MA99 EDUCATION

English Advanced: Practice Paper 1

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

1. Instructions

A complete Year 11 yearly examination for English Advanced, written to the 2024 syllabus. Sections I and II follow the yearly examination in NESA's sample Year 11 scope and sequence: an unseen reading task, then an extended critical response to the text you studied closely. Sections III and IV follow the shape of the HSC papers you will sit from 2028: the paired text question mirrors HSC Paper 2 Section I (Textual conversations), and the craft of writing question with a short reflection mirrors Section III (The craft of writing). Complete it under timed conditions before reading the marking guidance.

General instructions

- Reading time: 10 minutes.
- Working time: 2 hours and 40 minutes.
- Write using black or blue pen.
- Attempt every section. Answer Section I in the spaces provided. Answer each of Sections II, III and IV in a separate writing booklet.
- Use Australian spelling. Keep every quotation short and exact.

Total marks: 80

Section I, 20 marks. Attempt Questions 1 to 6. Allow about 40 minutes for this section.

Section II, 20 marks. Attempt Question 7. Allow about 40 minutes for this section.

Section III, 20 marks. Attempt Question 8. Allow about 40 minutes for this section.

Section IV, 20 marks. Attempt Question 9, parts (a) and (b). Allow about 40 minutes for this section.



Figure 1 · How the 80 marks are split across the four sections. Your time should follow the same split: about two minutes a mark.

Sitting it as two papers

Many schools split a yearly examination across two sessions. To practise that way, sit Sections I and II together (10 minutes reading, 1 hour and 20 minutes working), then Sections III and IV together (5 minutes reading, 1 hour and 20 minutes working). The two reading periods add up to 15 minutes, 5 more than the single sitting, because the second session needs its own reading time. The marks and the guidelines do not change.

The texts in this paper

- **Section I:** three unseen texts, each written for MA99. You need no prior knowledge of them.
- **Section II:** the one substantial literary print text you studied for Critical study of literature, such as Heart of Darkness, King Lear or the poetry of W B Yeats.
- **Section III:** the two texts you studied for Narratives that shape our world, such as Othello and New Boy, or any other pair your school set.
- Othello and Yeats's poems are also on NESA's 2027 to 2030 HSC prescriptions list (Year 12 Critical study of literature). This paper treats them as Year 11 texts.

> Read all three unseen texts before you write a word. The comparison question is easier once you have seen what the texts share.

2. Section I · Unseen texts

Section I

20 marks. Attempt Questions 1 to 6. Allow about 40 minutes for this section. Read Texts one, two and three carefully, then answer the questions. Your answers will be assessed on how well you demonstrate understanding of the ways language, form and structure shape meaning, and on how clearly you express your ideas with close reference to the texts.

Text one · prose fiction · written for MA99

The Height Chart

On her last afternoon behind the counter, Mira swept the shop from the back wall to the door, the way her mother had taught her, so that whatever you gathered went out with you and nothing stayed in the corners. The shelves were bare. Without their tins and their jars the room seemed to breathe more slowly, and the winter light came in flat and gold across a floor that had not been this empty in forty years.

She found the marks when she pulled the old freezer away from the wall. Low on the plaster, hidden all this time, a ladder of faint pencil lines climbed towards the light switch, each one dated, each one a name. Some she knew by heart. Some belonged to children who had grown tall and moved to other towns and forgotten they had ever been small enough to stand here and be measured.

Her own name was near the bottom, a single stroke at the height of a five year old. She stood a while with her thumb resting against it, as if she might feel the child still there beneath the paint. Outside, a truck idled at the kerb. The new owners had asked for the keys by six.

Mira took the pencil from behind her ear, the flat carpenter's pencil she had carried through every working year of her life, and under the lowest of the old marks she wrote the day's date in her small square hand. Then she turned off the light, and left the wall to go on keeping what it had always kept.

Text two · poem · written for MA99

Frost

Overnight the field has been rewritten.
Every blade of grass wears an edge of salt and light,
a whole paddock of small bright knives
that will not last the hour.

I stand at the window with my tea
and watch the sun begin its slow undoing,
the white receding blade by blade
until the green returns, ordinary and wet.

This is the world showing off, I think,
the way it does before it lets a season go.
The field is never more itself
than in these ten cold minutes before it melts.

So I stay. I let the morning wait.
I have been learning, slowly and against my nature,
to love the things that are already leaving,
to stand here at the glass and watch them go.

Text three · reflective and persuasive writing · written for MA99

In Defence of the Ordinary Walk

We are taught, early and often, to go somewhere. Every walk is supposed to have a destination, every hour a use, and a whole afternoon spent simply noticing things is an afternoon we are quietly encouraged to feel guilty about. I want to make the opposite case. I want to defend the walk that goes nowhere in particular, down the same street it went yesterday, past the same three trees and the same tilted fence.

Something happens when you give an ordinary place your full attention. The street you were sure you knew turns out to be moving all the time. The light shifts an hour earlier than it did last month. The jacaranda lets go of one more branch. A crack opens in the footpath and widens, week by week, like a small slow river finding its way. You begin to understand that nothing is ever quite the same twice, and that the person doing the walking is not the same either.

We call this daydreaming, and we treat it as time thrown away. I have come to believe it may be one of the few honest ways we have of measuring our own lives.

2.1 Questions 1 to 6

Question 1

2 MARKS

Explain what the pencil marks on the wall represent to Mira in Text one.

Question 2

3 MARKS

Analyse how the writer uses imagery and symbolism in Text one to represent memory and the passing of time.

Question 3

3 MARKS

Text one is a short story. Explain how the writer uses ONE convention of the short story, such as a single setting, a turning point or an understated ending, to shape the reader's response.

Question 4

3 MARKS

Explain how the poet uses figurative language to present the frost as both beautiful and fleeting in Text two.

Question 5

4 MARKS

How does the writer of Text three position the reader to value the ordinary walk? In your answer, refer to at least TWO specific techniques.

Question 6

5 MARKS

Compare how Text two and Text three represent the value of paying close attention to small or passing things. In your response, refer to the form and the language of both texts.

3. Section II · Critical study of literature

Section II

20 marks. Attempt Question 7. Allow about 40 minutes for this section. Answer the question in a writing booklet. Your answer will be assessed on how well you develop an informed personal response to the text you have studied, analyse the ways its language, form and structure shape meaning, and organise, develop and express ideas using language appropriate to audience, purpose and context.

Question 7

20 MARKS

'We value a literary text for the questions it leaves open rather than the answers it gives.'

To what extent does this statement reflect your informed personal response to the text you have studied in Critical study of literature?

In your response, analyse the text's language, form and structure, and consider other readings of the text where they sharpen your argument.

Write your response in a separate writing booklet.

Write on the one substantial literary text you studied in depth: a novel or novella, a play, or a selection of poems. A selection of poems is treated as one text, so draw on at least three poems and show what holds them together.

> Answer "to what extent" with a position, not a survey. "Largely, but not entirely" is a thesis; "in many ways" is not.

4. Section III · Narratives that shape our world

Section III

20 marks. Attempt Question 8. Allow about 40 minutes for this section. Answer the question in a writing booklet. Your answer will be assessed on how well you compare the texts you have studied, evaluate the ways context, perspective and values shape a narrative, and organise, develop and express ideas using language appropriate to audience, purpose and context.

Question 8

20 MARKS

'A narrative that is retold is never simply repeated: each retelling answers to the values of its own time.'

Compare how the two texts you have studied represent a shared narrative, and evaluate how the perspectives and values of their contexts shape each version.

In your response, refer closely to BOTH texts.

Write your response in a separate writing booklet.

You must write about both texts. If you studied Othello and New Boy, Chevalier's novel relocates Shakespeare's tragedy to a single school day in a 1970s suburban Washington schoolyard; the question asks what that move keeps, what it changes and why. If your school set a different pair, the same question applies to it.

Answering Section III

Do not deal with one text and then the other. Build each paragraph on one shared concern and move between the two.

Support a play or poem with short, exact quotations and a named technique. Where a text is still in copyright, as New Boy is, refer to it precisely by its characters, its parallel symbols, its structure and its setting.

Finish each paragraph, and the essay, by evaluating what the retelling keeps and what its new context exposes.

5. Section IV · Reading to write

Section IV

20 marks. Attempt Question 9, parts (a) and (b). Allow about 40 minutes for this section: about 30 minutes for part (a) and 10 minutes for part (b). Answer both parts in a writing booklet. Your answer will be assessed on how well you craft a sustained piece of writing for a purpose and audience, and reflect on your own choices using the language of analysis.

The stimulus

There is a first time for everything, and there is a last time too, and we almost never know the last time while it is happening.

This stimulus was written for MA99. Respond to the idea; you do not need to quote the wording back to the reader.

Question 9

20 MARKS

(a) Compose an imaginative, discursive, persuasive or reflective piece of about 500 to 700 words in response to the stimulus. You may use ONE of the texts in Section I as a model for an aspect of your writing. (15 marks)

(b) Explain how ONE choice of language and ONE choice of structure in your piece shape its meaning. If a text in Section I influenced either choice, say how. Write about 150 to 200 words. (5 marks)

Write your response in a separate writing booklet.

You might dramatise a single moment and let the reader feel its weight, or reflect on the idea and follow where your thinking leads. Whichever form you choose, choose it in the first minute and sustain it. Shape a deliberate opening and a resonant close, and let one image or idea control the whole piece.

> Choose your form in the first minute, then trust it to the last line.

End of paper.

6. Marking guidelines

Marking guidelines, indicative answers and criteria in NESA's style for every question, so you can mark your own work the way a teacher would.

How to use these guidelines

Read each answer against the criteria first, then decide the mark, rather than deciding the mark and working back.

The indicative answers are a checklist of what a strong response could include, not a script. A response may earn full marks with well chosen detail that is not listed here.

For Sections II, III and IV, read the whole response once as a reader before you look at the criteria: is there one controlling idea, and does it answer the exact question that was set?

6.1 What each section assesses

SECTION	FOCUS AREA	OUTCOMES	MARKS
I	Reading to write: unseen texts	EAV-11-01, EAV-11-02, EAV-11-03	20
II	Critical study of literature	EAV-11-01, EAV-11-03, EAV-11-05	20
III	Narratives that shape our world	EAV-11-02, EAV-11-03, EAV-11-05	20
IV	Reading to write: craft and reflection	EAV-11-04, EAV-11-05, EAV-11-06	20

The yearly examination in NESA's sample Year 11 scope and sequence, an unseen reading task with an extended critical response, lists EAV-11-01, 03 and 05; the other outcomes in the table are MA99's mapping. NESA requires Year 11 assessment to weight two components equally: knowledge and understanding of course content, and skills in responding to texts and communication of ideas. Your school decides how a yearly examination counts towards your grade.

6.2 Section I · Question 1 · 2 marks

MARKS	CRITERIA
2	**Explains clearly what the marks represent to Mira, with reference to the text**
1	**Identifies something the marks represent, or makes a general comment about them**

Indicative answer

The pencil marks are a height chart that recorded the children of the town over many years, each one dated and named.

To Mira they represent memory, continuity and belonging: the shop has quietly kept the history of a whole community, including her own childhood, marked near the bottom.

By adding the day's date beneath the lowest mark, Mira writes herself into that record and refuses to let it be erased, even as the shop passes to new owners.

6.3 Question 2 · 3 marks

MARKS	CRITERIA
3	**Analyses how specific imagery and symbolism represent memory and the passing of time, with well chosen textual detail and clear discussion of effect**

MARKS	CRITERIA
2	**Describes a relevant technique and its effect, with some textual support**
1	**Identifies a technique or makes a general comment, with limited support**

Indicative answer

The height chart is the controlling symbol: a physical record of time and community memory, hidden behind the freezer and uncovered on the last day.

Imagery of light, the winter light coming in flat and gold across the emptied floor, creates an elegiac, end of an era mood and marks the shift from a full working life to closure.

Personification, the room that seemed to breathe more slowly, gives the shop a living presence, as though it too registers the ending.

The flat carpenter's pencil is a motif of a whole working life, and the closing image of the wall going on keeping what it had always kept turns an ordinary shopfront into a keeper of memory.

Sentence control matters too: the two short sentences about the idling truck and the six o'clock deadline cut across Mira's reflection and remind the reader that time is moving on regardless.

6.4 Question 3 · 3 marks

MARKS	CRITERIA
3	**Explains how a specific convention of the short story shapes the reader's response, with apt textual detail**
2	**Identifies a convention of the short story and describes its effect, with some reference to the text**
1	**Names a convention or makes a general comment about the story**

Indicative answer

A single setting and a compressed time frame. The whole story happens in one room on one afternoon, the last one. Compression makes every small action carry weight, and the many years of the shop are felt through what is left in the room rather than told.

A turning point. Pulling the freezer away from the wall is the moment of discovery. The story turns from an ending (bare shelves) to a recovery of the past (the names), and the reader's response turns from loss towards something kept.

An understated, open ending. Mira writes the date and leaves; the story never states what she feels. The final clause, the wall left to go on keeping what it had always kept, trusts the reader to supply the emotion, which is why the ending moves rather than tells.

A strong answer names the convention, ties it to a precise moment in the text, and explains the effect on the reader, not just on Mira.

6.5 Question 4 · 3 marks

MARKS	CRITERIA
3	**Explains how specific figurative language presents the frost as both beautiful and fleeting, with clear reference to the text and its effect**
2	**Identifies figurative language and comments on beauty or transience, with some textual support**

MARKS	CRITERIA
1	**Makes a general comment about the poem or names a technique, with limited support**

Indicative answer

Metaphor presents the frost as something made and precious: the field has been rewritten, and each blade wears an edge of salt and light.

The image of a whole paddock of small bright knives holds beauty and threat together, and is immediately undercut by the plain statement that it will not last the hour, so beauty and transience are bound in the same picture.

Personification, the sun begin its slow undoing and the world showing off, dramatises the melting as a deliberate performance that is always about to end.

The paradox that the field is never more itself than in the ten cold minutes before it melts states the poem's idea directly: the frost is most beautiful precisely because it is fleeting.

The reflective close, learning to love the things that are already leaving, turns the observation into a wider truth about impermanence.

6.6 Question 5 · 4 marks

MARKS	CRITERIA
4	**Explains perceptively how two or more techniques position the reader to value the ordinary walk, with well chosen detail and clear discussion of effect**
3	**Explains how two techniques persuade the reader, with relevant textual support**
2	**Identifies a persuasive technique and its effect, with some textual support**
1	**Names a technique or makes a general comment, with limited support**

Indicative answer

First person voice and inclusive pronouns, the shift between I and we, draw the reader into a shared position and make the argument feel personal rather than preachy.

Anaphora, I want to make the opposite case and I want to defend, signals a clear stance and gives the piece rhetorical drive.

A concessive structure sets the destination driven world the reader knows against the defended walk, so the argument feels reasonable and earned.

The simile of a crack widening like a small slow river finding its way, and the tricolon of the same street, the same three trees and the same tilted fence, make the ordinary vivid and worth attending to.

The aphoristic close, one of the few honest ways we have of measuring our own lives, lifts the everyday walk into something serious and persuades by reframing daydreaming as valuable.

Positioning. The opening sentence, we are taught, early and often, to go somewhere, describes a habit most readers share, so the reader recognises themselves before the writer turns the argument against that habit. A 4 mark answer says how the reader is placed, not only what the writer believes.

6.7 Question 6 · 5 marks

MARKS	CRITERIA
5	**Compares perceptively how both texts represent the value of attention to small or passing things, integrating specific features of form and language from each and evaluating similarities and differences**

MARKS	CRITERIA
4	**Compares both texts clearly, with reference to form and language features in each**
3	**Compares both texts with some reference to language, showing clear understanding of how they represent the idea**
2	**Comments on both texts, or analyses one closely, with some reference to language**
1	**Makes a general or one sided comment, with limited textual support**

Indicative answer

Both texts argue, in different forms, that close attention to small or passing things is where meaning is found.

Text two works through lyric compression and figurative language, presenting the fleeting frost as most beautiful just before it melts, and closing on a reflective volta about loving what is leaving.

Text three works through persuasive direct address and accumulated observation of a single street, insisting that noticing the ordinary is an honest way of measuring a life.

A strong response evaluates the difference in form: the poem distils the idea into image and paradox, while the reflective essay reasons towards it and addresses the reader directly.

Both end on a reflective statement that turns outward observation into a truth about the self and the passing of time, which is the key point of comparison.

What separates a 5 from a 3

A 3 describes each text in turn. A 5 builds every sentence on a point of comparison (both, whereas, while) and judges which form does what better: the poem makes the reader feel the passing moment; the essay makes the reader agree that it matters.

6.8 Section II · Question 7 · 20 marks

MARKS	CRITERIA
17 to 20	**Develops a perceptive, informed personal response that takes a clear position on the statement and sustains it. Analyses the language, form and structure of the text with insight, through apt, well integrated references. Weighs other readings of the text against the student's own where they sharpen the argument. Composes a sophisticated, controlled response using the language of analysis and literary criticism**
13 to 16	**Develops an effective informed personal response that addresses the statement. Analyses language, form and structure with well chosen references. Refers to another reading of the text with some purpose. Composes a well organised, fluent response**
9 to 12	**Develops a sound response that relates the text to the statement. Explains some techniques with relevant references. Composes a generally organised response, with some reliance on description**
5 to 8	**Shows a limited understanding of the text and the statement. Describes the text with some general references. Composes a response that is uneven in organisation and expression**
1 to 4	**Shows elementary understanding of the text. Retells or makes general comments. Composes a response with limited control**

The statement has two halves. The strongest responses accept part of it and push back on part: a text can leave questions open and still give some firm answers, and the judgement is about which matters more in this text.

HEART OF DARKNESS · INDICATIVE CONTENT

- **Questions left open:** Kurtz's cry 'The horror! The horror!' (Part III) never says what the horror is, and Marlow's lie to the Intended leaves the reader to judge whether he protects her or betrays the truth.

- **Form that keeps meaning open:** the frame narrator says the meaning of Marlow's tales lies 'outside, enveloping the tale' (Part I), so the novella tells the reader to look around the story, not inside it. Ian Watt's term 'delayed decoding' (Conrad in the Nineteenth Century, 1979) names the way Marlow gives the impression before the explanation, so the reader has to work.
- **Answers it does give:** the verdict on conquest as 'robbery with violence' (Part I), the 'whited sepulchre' and the 'objectless blasting' are not open at all. A strong response notes this firmness and weighs it.
- **Other readings:** Chinua Achebe's charge in "An Image of Africa" (a 1975 lecture, published 1977, revised 1988) that Conrad was 'a thoroughgoing racist' (the 1988 wording), reducing Africa to 'setting and backdrop', is itself an answer the novella provokes; Cedric Watts (1983) replies that Marlow is an ironised narrator held at a distance by the frame. The open question of the novella's own blindness is part of why it is still read.

KING LEAR · INDICATIVE CONTENT

- **Questions the play asks aloud:** Lear's 'Who is it that can tell me who I am?' (1.4) and the opening exchange 'Nothing will come of nothing' (1.1) turn identity and value into questions the play explores rather than settles.
- **The gods and justice:** Gloucester's 'As flies to wanton boys are we to th' gods' (4.1) is set against Edgar's 'The gods are just' (5.3); the double plot gives both views a voice and lets neither win.
- **The ending that refuses consolation:** Cordelia dies after the reconciliation, and Lear's fivefold 'Never' (5.3) closes on loss, not meaning.
- **Other readings:** A C Bradley (Shakespearean Tragedy, 1904) reads the play as Lear's redemption through suffering; Jan Kott (Shakespeare Our Contemporary, 1964) reads it as absurd, close to Beckett. Samuel Johnson's distress at Cordelia's death (1765) and Nahum Tate's rewriting with a happy ending (1681) show audiences wanting an answer the play withholds. A strong response uses the debate as evidence that the questions are the source of value.

W B YEATS · INDICATIVE CONTENT

- **Poems that end on questions:** 'The Wild Swans at Coole' closes by asking where the swans will go when the speaker wakes 'To find they have flown away?'; 'The Second Coming' ends by asking what 'rough beast' 'Slouches towards Bethlehem to be born?'.
- **Doubt inside commemoration:** 'Easter, 1916' records a 'terrible beauty' and then asks 'Was it needless death after all?', so the elegy questions the sacrifice it honours, and warns that sacrifice can make 'a stone of the heart'.
- **Answers held in symbol:** the swans that are 'Unwearied still' with hearts that 'have not grown old', and the 'widening gyre' of history, offer patterns, not certainties. 'Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold' is a statement, but of disorder.
- **Other readings:** Frank Kermode (Romantic Image, 1957) on the symbol as an image set apart from time; Edward Said ("Yeats and Decolonization", 1988) on Yeats as a poet of a nation breaking from empire; T S Eliot's 1940 lecture judging Yeats the greatest poet of his time. A selection of poems is one text: reward a response that tracks a question across at least three poems.

6.9 Section III · Question 8 · 20 marks

MARKS	CRITERIA
17 to 20	**Develops a perceptive, integrated comparison of the two texts, sustained across the whole response. Evaluates with insight how the perspectives and values of each context shape each version of the narrative. Analyses language and form through apt, well chosen references to both texts. Composes a sophisticated, controlled response**
13 to 16	**Develops an effective comparison that integrates both texts on shared concerns. Evaluates how context and values shape each version, with well chosen references. Composes a well organised, fluent response**
9 to 12	**Compares the two texts, at times handling them in turn. Explains some ways context shapes each version, with relevant references. Composes a generally organised response**
5 to 8	**Describes one or both texts with some sense of their connection. Makes general references to context. Composes a response that is uneven in organisation and expression**
1 to 4	**Shows elementary understanding of one or both texts. Retells, with little comparison. Composes a response with limited control**

OTHELLO AND NEW BOY · INDICATIVE CONTENT

- **The shared narrative:** an outsider who has won a place and a love is undone by a manipulator's story about the one he loves. Chevalier's novel (2017), written for the Hogarth Shakespeare series, keeps the shape: its five parts match the play's five acts, and it moves the action into one school day.
- **Othering the outsider:** Iago's animal imagery, 'a Barbary horse' and 'an old black ram' (1.1), and the reductive label 'the Moor' cast the general as foreign. In New Boy, Osei, a Ghanaian diplomat's son on his first day at an all white school in 1970s suburban Washington, is othered by children and adults alike; even a teacher treats him with open racial contempt.
- **The storyteller as poisoner:** Iago's 'I am not what I am' (1.1) and his plan to 'pour this pestilence into his ear' (2.3) breed 'the green-eyed monster' (3.3) in Othello. Ian, who senses that Osei threatens his hold over the playground, works the same poison through the other children. What takes Iago five acts, Ian completes before the school bell.
- **The fatal token:** the handkerchief 'Spotted with strawberries' (3.3) becomes false evidence once Othello demands 'Give me the ocular proof' (3.3). Chevalier keeps the strawberries: Osei gives Dee the strawberry pencil case he inherited from his older sister, and Ian gets hold of it through Mimi to use as false evidence. The retained motif is itself evidence of how a narrative survives by being reimagined.
- **Context and values:** Shakespeare's Venice both needs and fears its Moorish general; Chevalier sets the story in the decade after the civil rights movement and among eleven and twelve year olds, which exposes prejudice as something learned young and taught by adults. The strongest responses judge what the retelling keeps (the manipulator, the token, the fall) and what its context newly exposes.

ANY OTHER PAIR · INDICATIVE CONTENT

- A genuine shared narrative, named at the start: the story both texts tell.
- Close analysis of how each text's form, mode and language carry that narrative, with references to both in most paragraphs.
- A judgement on each context: what values each version reinforces or challenges, and what the later text sees that the earlier could not, or the reverse.

6.10 Section IV · Question 9 (a) · 15 marks

MARKS	CRITERIA
13 to 15	**Composes a skilful, sustained piece in one form that responds thoughtfully to the stimulus. Controls language, form and structure with precision. Voice, imagery and structure work together, and the writing rewards a second reading**
10 to 12	**Composes an effective piece that responds clearly to the stimulus. Uses language, form and structure with control and shaping. Sustains a consistent voice and some deliberate imagery or symbolism, with a clear opening and close**
7 to 9	**Composes a sound piece that responds to the stimulus. Uses language and structure appropriately, with a recognisable form and voice. Shaping and control are still developing**
4 to 6	**Attempts a composition that relates to the stimulus. Language and structure are simple or uneven, and form and voice are inconsistent**
1 to 3	**Composes elementary text with a limited relationship to the stimulus, with limited control of form and structure**

INDICATIVE CONTENT · A STRONG COMPOSITION

- Responds to the idea in the stimulus, a first or a last time and how we notice the passing of time, rather than simply restating the words.
- Commits to one form, imaginative, discursive, persuasive or reflective, and sustains it from the first line to the last.
- Establishes a distinctive, consistent voice suited to the chosen form and purpose.
- Controls structure: a shaped opening, deliberate shifts in time or focus, and a resonant close, often returning to an opening image.
- Develops a controlling image, motif or idea across the piece rather than repeating it flatly.
- Uses precise, sensory and figurative language for effect, with restraint rather than decoration.
- Trusts implication: shows through detail and lets the reader supply the feeling, instead of explaining it.

What markers reward

Coherence: voice, structure and imagery pull in one direction, so the piece reads as something made, not assembled.

A genuine response to the stimulus, taken somewhere of the writer's own rather than summarised.

Restraint and control: one strong image, developed and not over explained, and an ending that earns its place.

6.11 Question 9 (b) · 5 marks

MARKS	CRITERIA
5	**Explains perceptively how a specific language choice and a specific structural choice shape the meaning of the piece, using precise metalanguage and evaluating their effect on the reader**
4	**Explains how a language choice and a structural choice shape meaning, with appropriate metalanguage**
3	**Describes a language choice and a structural choice and their intended effect**
2	**Describes one choice, or both in general terms**
1	**Makes a general comment about the writing**

Sample reflection · written for MA99

My piece is a short story about a boy's last swim at the town pool before it is demolished. The structural choice that carries the meaning is a single afternoon told in present tense, which I borrowed from Text one's compressed last afternoon. Present tense keeps the reader inside the moment, as the boy is, so neither of us knows it is the last swim until the final paragraph names the date on the demolition notice. The stimulus says we rarely know the last time while it is happening; the tense makes the reader live that ignorance. My key language choice is the repeated image of the lane rope, first as something he pushes against, finally as something he holds on to. Repeating it with a changed verb lets the reader feel the shift without my stating it. In revision I cut a sentence that explained his sadness, because Text one taught me that the unstated feeling is the stronger one.

The sample names two specific choices, uses metalanguage (present tense, motif, verb), links each to an effect on the reader, names its model, and reports one revision decision. That is what a 5 looks like at about 160 words.

6.12 Your marks

SECTION	YOUR MARK	OUT OF	THE ONE THING TO FIX NEXT TIME
I · Unseen texts		**20**	
II · Critical study of literature		**20**	
III · Narratives that shape our world		**20**	
IV · Reading to write		**20**	
Total		**80**	

> Mark the argument first, then the evidence that proves it. Reward the reading, not the memorised essay.

About this resource

MA99 EDUCATION

Scope

NSW English Advanced, Year 11. Written to the NSW English Advanced 11-12 Syllabus 2024, all three Year 11 focus areas, for students sitting the HSC in 2028 and later years. Every literary text quoted or printed here is in the public domain, apart from passages marked written for MA99, which are original. New Boy (Tracy Chevalier, 2017) is in copyright and is not quoted. Quotations were checked against a published text, and critics are named with the work and year.

Permitted use

Print it, annotate it and keep it on any device you own, for your own study.

Not permitted

Sharing, posting, selling or redistributing it, in whole or in part. Each copy is licensed to one student.

Copyright MA99 Education.
ma99education.com.au