, there were sixty-three boys present who
had known Keith as their foster-father, spanning some forty years of
weekends. He was a caring and compassionate man who was a strong
pillar of rock which supported us all in our darkest hours.

Keith had served for ten-months in the Vietnam War. He saw atrocities that
would make our blood run cold and kept strong. He hated war as only a
soldier who has lived it can. He told us that he was asked to kill people who had done him no harm and with whom he had no quarrel. It was once said, I believe, that "Great people need great sorrows and burdens, or half their greatness goes unnoticed". I believe if anybody's life has been moulded by fate to fit that saying, it was Keith's. It is, after all, truly hard to comprehend how great a man he was without knowing the hardships he had endured in life; but is not the sole reason he is great - on the contrary, this merely accentuated his greatness and inspiration. He said that it was wrong to conscript young boys off to fight and die for a cause many of them did not even believe in. Unlike my father, who had been conscripted, Keith had volunteered. He had lost his wife and young son in a car accident when he was twenty-two: and he had gone to Vietnam hoping he would never return, or that if he did, it would be in a body bag. Keith said it didn't seem fair that someone like him with nothing to live for should survive and linger one, and that someone like my father, who had everything to live for, should have died.

The Keith I knew was a man with kind eyes, a warm smile, and a generous heart. There were many Vietnam veterans who returned silent, solitary shadows of their former selves; and many more who never truly returned at all. But for Keith, his life had been so enriched as a consequence of it. Thinking he would never find true love again, he met Nancy, a young war widow. And, in addition to Nancy's son Matt, who Keith had also been a caring foster-father to, they had two lovely daughters, Phoebe and Amy who unfortunately have had their flight grounded and could not make it to be with us today. But, he considered among his greatest blessings was to have known boys like me, like my brother, and like every other foster-son here today: the sons of what he called his "war heroes". Keith Nankervis was a man who had not let the ravages of war ravage his heart.
But at this time, one thing Keith would always say springs clearly to my mind: that when he got to the vast green meadows of Heaven, he would be sure to tell all our fathers what fine young men we were. Well Keith, I know that somewhere in Heaven today, there are a group of Australian soldiers who have given the ultimate sacrifice gathering to welcome another hero into their ranks. I am sure they will thank you, Keith, for looking after us, our mothers, making sure we all had the chance to do things that boys need to do growing up, and for keeping our fathers’ memories alive in our hearts.

And there is something I must say to Keith’s family. I speak on behalf of his sixty-three foster sons, and indeed everyone here today: we hope our words speak of our respect, our tears of our affection, and our very presence speaks of our admiration for the man who was your husband and your father. Please take whatever comfort that you can from us during this difficult time. We hope that you are able to find solace in knowing that Keith’s death is not an end, but a new beginning. Beyond the white shores of Paradise, he will be at last in his far green country under a bright sunrise; at peace forevermore.

To our dear friend, may the flight of Angels take thee, under the guidance of a clear star, to thy eternal rest.

God bless you, and I am sure we will all see you again soon enough.
In their respective poems, "The Land Itself" and "Terra nullius", Australian poets Philip Hodgins and Philip Rush contrastingly depict the land of Australia and man's relationship with the land. In "The Land Itself", Hodgins describes the dominant culture's changing uses of the land and the increasing damage caused to the land by these activities to make it what it is today. In "Terra nullius", Rush depicts the conflicting opinion of Australia between the European culture of owning land and the despair felt by the Aboriginal people during the period when the colonisers took their lands from them. Both poets employ textual features to carefully construct contrasts to highlight the competing attitudes, values, and beliefs toward the land and it is where these representations intersect that the meaning of each poem is made.

In "The Land Itself", Hodgins uses juxtaposition to highlight the competing attitudes toward the land that exist within the dominant European culture's ideological perspective of capitalism. He constructs contrasting representations of the impacts of farming and mining to foreground the damage caused to the land through man's use. Utilising two seven-line stanzas to create a steady pace, Hodgins depicts farming as being low-impact on, and in fact 'naturally' suited to, Australia. Being a third
generation dairy farmer, Hodgins’ attitude does not surprise. He represents this idea by describing the effects of nature on the land, and the impact of man farming the land, in a similar way. He uses visual imagery to describe the land as "cracking at the end of summer/... losing its topsoil/ to the wind". He describes farming using fricative sounds and visual imagery: "Sheep and cattle are there with their hard split feet/ They loosen topsoil that will ... blow away". However, Hodgins constructs a negative representation of man’s use of the land for mining. He uses more visual imagery, "Further out where the colours are all sun-damaged/... and the land is barely held together", to represent the unique and fragile nature of the ‘Red Centre’ of Australia with its rich iron ore deposits. Readers fill the gap here through their own knowledge that the degradation of the land by open-cut iron mining is irreparable. The juxtaposition operates to privilege Hodgins’ point of view that the farming of introduced species is a sensitive enough land use to make money. It is for this reason that Hodgins marginalises the farming of native animals like "emus ... (and) kangaroos", which are not profitable, only managing to nurture "tax-write offs": and in doing so he also effectively silences the voice of the indigenous Australians.

Where Hodgins uses juxtaposition to highlight the competing values, attitudes, and beliefs that exist within the dominant white culture, Rush uses it to highlight the competing ideological perspectives of Australia between cultures.
To this end, in "Terra nullius", Rush also emphasises the detrimental effects of the dominant culture's use of the land. Using a preponderance of literary devices - repetition, gradation, exclamation and dialect - Rush constructs a negative representation which marginalises the coloniser's culture by emphasising the environmental damage cause by farmers introducing species which the reader again knows have become pests, "No fox, no sparrow, goat or horse ... unrabbitted!". Rush juxtaposes this representation of the "white man('s)" attitude of using, and causing damage to, the land with that of the Indigenous Australian's notion of respect. He represents the Aboriginal culture as not having any impact depicting the condition of Australia, after tens of thousands of years of habitation, as being in its natural state using repetition for emphasis: "An empty land, a vacant land". Rush depicts the Aboriginals' relationship with the land as being so sacred that they could never do anything that would possibly damage it, because it would be akin to destroying themselves: "The Aboriginal is lost when they are dispossessed of land" - in other words, if Australia was ever lost or destroyed, the Aboriginal race would cease to exist.
In "The Land Itself", Hodgins contrasts the different relationships that the farmer and mining companies have with Australia by describing them both as sharing common characteristics using visual imagery: "the land/... drying out and cracking" mirror the "farmers in their cracked and dried out boots". This reinforces his notion of farming being in-tune and natural to the landscape. He employs short sentences as he depicts the unpoetic and distant nature of the relationship that mining companies have with the land: "Company Personnel" have reduced the relationship to nothing more than "a computer screen of numbers". This increasingly distant relationship foregrounded by Hodgins is in sharp contrast to that conveyed in Rush's representation of the Aboriginal.

Through his employ of powerful and emotive imagery, Rush describes Australia through the Aboriginals' profound spiritual connection: "For their existence, heart and soul, is bound in rock and earth and sand". The inextricableness of the relationship is emphasised by his type of diction, "heart and soul". He uses these words to emphasise that the Aboriginal is completely devoted to Australia because they believe it to be the physical embodiment of their ancestral spirits. Moreover, by identifying various aspects of the land by using a lexical chain, "rock and earth and sand", Rush conveys the Aboriginal belief that Australia not only owns them, but it also owns every aspect of their lives - a notion of their "Dreaming" ideology. The effect of Rush's juxtaposition serves to privilege his point of view that the Aboriginals' culture is more highly viewed than that of the colonisers'.
In their respective poems, both poets construct contrasting representations of Australia, and man’s relationship with, and attitude toward, it to privilege their divergent ideological perspectives. In "The Land Itself", Hodgins depicts the dominant European culture as essentially having an "economic" relationship with the land: Australia is something to be owned and used. In contrast, Rush constructs an alternative version in "Terra nullius", portraying Australia as having a spiritual affinity with the indigenous people and that this land controls them in many ways. However, despite their somewhat contrasting representations and views, both poets privilege the perspective that Australia is something of a paradise, and is vital to the livelihood and existence of both the European and the Aboriginal races; and consequently should never be destroyed.

A stereotype is the over-generalisation, over-simplification, and exaggeration of characteristics used to describe and judge members within a particular group and often in comparison to other members of the group, or other groups. Of the many influences on how we view the fictional or selected elderly as opposed to real life, and the elderly in general compared to youth, the media is the most pervasive and powerful. The construction of the elderly in the media is heavily influenced by cultural stereotypes. Despite the discriminatory and limiting effects has on the elderly, all forms of media construct and reinforce representations that perpetuate negative ageist stereotypes. Ageist stereotypes are an extreme form of representation of the elderly that is commonly constructed in film and television. Through their repeated use, ageist stereotypes are reinforced and become instantly recognisable, and therefore are regularly exploited in advertising where they invite prejudicial judgements about the elderly. Despite this, the media continues to perpetuate ageist stereotypes with little regard to the detrimental impact this has on the elderly.
Ageist stereotypes are constructed in film and television where multi-character texts rely on an extreme form of representation of characters to quickly tell a story, and in news reporting for dramatic effect.

Not all stereotypes are negative, but those that are have the greatest impact attached. For example, in the sitcom "The Simpsons, the character of "Gramp" is constructed to foreground the most demeaning and feared aspects of being old - the loss of physiological and psychological functions. His character is depicted as representing loss of independence by living in a nursing home; incontinence by soiling his trousers; paranoia as he is always afraid of youth and foreigners; being unloved by getting himself locked out on Christmas Day; and senility by rambling, forgetting things, and being child-like. While very humorous, this version of the elderly silences the version of those who are independent, healthy and mentally acute well into their senior years; like Rupert Murdoch and Frank Lowy (both 82) for instance. News reporting also regularly represents the elderly as vulnerable and defenceless victims of crime to sensationalise a headline:"Elderly Pensioner Scammed Out of Life Savings" and "Elderly Couple Robbed While Watching TV" are common examples. Very rarely will a reader read "Healthy Youth Robbed While Out For A Run". The repeated use of stereotypes in film, television, and news reporting has naturalised the over-generalised, over-simplified, and exaggerated assumptions they foreground as being attributable to all elderly people. Consequently, the instantly recognisable nature of ageist stereotypes means they are particularly effective in advertising.
Established ageist stereotypes are reinforced and exploited in magazine advertisements and television commercials because they are recognisable; with little regard to what is actually true. Not all stereotypes are negative, but those that are invite prejudicial judgments about the elderly and old age. For instance, although many people suffer from osteoporosis, very few suffer the extreme effects represented in the Pfizer's printed advertisement for "Caltrate". The character in the image constructed is an old lady who has an exaggerated curved spine. The composer also employs many other 'symbols' of old age - gray hair, glasses, slippers, a bandaged shin and a walking frame. The composer knows that the viewer will complete the gaps in the text by mobilising other naturalised stereotypical assumptions; for example, the old lady probably has dementia and lives in a nursing home. This privileges the cultural assumption that the elderly are in fact a burden on society. The constructed image silences the elderly who enjoy good health and a mobile lifestyle because these are in conflict with the beliefs about the elderly the composer wishes to privilege. This woman is juxtaposed by what appears to be a younger version of herself, a fit woman constructed to be at the pinnacle of her health in youth. The negative aspects of old age - and positive aspects of youth - foregrounded invoke a fear of getting old in the young and middle-aged; positioning them to accept the invited reading that taking Caltrate tablets can help them avoid this infirmed state and keep them fit. The media reinforces negative stereotypes of the elderly in advertising, even though perpetuating such stereotypes is not in the interests of the elderly.
The media's choice of and continued employ of ageist stereotypes works ideologically to inculcate and perpetuate limited and distorted perceptions of and between the elderly in society. Where such stereotypes are acted on in a negative way, this leads to discrimination of the elderly by others. The elderly repeatedly complain that they are often demeaned in public by others speaking loudly and patronisingly to them because of the widely held misconception that all old people must be deaf and senile. They are also overlooked for jobs and promotions by employers because of the false belief that they will not be able to work to the physical and mental capacity of someone younger. Moreover, negative stereotypes impacts the way the elderly see themselves. Many older people limit their recreational pursuits and relationships because they are not considered 'age-appropriate' and live in fear of being a target of crime because news reporting regularly represents them as being weak and defenceless victims of robbery. To a lesser extent, this applies to younger people, who feel less inclined for certain careers or sporting pursuits as they are "too young to be doing an 'old man's' thing". The media's perpetuation of negative stereotypes adversely impacts the dignity and rights of both the elderly and the youth.

All forms of media utilise negative stereotypes of the elderly without regard to the discriminatory and limiting effect this can have in real life. Ageist stereotypes are commonly constructed in film, televisions, and news reporting; and because the exaggerated and simplified attributes ascribed have become naturalised, they are regularly exploited in advertisements. Not all stereotypes are negative, but those that are can lead to discrimination by others and limit the dignified enjoyment of life within age groups. The media's use of ageist stereotypes can never be eliminated, but the public can be taught to understand that they represent merely an exaggerated and biased version, and not real life.