

# Essential English

## Preparing Unit 4 assessment for endorsement

January 2020

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### About this advice

This advice is intended to help teachers construct Unit 4 assessment in preparation for endorsement. It provides information about the:

- Summative internal assessment 3 (IA3)
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Resources on the QCAA Portal to help teachers construct assessment instruments include the:

- quality assurance tools
- accreditation courses 1, 2 and 4
- cognitive verb toolkit
- sample assessment instruments and responses in the syllabus resources for Essential English.

**Note:** Updated Essential English sample assessment instruments have been uploaded to the QCAA Portal.

The specified audience and studied texts need to be different in order for schools' IA3 and IA4 assessment instruments to be deemed different enough from the QCAA sample assessment instruments to satisfy the practice of authenticity.

# Summative internal assessment instrument 3

## Topic 1: Responding to popular culture texts

This assessment instrument is a responding task: students explain the ways popular culture text/s convey meaning in a multimodal response.

The popular culture text/s studied for this assessment can have an Australian focus, but this is not mandatory. Many schools are choosing overseas' texts for this assessment instrument.

### Tips for IA3

- Choose a popular culture text/s incorporating a representation (or range of representations of that you require your students to explain only one) that contain a range of language features and text structures. This will give students choice about the features and structures they want to explain in their response.
- In the task section of the assessment instrument:
  - express your task in a way that enables students to explain **one** representation of an identity, place, event or concept in the studied text and demonstrate the range of standards (from 'thorough' in Standard A to 'uneven' in Standard E).
  - frame your task using either a statement or a question (e.g. statements incorporate the cognitive verb of explain while questions illicit the cognitive verb of explaining).
- Students need to incorporate a combination of at least two modes, one of which must be spoken/signed. Defining the requirements of the selected multimodal genre will provide clarity for students, e.g. if it's a video essay, specify the required modes that are appropriate for your context (several combinations of modes are possible — one combination is the inclusion of clips from the studied text and a student voiceover).
- If students are presenting to the class (or have the option to), students need to be explicitly instructed in the task section to not only create their multimodal response but to present it, e.g. 'Create and present your multimodal PowerPoint film review ...'
- Students need to be given the opportunity to explain how language features and text structures of the studied text 'shape representations' and 'shape meaning and invite particular responses'.

Some teachers will make this requirement explicit in the assessment instrument while others may not according to the needs of their cohort. If your students need to be reminded of this requirement, include this instruction, but doing so is not mandatory.

## Topic 2: Creating representations of Australian identities, places, events and concepts

This assessment instrument is a creating task where students influence audiences about an Australian social group in a written response. However, students may incorporate digital elements according to the required genre, e.g. images in a website, pitch or blog.

### Tips for IA4

- Students do not have to study one complete text for the IA4. They can study a series of texts (e.g. a collection of short stories or poems), but the assessment instrument must make the text/s and focus clear.
- The studied popular culture text/s must be different from the one/s assessed in the IA3 and they must be one/s that allow students to ‘shape representations of Australian identities, places, events and/or concepts and influence meaning ...’ and ‘influence audiences to accept perspectives on an Australian social group’.
- Students are to be given the opportunity to demonstrate:
  - the use of written language features informed by an understanding of purpose, audience and context
  - the use of additional media (if/where appropriate according to genre)
  - the skill of influencing audiences to accept perspectives of an Australian social group
  - the skill of using cultural assumptions, attitudes, values and beliefs to shape representations of Australian identities, places, events and/or concepts and influence meaning.

## General principles for creating IA3 and IA4 assessment instruments

- Use the quality assurance tools to quality assure each assessment instrument and avoid including any information/instruction that isn't critical for students to complete the task.
- Provide instructions in scaffolding only where necessary according to the needs of your particular context and cohort — scaffolding is not compulsory.
- Keep the context short and general in nature by including only information about the:
  - text/s being studied and
  - the genre being used as a vehicle for communicating ideas/information.

The context is about the situation in which learning occurs. Restricting instructions to only those that satisfy this purpose may prevent contradictions and vital instructions being left out of the task section of the assessment instrument.

- Stipulating the genre, audience and purpose is essential to satisfying the attribute of validity. It also clarifies your thinking, helps you frame the task and makes requirements explicit to students. Schools can weave these three vital pieces of information into the task statement or itemise them at the top of the task cell as modelled in the updated sample assessment instruments.

The purpose provided here is general in nature, e.g. to inform, entertain, reflect on, persuade.

- Use consistent terminology throughout your assessment instrument, e.g.:
  - In the IA4, if the student response requires two–three journal entries, retain the plural form throughout.
  - In the IA3, if the student response is a 'multimodal PowerPoint film review', retain this terminology every time it's referred to rather than using different or shorter terms like 'presentation' or, alternatively, if students are constructing a 'video essay', retain this terminology rather than switching to substitute terms like 'video film review'
  - Being consistent with plurals and singular nouns will prevent ambiguity, e.g. not using 'representation' in one section and then 'representations' in another.
  - Make it clear where students have choice (e.g. a choice of films or characters or concepts to explain), and use bullet-pointed lists, properly formatted, to help students understand the decisions they need to make.
  - If the task requires students to explain the representation of Australian identity through a character in a particular text, ensure that the scaffolding doesn't contradict it, e.g. don't include an additional layer such as 'Australia and Australian identity', which adds another requirement to the task, making it not unendorsable.
- Sequence instructions in the task section of the assessment instrument in a way that enables students to quickly understand how they are to respond to the studied text:
  - Position the most important information at the top of the task cell, e.g.:
    - If you are itemising genre, purpose and audience rather than weaving it into your task statement, position this information at the top of the task section (see the QCAA samples assessment instruments for examples).
    - In the IA3, if you are using a statement rather than a question to frame your task, using the cognitive verb of 'explain' at the beginning of the sentence (or close to the front of the statement) will emphasise to students that they need to demonstrate this cognitive verb.

- If you are using a question, ensure that students are able to ‘explain’ by carefully testing its construct — some questions that begin with ‘what’ allow students to only recount or describe, which will prevent the instrument from being endorsed.
  - In the IA4, if you are using a statement rather than a question, using the cognitive verb of ‘construct/write/create’ at the beginning of the sentence will clarify task requirements. If you are using a question, ensure that students are able to answer the question in their response.
  - Write your own sample student response to test the question’s validity and accessibility.
- Instruct students to do only what the syllabus requires by referring to the quality assurance tool and/or the instrument-specific standards and turning each of the descriptors into a question, e.g.:
    - In the IA3, does your task allow students to explain how ‘cultural assumptions, values, attitudes and/or beliefs underpin texts and shape representations of identities ... in a popular culture text’?
    - In the IA4, ask yourself whether your task allows students to ‘shape representations of Australian identities, places, events and/or concepts and influence meaning...’ and ‘influence audiences to accept perspectives on an Australian social group’.
  - Ensure that the scope and scale of the task is appropriate, so students are being given the opportunity to demonstrate the range of standards within the conditions (4–6 minutes or 500–800 words) from Standard A (‘thorough’) to Standard E.
    - For scale, this can be achieved by selecting only one representation to be explained.
    - For scope, this can be achieved by ensuring that only cognitive verbs from the syllabus are being used and that an age-appropriate audience is specified.