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**Year 12 ATAR English 2021**

**Semester 2 Examination**

**Markers’ Report**

**Section One- Comprehending**

**General Observations**

Please note these general observations apply to each question. A section which deals with each text specifically can be found on the following pages.

* Read the question carefully- and the texts themselves- before attempting your response. Use the words of the question to frame your response.
* Be specific when referring to ‘language features’. This is also true when referring to ‘imagery’. The most effective responses will be those that refer to specific textual features when engaging with each text. Also, the same could be said for ‘descriptive language’. These terms are too general, too broad to be an entirely successful approach. Also add ‘sensory imagery’ to that list as well.
* Students are encouraged to refer to the glossary at the back of the syllabus to ensure key terms and concepts are fully understood. The document can be accessed using the following link: <https://senior-secondary.scsa.wa.edu.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0003/576705/English-Y12-Syllabus-AC-ATAR-GD.PDF>
* Students who write rather long-winded explanations of the text won’t tend to be successful with this approach. The section rewards succinctness rather than verbosity.
* Keep chosen quotations as brief as possible. There are no prizes on offer in your WACE examination for copying out large tracts of the text in your own handwriting.
* ‘Reader’ rather than ‘viewer’ or ‘audience’ please with WRITTEN texts.
* A narrative approach (a kind of ‘Say what you see’) isn’t a successful approach to take. Your WACE examiner will expect you to have read and understood the text; what they’re looking for is your engagement with it, your insight into how the text’s construction invites a specific response from the reader.
* Keep your discourse as sophisticated and as formal as possible.
* Try not to list quotations or group them together as it limits the effectiveness of each one and limits your ability to analyse each quotation on its merits.
* Ensure that your first sentence is a direct response to the question and is as focused/specific as possible.
* Time management, for some students, remains an issue for this section and this will need to be addressed prior to your WACE examination.
* In some cases, students wrote substantially more about one text than the others. In some instances, that meant that Q3, for example, was sketchy and incomplete. This isn’t a productive strategy.
* Some quotations were misspelt. Not a good look for your WACE examiner.
* Make sure you clearly number your responses, as this helps your examiner to know where one question ends and other one begins.
* There is no expectation that students write a conclusion to their responses in this section.
* Handwriting remains an issue for some students. Please note that your WACE responses are scanned in and marked online. Therefore, the legibility of your handwriting becomes extremely important.
* While it was GOOD to see students planning their responses, it is also important to note that this planning should be as efficient as possible and not take up too much time.
* Some responses contained NO quotations whatsoever. This cannot happen in your WACE examination if you have expectations of success in this subject.
* Just because you’ve used a quotation, it doesn’t mean that you’ve understood the significance/importance of that to how the text’s construction invites a specific response. Some students used quotations, for example, to summarise plot/character/setting rather than engaging with it and exploring how the author’s choice of language constructs ideas in specific ways.
* Embed quotations to ensure your academic discourse is as sophisticated as possible. Use short quotations.
* Students need to revise what ‘voice’ means in a text and how voice is constructed. There is a SCSA/syllabus definition in the subject-specific feedback further on in this markers’ report.
* Please refer to authors by their surname… unless you are on first-name personal terms with them and they happen to be friends with you on social media. Also easier (and less words) than referring to them as ‘the author’.
* Q2 asked for YOUR interpretation, not the ‘audiences’ or the ‘readers’… YOUR interpretation. Read questions carefully.
* The most effective responses- across all questions in this section- explored how conventions COMBINED to construct the central ideas. Rather than just noting what you noticed, look for patterns and how conventions work together.
* Some responses to Q3 were noticeably shorter than the responses to the other 2 questions. Time management, people… time management.
* However, ALL questions were answered by ALL students in some form or another which was very good (and promising) to see.

May the odds be ever in your favour for your WACE examination. Please let your teacher know if you need their help in any way, shape or form. Good luck.

**Question-Specific Feedback**

**Question 1**

Discuss the ways **Text 1** constructs contrasting ideas about Darwin.

**In their response to Question 1, candidates may:**

Clearly identify contrasting ideas about Darwin which may include:

* Darwin is violently hot, uncomfortable, unwelcoming, shocking, alien and hard to get used to
* Darwin is a dream: exotic, naturally beautiful, colourful and exciting
* Candidates may choose to approach this by contrasting the dream of Darwin with the reality

Discuss the ways these ideas are constructed by analysing:

* the structural change between the first and second paragraph
* the verbs ‘thrashes’ and ‘trap’ being attributed to the setting, constructing it as violent and oppressive
* the verb phrases attributed to the family (‘it shocks them to discover’, ‘venture outside’, ‘hurry back’, ‘wading through broth’, ‘fiddles with the dial’) thereby constructing them as helpless
* the third person narrative point of view which can be read as further disempowering the family as it observes their struggle in the heat
* the description ‘like nocturnal frogs or bandicoots’ which constructs the mother and boy as timid, as though they are hiding away
* the comparison drawn between the reality of Darwin and the boy’s dream, ‘Dah Win’
* the descriptions based on pictures (e.g. ‘sunsets of cartoonish proportions’) representing their perception of Darwin as a dream or naive fantasy
* the inclusion of dialogue between the boy and his mother, and her statement ‘this is it’ which is enhanced by the framing narration ‘though she can hardly believe it’ to show that Darwin is not as she remembered.

**Question 2**

Explain how the writer’s narrative voice shapes your interpretation of **Text 2**.

**In their response to Question 2, candidates may:**

demonstrate an understanding of narrative voice (according to the syllabus*, voice, in a literary sense, is the distinct personality of a piece of writing. Voice can be created through the use of syntax, punctuation, vocabulary choices, persona and dialogue.*)

identify the writer’s narrative voice in the text and may do so by describing it as:

* nostalgic
* reminiscent
* longing
* disconnected or detached
* displaced
* lonely or empty

in addressing the ‘how’, identify techniques used by the author to construct the narrative voice (such as those listed in the syllabus definition above); candidates may also refer to:

* vivid imagery used when describing the marketplace
* listing, which is very specific, used to describe the food ordered
* the integration of Cantonese language in dialogue and descriptions
* the use of punctuation–exclamation and question marks
* short sentences to emphasise confusion and questioning
* the inclusion of dialogue–the man’s question highlights the disconnect
* shifts in tense
* the symbolic function of the camera
* the use of metaphor: ‘shedding of a shell’, ‘wave of emptiness’
* language choices, for example, ‘The question *stung*’

Identify the interpretation that they make of the text; stronger responses will take time to explain the connection between the voice and their interpretation, thus addressing the key word ‘shapes’

Discuss the meaning, ideas or reading they make when explaining what their interpretation is which may include, but is not limited to:

* that people often hold strong feelings for the place in which they were born
* often it is difficult to feel like you belong to a place after being away for so long
* that there is a strong connection between place and identity
* understanding that the narrator feels a sense of loss for her culture or place of birth
* the importance or significance of memory.

**Question 3**

Examine how written and visual elements represent female surfers in **Text 3**

**In their response to Question 3, candidates may:**

identify the representation of female surfers that is constructed as:

* powerful
* determined
* skilful
* heroic
* independent
* challenging gender stereotypes

Discuss written and visual elements in isolation; however, stronger responses will most likely draw connections between how the elements work in conjunction to construct the representation – reward candidates who demonstrate the ability to do so,

Identify written elements that may include:

* the title – as ironic and working as a short, matter-of-fact statement
* the bold font working to support the sentiment expressed in the title
* language choices related to strength and reverence – ‘awe-inspiring’ and ‘empowering’
* colloquial language choice such as ‘badass’ related to rebellion and challenging traditional norms
* some candidates may also reference the celebrity surfers listed at the top of the poster
* candidates may identify the relationship between the promotional poster and the text indicating those involved in making the documentary film

Identify visual elements that may include:

* composition–the surfer girl occupying the space suggesting dominance and success
* facial expressions– the serious look of determination with brow furrowed and lip bitten
* body language – arms splayed outward illustrating great skill in balancing  
  movement–the surrounding water and water droplets creating a sense of dominance over the wave
* close camera shot and eye-level angle to emphasise the surfer’s presence and power
* juxtaposition of the image and title working as a contradiction

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**Responding Section**

***General Comments:***

* Revise introduction structure – when marking in bulk, it is so crucial to have an excellent introduction as it immediately establishes you as a knowledgeable, clever student. Do not underestimate the power of a strong opening sentence and logically built argument. Intro’s can largely be memorised for WACE – don’t sell yourself short and simply ‘wing it’.
* Many students need to revise their topic sentences and make sure they are aligned with the key words of the question
* In fact, be sure to **use the key words of the question** throughout your response, but especially at the beginning and close of EVERY SINGLE BODY PARAGRAPH
  + Tieback sentences could still be improved overall to really help “good” essays become “great” essays
* Censor swearing!! It is okay to swear as part of a direct quotation, however, this is still a formal, school assessment, and thus “beeping” out the swearing is more appropriate (especially for old school markers…)
* There were some very good responses throughout this section with a handful of students producing outstanding results proving it is very possible to write a sustained argument that engages with all parts of the question and demonstrates sophisticated textual knowledge

***Question 4:* Explain how and why two distinctly different responses may be generated by the same studied text.**

* 11 responses
  + Texts ranged from The Road, Murderball, and High Noon
* Candidates needed to clearly identify two different responses to the text
* Stronger responses brought context and audience into their discussion, most likely citing how different audiences, from possibly different contexts would respond
* Students were able to respond with personal voice to this question
* It was essential to address the ‘how and why’ of the question as well
  + This required concrete text evidence, with reasoning embedded
* Text knowledge tended to be quite superficial in response to this question
* Remember when writing on The Road, it is still very important to have an arsenal of quotes at your disposal to use as concrete support for your claims
  + *Across the entire exam, The Road was written on with poor specific textual knowledge, which generally stood out as lacking when compared to the detail given by those students who used other texts (this now seems to be a feature across year groups; it is NOT ENOUGH to simply use “carrying the fire” as your only piece of text evidence)*
* More successful responses tended to be written about Murderball in relation to this question

***Question 5:* Examine how the conventions of genre in one studied text have been used in an unexpected way to surprise an audience.**

* 22 responses
  + Texts ranged from The Road, Murderball, and The Dressmaker
* Generally, this question was responded to in a strong fashion, with good text knowledge and strong command of generic features and text detail
* Although many students wrote on both The Dressmaker and Murderball, the question was ultimately better suited to The Dressmaker (in fact, this was quite an easy question to answer with TD in mind…)
  + This is because The Dressmaker actually uses genre in an ‘unexpected’ way
  + While, Murderball does surprise/shock audiences, it doesn’t necessarily use generic conventions in an unusual way (if anything, it is very conventional); some students came unstuck here, although some managed to work their way around this…
* Candidates needed to identify the appropriate genre and utilise associated metalanguage
* A key discriminator was to consider how well students engaged with the term ‘unexpected’
  + This was handled to varying degrees of success

***Question 6:* Compare the ways in which the stylistic features of two studied texts reflect a changing social or cultural context.**

* 8 responses
* This question was perfectly suited to High Noon and The Dressmaker
* It was essential for responses to be comparative, with active connections being drawn between the texts (these could be differences, similarities, etc.)
* Students tended to write well about ‘changing social or cultural contexts’
  + Values and attitudes can be (and often were) brought into the discussion
* However… almost all students who responded to this question did not have a clear understanding of ‘stylistic features’ (according to the syllabus; ‘arrangement of words, sentences, images’). They either just tacked the term onto their analysis or simply ignored it altogether. This did hamper some otherwise excellent essays from scoring even higher marks.
* Text knowledge tended to be very good in this question, with (most impressively) active comparisons between texts being made.

***Question 7:* Explore how the construction of voice in at least one studied text has challenged or reinforced your attitude towards a person, event or idea.**

* 34 responses
  + Most chose to write on Murderball, although some students did write on The Road, and The Dressmaker
* Text knowledge was often very superficial in relation to this question, with a shaky understand of ‘voice’ being displayed
  + Many students chose to quote dialogue in this section; be sure to actually discuss the language being used and not just randomly share the quote
  + Consider tone of voice, and how this constructs character
* Clear connections were not always made between ‘voice’ and ‘attitude’
* This question encouraged students to use persona voice in their own response
  + Some students successfully engaged with this, but not all

***Question 8:* With reference to two studied texts, analyse how texts from different genres have treated a similar idea.**

* 7 responses
  + Different combinations of texts used
* I was generally impressed with students who chose this question, mainly because I knew they were thinking ‘on the spot’ and were comparing texts they most likely had not thought of comparing before
  + There was a ‘freshness’ to some of these responses because of this
  + With that said, most students tended to compare texts along the lines of gender representation (to varying levels of success)
* Students needed to identify one common idea between texts
* Each text genre also had to be clearly specified and engaged with

***Question 9:* Explain the way in which language choices work to offer a perspective in one studied text.**

* 15 responses
  + Most chose to write on The Road, but not all did
* Even though the focus of this question was on ‘language features’, students were still able to discuss visual language features, although not many chose to do this…
* If you were writing on The Road, it was ESSENTIAL to know a range of quotes in support of this question
  + Only very few students had this knowledge
  + Examples tended to be quite general
  + Many students were let down by their lack of specific text knowledge in relation to language features
* Many students handled the term ‘perspective’ in a clunky manner and simply substituted that word for ‘idea’; you need to think more carefully around this topic, particularly if you’re thinking of writing about it for WACE…

***Outstanding responses from the cohort:*** Natalie Langford, Declan Fern, Ellie Parsons, Kyna Schrick.