MA99 EDUCATION

Close study of literature: Summary 03

NSW ENGLISH STANDARD 11-12 SYLLABUS 2024 FOR HSC 2028 AND LATER

1. The focus area at a glance

One text, studied whole and closely, and your own informed response to it.

ITEM	FACT
Course	English Standard Year 11, English Standard 11 to 12 Syllabus (2024)
Focus area	Close study of literature, about 40 indicative hours
Text	ONE substantial literary print text: prose fiction, drama or poetry (a selection from ONE poet counts). Schools choose it. There are no prescribed texts in Year 11
Outcomes	EST-11-01 to EST-11-06, all six apply
Key verbs	analyse (01), explain (02, 03, 06), compose (04, 05)
Assessment	School based. Two mandatory components, each 50 per cent. Tasks 10 to 40 per cent each. From Term 1, 2027, at most one take home task, 15 per cent or less

The whole focus area in four lines

Read the text whole. Look closely at language, form and structure. Place it in its context and among different readers. Form a view and prove it with short, exact evidence.

2. Content points, in order

UNDERSTANDING	ONE LINE
Forms, features and point of view	Form, language features, style, tone and point of view shape meaning
Language and content	What is said and how it is said work as one thing
Conventions	Writers keep or challenge the accepted habits of a form
Perspectives	Different readers can interpret the same text differently

RESPONDING	ONE LINE
Evidence	Choose, interpret and use evidence to support a personal interpretation
Arguments	Write logical, ordered, joined up responses that build an argument
Critical and creative texts	Compose analysis and imaginative writing that show values and perspectives, including your own

NESA's Teaching advice adds: use class discussion, consider the context of the text and its author, look at how the text relates to the conventions of its form, and use the framework for texts by Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander authors.

3. Key terms

TERM	QUICK MEANING (AFTER NESA)
Form	The kind of text (novel, play, sonnet, short story)
Convention	An accepted habit of a form that readers expect
Language features	Tools such as simile, imagery, repetition, sentence length
Style	The overall impression created by language, form and features
Tone	The attitude or feeling shown through word choice and technique
Point of view	Who tells the text and from where
Context	The personal, social, historical and cultural world around a text
Values	The ideas and beliefs in a text
Perspective	The lens a writer or reader looks through
Analyse	“Identify components and the relationship between them” (NESA, Glossary of key words)
Explain	“Relate cause and effect” (NESA, Glossary of key words)

4. Techniques and their effects

FEATURE	EFFECT, IN A SENTENCE
Simile and metaphor	Makes you see one thing as another, giving it a new quality
Imagery	Lets the reader see, hear or feel
Personification	Makes a thing seem alive
Alliteration	Repeated sounds add harshness, softness or speed
Repetition	Stresses an idea, or makes a memory loop
Listing	Builds a picture by piling up detail
Contrast	Sets opposites together to expose a difference
Irony	A clash between what is said and what is meant
Symbol	A thing that stands for an idea
Sentence length	Short sentences hit hard, long ones carry or drag
Direct address	Speaks to “you” to draw the reader in or accuse them

> Never name a technique without its effect. "A simile" is worth nothing. "A simile that makes Scrooge cold and cutting" earns marks.

5. Point of view and tone

POINT OF VIEW	EFFECT
First person	Close and personal, limited to one voice
Third person, close	Inside one character’s mind, with some distance

POINT OF VIEW	EFFECT
Omniscient narrator	A guide who knows all and may judge

Name a tone with an exact word: angry, bitter, tender, mocking, sympathetic, solemn, playful, matter of fact. Notice shifts of tone and say what causes them.

6. Quick close reading routine

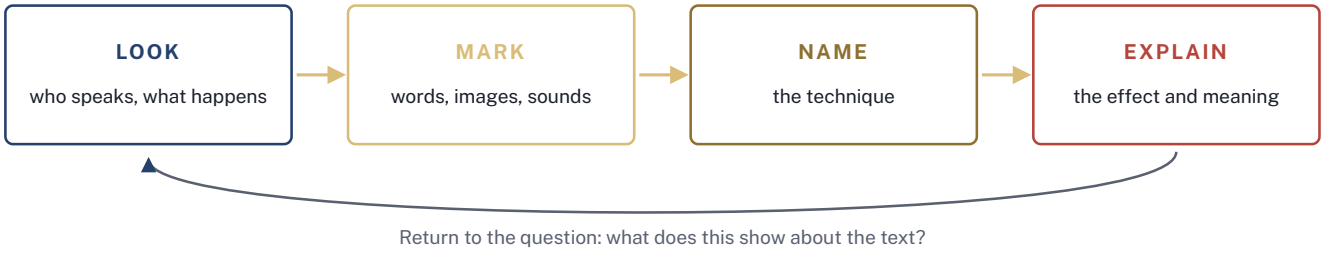


Figure 1 · Look, mark, name, explain.

7. Context, values and different readers

- **Context of composition:** the world the text was written in. Use one or two accurate facts to explain a choice.
- **Context of reception:** the world it is read in now. A line can shock one generation and be familiar to another.
- **Values:** shown through what characters do and say, the setting, and the narrative voice. A text can hold conflicting values.
- **Perspectives:** age, experience, culture and beliefs shape how readers respond. Say which reading you favour and why.
- **Caution:** noticing a value in an old text is not the same as agreeing with it.

8. Evidence and the paragraph

The evidence chain

Quotation (short, exact, embedded) then **technique** (named correctly) then **effect** (on the reader) then **link** (to the argument and the ideas).

TEEL	PART
T	Topic sentence: a claim that answers the question
E	Evidence: a short, exact quotation, built into your sentence
E	Explanation: technique, effect, meaning
L	Link: back to the question

Response shape: introduction (text, author, thesis, hints of main points), two to four body paragraphs, a conclusion that returns to the question with no new evidence.

Cite: poem title and stanza or line; chapter, part or stave; act and scene. Keep quotations short.

9. Critical and creative responses

- **Critical:** takes a stand, uses the evidence chain, follows the response shape.
- **Creative:** copy the voice and style (sentence length, vocabulary, tone), keep to the values of the text or change them on purpose, and use techniques from the text.
- **Reflection:** say what you chose, why, and what effect you wanted. Name the technique and its effect on the reader.
- **Own values:** say where you stand and give a reason from the text.

10. Texts by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander authors

Consider the text's artistic and Cultural value; how Country/Place, Community and lived experience shape its perspectives; ethical responsibilities around Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property; Storytelling and Aboriginal Languages and Aboriginal English as expressions of Culture; oral Storytelling in the text's modes; Cultural symbolism and irony; how the text widens your own values; and the diversity of Communities. Follow protocols and never copy Cultural material into your own writing.

11. Task shapes and what markers want

TASK	WHAT MARKERS REWARD
Short answer on an unseen extract	Accurate reading, technique, effect, brief
Extended analytical response	Clear thesis, whole text, close analysis, logical order
Creative or reflective response	Voice, form, values, explained choices

- [ ] I can state my text's form and three conventions.
- [ ] I can name five techniques, each with an effect.
- [ ] I can say who tells my text and what point of view allows.
- [ ] I can give two facts about my text's context and use them to explain a choice.
- [ ] I can write a TEEL paragraph with a short embedded quotation.
- [ ] I can plan and reflect on a creative response.
- [ ] I have rehearsed at least ten short quotations from my text.

About this resource

MA99 EDUCATION

Scope

NSW English Standard, Year 11. Written to the NSW English Standard 11-12 Syllabus 2024, Close study of literature, for students sitting the HSC in 2028 and later years. Every literary text quoted here is in the public domain or was written for MA99 and says so. Texts in copyright are discussed, not quoted. Quotations were checked against a published text.

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MA99 EDUCATION

Close study of literature: Practice Questions

03

NSW ENGLISH STANDARD 11-12 SYLLABUS 2024 FOR HSC 2028 AND LATER

1. Instructions

Three parts, in the three shapes Year 11 tasks usually take: a short answer on an unseen extract, an extended analytical response on your own text, and a creative or reflective response.

Your school sets your real tasks, and Year 11 has no NESA examination. These questions are written by MA99 in the style of school assessment tasks and a yearly examination, for any Close study text. Where a question says “your text”, answer on the one text you have studied. Part A uses three short passages (a poem, a prose extract and a play extract) written for MA99, labelled that way, so you can try them cold.

How to run this

Part A: 26 marks, about 32 minutes, no notes. Part B: one 20 mark response, about 40 minutes (5 planning, 35 writing), roughly 500 to 650 words. Part C: one 15 mark task, about 30 minutes.

Write Part A and the 10 mark warm ups B1 and B2 in the spaces provided. Write the 20 mark Part B questions and Part C in a separate writing booklet.

After each part, mark yourself against the guidance in section 6, then write one sentence naming the change that would gain you the most marks. Make that change next time.

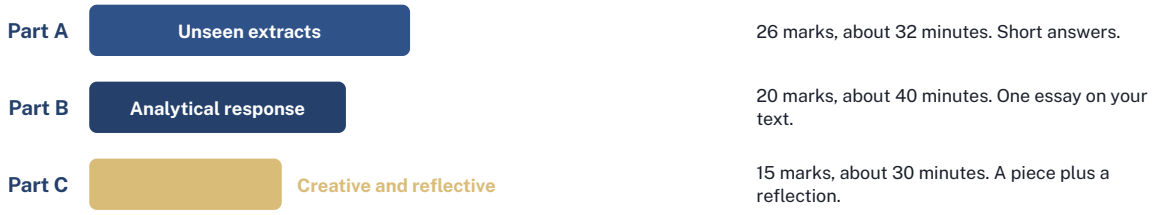


Figure 1 · Where the marks sit. Your time should follow the same split.

About the texts and the marking

Every passage printed here was written for MA99. Where the guidance mentions Owen, Lawson or Dickens, the quotations are checked against published public domain texts and are 15 words or fewer. The marking criteria are MA99’s, written in the style NESA uses. They are not NESA’s. NESA’s key verbs analyse, explain and compose steer the wording: NESA’s glossary defines analyse as “identify components and the relationship between them” and explain as “relate cause and effect” (NESA, Glossary of key words).

2. Part A: unseen extracts (26 marks)

Read each text twice: once for what happens, once with a pencil for how it is made. Answer in the space of a short paragraph or less.

Text 1: a poem, written for MA99

Night Shift (written for MA99)

The bus is empty, but the heater hums.
I count the stops by streetlights, one by one,
and watch my reflection ride beside me,
tired as a coat left on a chair.

The city sleeps. I carry what I'm not:
the cleaner's keys, the quiet, the cold tea,
the hour when nobody is anybody
and every window holds a different home.

At the last stop the driver says, "Mind the step."
Small words. I take them like a gift
and step down into morning,
where the first light is already waiting for me.

Question 1

2 MARKS

Identify TWO features of the form of this poem and state what ONE of them contributes to its meaning.

Question 2

3 MARKS

Explain how the simile "tired as a coat left on a chair" shapes the way we see the speaker.

Question 3

4 MARKS

Analyse how the tone of the poem changes between the first stanza and the last. Refer to the language of the poem in your answer.

Text 2: a prose extract, written for MA99

The Shed (written for MA99)

Dad kept the shed locked. Not with a padlock; he just never talked about it, which worked the same. Today the door stood open, and the smell of oil and cut timber rolled out across the yard like something that had been waiting.

Inside, everything hung in its outline: hammers, chisels, a saw with a handle worn smooth as a river stone. Each tool had its place painted on the board behind it. One outline was empty.

I stood there a long time. The empty shape on the wall was the loudest thing in the shed.

“Looking for this?” Dad said behind me. He held out the chisel, turning it over in his big cracked hands. “I was going to show you. Thought you might be old enough.”

I wanted to say something clever. Instead I said, “Yeah.”

Question 4

2 MARKS

Identify the point of view of this extract and explain ONE effect it has on the reader.

Question 5

4 MARKS

Explain how the writer uses the empty outline to build meaning in the second and third paragraphs.

Question 6

5 MARKS

Analyse how language and structure are used to show the relationship between the narrator and the father in this extract.

Text 3: a play extract, written for MA99

The Last Train (written for MA99)

A suburban platform, evening. MAYA stands at the edge with a ticket in her hand.

MAYA: You said you'd be here.

DAD: (arriving, out of breath) I'm here.

MAYA: Four minutes late is not here.

(A train announcement crackles, unintelligible. DAD takes a step forward; MAYA takes one back.)

DAD: I brought your jacket.

MAYA: It's summer.

(Silence. DAD holds the jacket out. A headlight swells on both their faces.)

DAD: Cold where you're going.

(MAYA looks at the jacket for a long moment, then takes it.)

MAYA: ...Okay.

Question 7

3 MARKS

Explain how the stage directions shape the audience's understanding of the relationship between Maya and her father.

Question 8

3 MARKS

Explain how the dialogue shows that the characters mean more than they say.

3. Part B: extended analytical response (20 marks)

Answer ONE question. Argue one clear view, use short exact quotations from your text, and name techniques with their effects.

Read "your text" as the ONE text you have studied. The questions run from two 10 mark warm ups (mark them with the criteria halved) to full 20 mark examination questions. In a timed task you answer ONE of B3 to B8. If you have not studied a text yet, practise on Owen's "Dulce et Decorum Est", Lawson's "The Drover's Wife" or Dickens's A Christmas Carol.

WARM UP: ONE FEATURE, CLOSELY EXAMINED

B1. Choose one key passage in your text. Analyse how its language features shape meaning. (10 marks)

B2. Explain how the point of view of your text affects the way you respond to a character or idea. (10 marks)

STANDARD: ONE IDEA, BUILT INTO AN ARGUMENT

B3. How does your text use or challenge the conventions of its form to shape meaning? Refer closely to the text. (20 marks)

Write your response in a separate writing booklet.

B4. "What a text says cannot be separated from how it says it." Discuss this statement with reference to your text. (20 marks)

Write your response in a separate writing booklet.

B5. Explain how the ending of your text shapes your response to the whole. (20 marks)

Write your response in a separate writing booklet.

EXAMINATION STYLE: A FULL QUESTION, UNDER TIME

B6. "A text can mean different things to different readers." To what extent does this reflect your personal response to your text? Support your view with close analysis of language, form and structure. (20 marks)

Write your response in a separate writing booklet.

B7. Analyse how context and values influence the way your text was composed and the way audiences respond to it. (20 marks)

Write your response in a separate writing booklet.

B8. Write a response that explains your personal interpretation of your text, supported by evidence. (20 marks)

Write your response in a separate writing booklet.

3.1 A plan to copy

Use this table before you write. Five minutes spent here is worth ten minutes of writing.

STEP	FILL IN	EXAMPLE, USING OWEN'S POEM AND B3
Key words in the question	Underline them	"use or challenge", "conventions of its form", "shape meaning"
Thesis, in one sentence	Your answer	Owen keeps the look of patriotic verse but fills it with ugliness to expose its lie
Paragraph 1: idea and quotation	Claim, quotation, technique, effect	Form: neat rhyme in stanza 1, yet "Bent double, like old beggars under sacks"
Paragraph 2: idea and quotation	Claim, quotation, technique, effect	Language: panic in "Gas! GAS! Quick, boys!" against the dragging opening
Paragraph 3: idea and quotation	Claim, quotation, technique, effect	The ending: "The old Lie" names the convention being attacked
Conclusion	What the text finally shows	The conventional form is turned against its own message

Turning a question into a thesis

Underline the key words. State one view that answers the question, not a summary of the text. Choose the passages that will carry your evidence before you start. If the question names a view ("to what extent"), say how far you agree, and why.

3.2 Two paragraphs to mark

Here are two paragraphs written in answer to B3 on Lawson's "The Drover's Wife" (first published in the Bulletin, 1892). Mark each one with the Part B criteria and say what separates them.

Paragraph one

In the story the drover's wife has to deal with a snake. She watches it all night. There is also a lot about her life and what she has done. It is a sad story and shows that life was hard. The ending is when the snake dies and her son says something.

Paragraph two

Lawson bends the shape of a short story by giving most of the space to memory, not action. The snake is the plot, but between its arrival and its death come the woman's memories of fire, flood and a mad bullock, told in short flat sentences such as "She cried then." The plain, unshowy language matches a woman who does not complain, and the long pause in the plot makes the reader sit through the night with her. In this way the form itself shows that for her the crises never stop.

What separates them

Paragraph one retells, has no quotation and no technique, and does not answer the question about form. Paragraph two makes a claim about form, uses a short exact quotation, links language to character and ends by returning to the question. It would sit in the upper bands. Paragraph one belongs in the lower ones.

4. Part C: creative and reflective response (15 marks)

Answer ONE task. Write a piece (about 250 words) and a reflection (about 100 words) explaining your choices. NESA's Responding points for this focus area name critical and creative texts. The reflection is MA99's addition, because outcome EST-11-06 asks you to explain your own composing choices.

C1. Write a diary entry, a letter or an inner monologue in the voice of a character from your text, at a moment the text does not show. Use the voice and style of the original. Then explain your choices of language, form and structure.

Write your response in a separate writing booklet.

C2. Rewrite a short scene or stanza from your text from the point of view of a different character or speaker. Then explain how the change of point of view changes the meaning.

Write your response in a separate writing booklet.

C3. Write a speech to your class on why your text is worth reading, in a voice that suits a school audience. Then explain how your choices of language and structure would persuade them.

Write your response in a separate writing booklet.

C4. Write a short poem or scene in response to the central idea of your text, showing your own values and perspective. Then explain how your piece connects to the text.

Write your response in a separate writing booklet.

A warning on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander material

If your text is by an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander author, do not copy or imitate Cultural stories, symbols or voices in a creative piece without your teacher's guidance. Write from your own perspective about what the text taught you, and respect Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property.

4.1 A sample for C1, to compare with your own

This sample is written for MA99 in the voice of Scrooge's clerk, Bob Cratchit, from Dickens's A Christmas Carol, at a moment the novella does not show: the night before Christmas Eve. It is a sample to learn from, not a model to copy. It is much shorter than the 250 and 100 words that Part C asks for, so it shows the moves, not the length.

A sample piece, written for MA99

Bob Cratchit's diary, 23 December.

Fifteen shillings, and the fire in the office the size of a coal. Mr Scrooge keeps the key to the box, and I keep my scarf on. Tonight I walked home by the bakers' windows, lit up like something from a story. Tim wants to see them. I will carry him on my shoulder. A little comfort costs nothing to look at, and I intend to look at a great deal of it.

Its reflection

I wrote a diary in the first person, as the form allows a private voice, and copied Dickens's gentle humour ("the fire in the office the size of a coal"). I chose Bob because the novella shows his kindness but little of his thoughts. My value is that warmth can survive poverty, which I take from the way Dickens shows the Cratchit family. Writing as Bob made me notice how much the novella tells us through the narrator, and how little through Bob himself.

What the sample does

It copies voice and sentence rhythm, keeps to the values of the text, and links to a technique in the original (a narrator's gentle humour). The reflection names three choices (form, voice, character) and says what effect each has. It does not claim anything about Dickens that is not true. Facts it uses: Bob Cratchit is Scrooge's clerk and Tiny Tim is his son, and both are in the novella.

4.2 Track your practice

DATE	PART AND QUESTION	MARKS	THE ONE CHANGE THAT WOULD GAIN MOST MARKS

DATE	PART AND QUESTION	MARKS	THE ONE CHANGE THAT WOULD GAIN MOST MARKS

5. A tip sheet for each part

PART	DO	AVOID
A	Read twice. Name a technique and say its effect. Use a short quotation in every answer worth 3 or more marks	Retelling. Listing techniques with no effect
B	State your view in the first two sentences. Keep each paragraph to one idea. Use short, exact quotations	Telling the plot. Long quotations. A conclusion with new evidence
C	Copy the voice and sentence rhythm of the original. Make the reflection name choices and effects	Imitating only the topic. A reflection that only says “I wanted it to be good”

6. Marking guidance (MA99’s, in NESA style)

Mark your response accurately. Award each mark only where the answer shows the thing named.

6.1 Part A: marking guidance and sample answers

Worked example · Question 1 (2 marks)

Features of form: three stanzas of four lines; free verse with no regular rhyme; first person speaker; present tense. Any two. A contribution: for example, the first person present tense makes the experience immediate and private.

WHERE THE MARKS ARE

1 for two accurate features of form. 1 for stating accurately what one of them contributes to the meaning.

Worked example · Question 2 (3 marks)

A sample answer: The simile compares the speaker to a coat that has been left on a chair, so the speaker seems worn out and forgotten, not wanted or needed at that moment. “Tired” is a human feeling given to an object, which makes the speaker seem both weary and a little like an object. This sets up the lonely mood of the first stanza.

WHERE THE MARKS ARE

1 for identifying the comparison (speaker and coat). 1 for explaining what it suggests (tired, forgotten, overlooked). 1 for linking it to the speaker’s loneliness or the mood.

Worked example · Question 3 (4 marks)

A sample answer: The first stanza is weary and lonely: the bus is “empty”, and the speaker’s reflection is the only company. By the last stanza the tone is warmer and hopeful. The driver’s “Mind the step” is taken “like a gift”, and the poem ends with the “first light” “waiting” for the speaker. The shift from “empty” to “waiting” shows the speaker moving from isolation to a sense of being noticed.

WHERE THE MARKS ARE

1 for stating the tone of the first stanza. 1 for stating the tone of the last stanza. 1 for an accurate quotation from each. 1 for explaining the shift and its meaning. Maximum 4.

Worked example · Question 4 (2 marks)

First person (“I”), past tense. One effect: the reader sees only what the narrator notices, so the father’s feelings are revealed through his actions, not explained, which makes the ending feel more real.

WHERE THE MARKS ARE

1 for identifying first person (and tense, if given). 1 for an effect on the reader that is explained.

Worked example · Question 5 (4 marks)

A sample answer: The empty outline on the wall is a symbol of what is missing, and the narrator’s attention to it shows its importance. The writer tells us that “One outline was empty”, a short sentence that makes the gap stand out. The next paragraph calls it “the loudest thing in the shed”, a paradox that turns an absence into a presence. It builds tension, because the reader wonders what is missing, and prepares for the father’s gesture of handing over the chisel.

WHERE THE MARKS ARE

1 for identifying the empty outline as a symbol of absence. 1 for an accurate quotation. 1 for naming a technique (short sentence, paradox, symbol). 1 for explaining how it builds meaning or prepares for the ending. Maximum 4.

Worked example · Question 6 (5 marks)

A sample answer: The relationship is shown as loving but unspoken. The father “just never talked” about the shed, so the silence between them is part of their closeness. His “big cracked hands” show a working man, and the narrator’s attention to them suggests respect. The simile “worn smooth as a river stone” makes the family’s tools seem natural and lasting, like part of the land. Structurally, the long build up of silence ends in short speech: “I was going to show you.” The father’s offer is gentle, and the narrator’s one word answer, “Yeah”, shows that both are too moved to say more. The language is plain, because the feeling is too large for decoration.

WHERE THE MARKS ARE

1 to 2 for a clear statement of the relationship supported by an accurate quotation. 1 for analysing a language feature (simile, adjectives, plain diction). 1 for analysing structure (the build up of silence to brief speech). 1 for a clear link to the meaning. Maximum 5.

Worked example · Question 7 (3 marks)

A sample answer: The stage directions show the distance between the two before any words do: “DAD takes a step forward; MAYA takes one back.” The movement tells the audience that she is pulling away and he is reaching for her. The silence and the swelling headlight add tension and light both faces equally, so the audience sees that both are affected. When she “takes” the jacket, the gesture shows that she accepts his care without saying so.

WHERE THE MARKS ARE

1 for identifying a stage direction accurately. 1 for explaining what it shows about the relationship. 1 for explaining the effect on the audience (tension, sympathy, shared feeling). Maximum 3.

Worked example · Question 8 (3 marks)

A sample answer: The father talks about a jacket but means that he cares and does not want her to leave without his protection. “Cold where you’re going” is practical on the surface and loving underneath, which is called subtext. Maya’s “It’s summer” is a refusal, but her final “…Okay” shows that she hears what he really means.

WHERE THE MARKS ARE

1 for identifying that the surface talk (the jacket) hides feeling. 1 for an accurate quotation. 1 for explaining the meaning beneath it or its effect. Maximum 3.

6.2 Part B: criteria for a 20 mark response

MARKS	WHAT THE RESPONSE DOES
17 to 20	Argues a clear, insightful personal view that answers the question and is sustained throughout. Analyses language, form and structure closely, with short, exact, well chosen quotations and accurate technique names. Shows knowledge of the whole text. Explains effects precisely and links them to ideas and context. Controlled, logical writing
13 to 16	Argues a clear personal view that answers the question. Analyses language, form and structure effectively, with relevant quotations. Shows sound knowledge of the whole text. Explains most effects. Logical writing with minor errors
9 to 12	States a view that mostly answers the question. Explains some language features and some links to form or structure. Uses some evidence, with some retelling. Knowledge of the text is sound but uneven. Writing is clear but not always controlled
5 to 8	Describes parts of the text and gives a limited response to the question. Names some features without explaining effects. Evidence is general. Writing is variable
1 to 4	Recognises a main idea or event with little reference to language. Mostly retells. Limited control of writing

6.3 Part C: criteria for a 15 mark response

MARKS	WHAT THE RESPONSE DOES
13 to 15	The piece controls voice, form and style, shows values and perspective clearly, and links to the text. The reflection explains specific choices of language, form and structure and their effects precisely. Accurate, polished writing
10 to 12	The piece uses voice and form effectively and shows values. The reflection explains most choices. Writing is sound with minor errors
7 to 9	The piece is generally appropriate with some control of voice. The reflection describes choices with limited explanation
4 to 6	A basic piece that shows some link to the text. The reflection is brief or descriptive
1 to 3	A short, undeveloped attempt with little link to the text or reflection

How to use the marks

Mark Part A strictly, one point at a time. For Parts B and C, read the criteria from the top and stop at the first band that fits all of your response. Then read the band above and write down the single missing thing.

- [ ] I can give the effect of a technique, not just its name.
- [ ] I have tried each of the three parts under time.
- [ ] I can write a thesis that answers the question in one sentence.
- [ ] I used short, exact quotations and embedded them.
- [ ] I wrote a reflection that names choices and effects.

About this resource

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