MA99 EDUCATION

Henry Lawson: Practice Questions

NSW ENGLISH STANDARD AND ENGLISH ADVANCED 11-12 SYLLABUSES 2024 FOR HSC 2027 AND LATER

Instructions

There are no answers in here, and that is the point. A question with a model response on the facing page is not a question. The graduated exemplars are Document C. Do not open it until you have written something.

The format, and it is different from Paper 2. Paper 1 runs one hour and thirty minutes plus ten minutes reading time, and carries two sections of 20 marks each. Section I is a set of short answer questions on unseen texts. Section II is one question requiring an extended response on your prescribed text, and it may include stimulus and/or unseen texts.

About the forty minutes. NESA publishes ninety minutes for the whole paper and does not publish a split between the two sections. Fifty minutes on Section I and forty on Section II is this suite's recommendation, not NESA's, and every document in this suite labels it that way.

Why no question below names Lawson. Because the real one cannot. NESA states that the Section II question is common to English Standard and English Advanced, and candidates across both courses are studying different texts. Every stem you meet will say your prescribed text and nothing more, which is why the ability to decide quickly which stories a question wants is worth as much as the material itself.

These are questions written for this pack. The first examination under this syllabus is 2027 and no past paper exists. Where a stimulus appears it is this pack's own wording and is deliberately not attributed to anybody, because a fabricated attribution in a practice paper teaches a student to fabricate one in an examination.

> Write four of these under time before you read a single one of the exemplars.

1. How the questions are graded

The bands describe how hard the question is to answer well, not what it is worth. Every question here is worth 20 marks, because the Section II question always is.

FOUNDATION One clear demand. If you have an argument at all, you can start.

STANDARD The ordinary shape. Two things to hold together, and a verb that has to be obeyed.

ADVANCED Genuinely hard. An unfamiliar angle, or a demand you have to interpret before you can answer it.

STIMULUS A statement is printed above the question. The specification permits this, and permits unseen texts too.

One rule for every question in this set. No claim should rest on a single story. Five stories constitute the prescribed text, so a paragraph built on one has used a fifth of it. Note beside each claim in your plan which two stories it reaches.

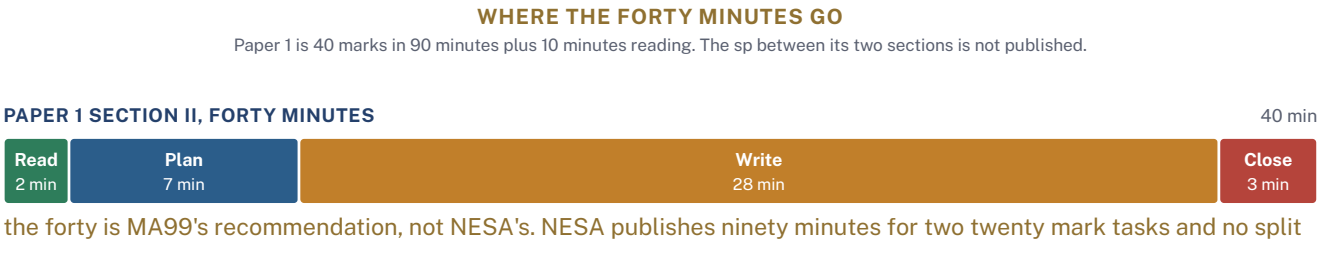


Figure 1 · Where the forty minutes go. The forty is this suite's recommendation, not NESA's.

2. Foundation

One demand each. Start here if you have not yet written a full response on this text.

Question 1

How does your prescribed text represent the experience of loss? In your response, refer closely to the text. (20 marks)

Suggested time 40 minutes, including planning. This suite's recommendation, not NESA's.

Write your response in a separate writing booklet.

Question 2

Explain how your prescribed text represents the relationship between a person and the place they live. (20 marks)

Suggested time 40 minutes, including planning. This suite's recommendation, not NESA's.

Write your response in a separate writing booklet.

Question 3

Discuss the ways your prescribed text represents what people do not say to one another. (20 marks)

Suggested time 40 minutes, including planning. This suite's recommendation, not NESA's.

Write your response in a separate writing booklet.

Question 4

What does your prescribed text suggest about the value of company? Support your response with detailed reference to the text. (20 marks)

Suggested time 40 minutes, including planning. This suite's recommendation, not NESA's.

Write your response in a separate writing booklet.

3. Standard

Two things to hold together, and a verb to obey.

Question 5

Analyse how your prescribed text represents ordinary lives as worth attention, and evaluate the methods it uses to do so. (20 marks)

Suggested time 40 minutes, including planning. This suite's recommendation, not NESA's.

Write your response in a separate writing booklet.

Question 6

Evaluate the extent to which your prescribed text represents human experience through what it withholds rather than what it states. (20 marks)

Suggested time 40 minutes, including planning. This suite's recommendation, not NESA's.

Write your response in a separate writing booklet.

Question 7

How does your prescribed text represent the difference between belonging to a group and being known by one? In your response, make close reference to at least three moments. (20 marks)

Suggested time 40 minutes, including planning. This suite's recommendation, not NESA's.

Write your response in a separate writing booklet.

Question 8

Analyse how your prescribed text uses humour, and evaluate what the humour is carrying. (20 marks)

Suggested time 40 minutes, including planning. This suite's recommendation, not NESA's.

Write your response in a separate writing booklet.

Question 9

To what extent does your prescribed text present its narrator as a reliable observer of the experiences it describes? (20 marks)

Suggested time 40 minutes, including planning. This suite's recommendation, not NESA's.

Write your response in a separate writing booklet.

4. Advanced

Harder because the demand has to be interpreted before it can be answered.

Question 10

Assess the significance of the endings in your prescribed text to the meanings it makes available. (20 marks)

Suggested time 40 minutes, including planning. This suite's recommendation, not NESA's.

Write your response in a separate writing booklet.

Question 11

Your prescribed text has been read as a record of a way of life and as an argument about one. Evaluate these two readings against your own reading of the text. (20 marks)

Suggested time 40 minutes, including planning. This suite's recommendation, not NESA's.

Write your response in a separate writing booklet.

Question 12

Evaluate the view that your prescribed text is most revealing at the moments when it appears least interested. (20 marks)

Suggested time 40 minutes, including planning. This suite's recommendation, not NESA's.

Write your response in a separate writing booklet.

Question 13

Analyse how your prescribed text positions its reader to do work the text declines to do, and evaluate the effect. (20 marks)

Suggested time 40 minutes, including planning. This suite's recommendation, not NESA's.

Write your response in a separate writing booklet.

5. With a stimulus

The specification permits a stimulus, and permits unseen texts, in this section. These three model the shape.

How to use a stimulus. It is a lever, not a topic. Find the word doing the most work, decide in one sentence what you accept and in one sentence what you reject, and make the rejection a body paragraph rather than a concession in the introduction. Do not spend a paragraph explaining what the statement means.

Stimulus

A writer who refuses to tell us what to feel has not stopped arranging our feelings. They have only stopped admitting it.

Question 14

Evaluate this view in relation to your prescribed text. (20 marks)

Suggested time 40 minutes, including planning. This suite's recommendation, not NESA's.

Write your response in a separate writing booklet.

Stimulus

The most revealing thing about any account of a life is which parts of it are given a whole page and which are given a clause.

Question 15

To what extent does your prescribed text support this proposition? (20 marks)

Suggested time 40 minutes, including planning. This suite's recommendation, not NESA's.

Write your response in a separate writing booklet.

Stimulus

Every text decides who is worth naming, and no text has ever made that decision by accident.

Question 16

Assess the usefulness of this claim as a way of reading your prescribed text. (20 marks)

Suggested time 40 minutes, including planning. This suite's recommendation, not NESA's.

Write your response in a separate writing booklet.

6. Three full attempts

Choose three questions from this set and write each under time, in a separate writing booklet.

Use the same shape all three times so that the shape becomes automatic and stops needing to be decided under pressure. Write the two stories beside each claim, and check that no claim rests on one.

The spread test. List the stories you have used. If it is fewer than three of the five, go back and change one claim before you write.

> Deciding the closing sentence first is an inexpensive technique.

7. Reading a question you have not seen

Two minutes on this is the cheapest two minutes in the paper.

Every question in this set can be answered with the six concerns in Document A, section 4. The skill is not recall. It is deciding, quickly and once, which concern the question wants and which three stories will carry it. That decision is made in the first two minutes or it is made badly for the next thirty eight.

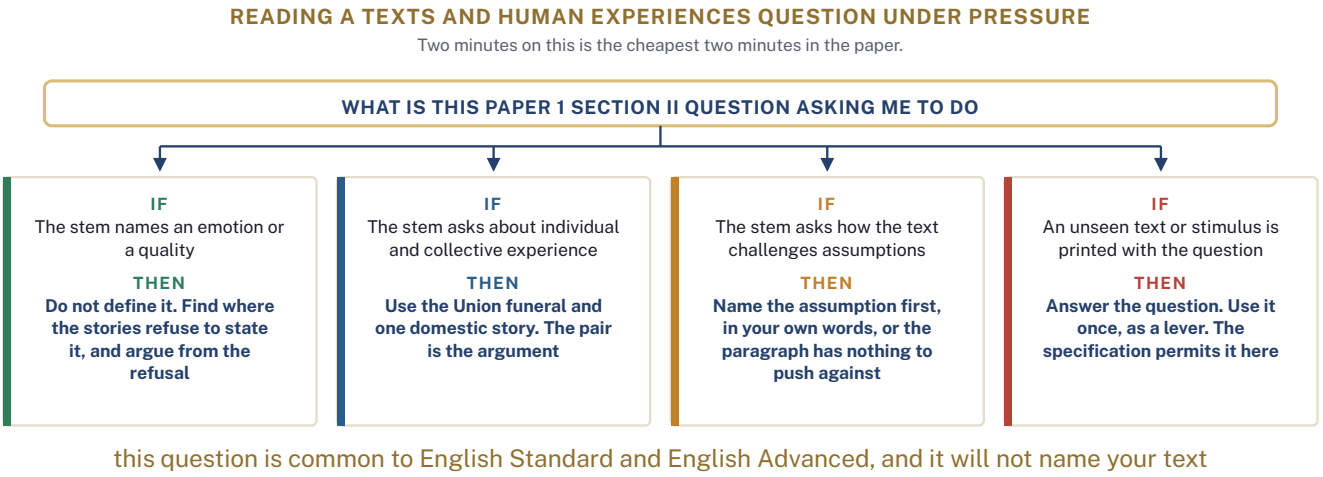


Figure 2 · Four common shapes and what each one asks you to do.

Three checks before you begin writing

Underline the verb. Explain, analyse, evaluate and assess are not the same instruction, and the last two ask for a judgement about worth.

Say the answering sentence in your head. If it is not deniable, it is a topic and you have not answered anything yet.

Count the stories your three claims reach. Fewer than three of the five means you are about to write about a fraction of the prescribed text.

After you write, before you look at Document C

Count your paragraphs and count the stories. If it is one story per paragraph, you have written summaries in order.

Count the quotations, then count how many sit inside your own sentences. If the second number is under half the first, that is the gap.

Find the sentence where you explained how an effect is produced rather than that it exists. If there is not one, that is the gap instead.

Check that you have not quoted anything from a free online text you have not verified against your Penguin.

Read your first and last sentences together. If they could be swapped, the response did not travel. Only then open Document C.

> Sixteen questions. Four written under time is worth more than sixteen read.

About this resource

MA99 EDUCATION

Scope

NSW English Standard and English Advanced, Year 12. Written to the NSW English Standard and English Advanced 11-12 Syllabuses 2024, Henry Lawson, for students sitting the HSC in 2027 and later years. Texts and human experiences is common to both courses, so this resource serves students in either. Document A, Document B and Document C are the three files of this set: the Text Pack, the Practice Questions and the Graduated Exemplars. References to them in this resource point to those files.

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MA99 EDUCATION

Henry Lawson: Graduated Exemplars

NSW ENGLISH STANDARD AND ENGLISH ADVANCED 11-12 SYLLABUSES 2024 FOR HSC 2027 AND LATER

Read first

These are model responses written for this pack. They are not NESA sample responses. The first examination under the 2024 syllabus is in 2027, so no marked student work exists for this course and nobody can show you a marked response to a real question under this syllabus. Any resource that claims to is describing the previous syllabus.

Where the band language comes from. The descriptions of what separates the three responses are grounded in NESA's published Year 12 English Advanced performance band descriptions, which distinguish the top two bands almost entirely by quality words. A student cannot act on an adjective, so every quality word below has been translated into the observable move that earns it. English Standard has its own band descriptions and its own outcome codes; the moves described here are the same either way.

The point of three versions. The top band response is barely longer than the strong one. It reads no more widely and quotes nothing rarer. It is the same material doing more work, and that is the only thing this document is trying to teach.

> Write your own response to the question before reading the exemplar.

1. The question

Evaluate the extent to which your prescribed text represents human experience through what it withholds rather than what it states. (20 marks)

This is question 6 from Document B, Standard band. It was chosen because it is ordinary and because it is a shape the published specification allows for and one this suite expects to be common: an abstract noun from the focus area statement, a proposition about method, and a verb demanding a judgement about extent. It names no text, no author and no story, because the real question cannot.

About the length of these three. Response one runs to about 250 words, response two to about 400 and response three to about 470. They are condensed. A full response written under time runs to roughly eight or nine hundred words, and these have been cut back to the moves that separate the bands so that all three can be read side by side. Do not treat their length as a target.

2. Response one · a competent middle band

MIDDLE Accurate, organised, and one story per paragraph.

About 250 words, condensed. Everything in it is true.

THE RESPONSE	WHAT THE MOVE EARNS
Henry Lawson uses withholding to represent human experience in his short stories. He uses short sentences and does not describe emotions directly. This can be seen in The Drover's Wife, The Union Buries Its Dead and Our Pipes, which all show characters who do not express their feelings.	A workable opening, and it is not a claim. The question already said withholding, so restating it puts nothing at risk. The third sentence lists three stories, which announces the structure the focus area penalises most.
In The Drover's Wife, Lawson does not describe the woman's emotions in detail. When one of her children dies, he simply writes that she rode nineteen miles for assistance, carrying the dead child. This short sentence shows that she is used to hardship and does not have time to grieve. It also makes the reader feel sympathy for her.	Accurate, correctly quoted, and the right quotation. But shows that she is used to hardship and makes the reader feel sympathy are both assertions. Neither sentence says how a trailing phrase produces the effect.

THE RESPONSE	WHAT THE MOVE EARNS
Similarly, in The Union Buries Its Dead the narrator does not show emotion at the funeral. He says that it didn't matter much and that nothing does. This shows that the men are detached from the death of the stranger they are burying. Lawson uses this to show the harshness of bush life.	Similarly is the listing word. And the last sentence converts a specific technique into a general theme, which is the move that stops a response at this band.
Our Pipes is another example. The story seems to be about smoking but Mitchell's mother and father are both dead before the story begins. Lawson only mentions this briefly, saying she's been at rest these seventeen long years. This again shows Lawson's use of withholding to represent emotion.	Another example and this again shows are both admissions that the paragraph is repeating the previous one with different evidence. Three paragraphs, three stories, one observation.
In conclusion, Lawson represents human experience through what he withholds rather than what he states. His use of short sentences and lack of emotional description in The Drover's Wife, The Union Buries Its Dead and Our Pipes shows the difficult lives of people in the Australian bush.	The conclusion repeats the introduction, relists the three stories, and answers a question about method with a claim about setting. Read the first and last sentences together and you find the same sentence twice.

What is actually wrong with response one

Nothing is inaccurate, and the three quotations are exactly the right three. A student who has written this knows the text.

The plan is one story per paragraph, which treats five stories as three topics and uses three fifths of the prescribed text.

Every paragraph makes the same observation about a different story. The essay does not travel; it repeats.

Nowhere does it say how withholding produces an effect, only that it does.

The question asks to what extent, and no extent is ever given. There is no limit, no exception and no objection.

3. Response two · a strong band

STRONG Argues a position, explains mechanisms, and each claim reaches two stories.

About 400 words, condensed. The same three stories, and one more.

THE RESPONSE	WHAT THE MOVE EARNS
Lawson withholds most heavily at the moments a reader most expects description, and the effect is not restraint but transfer: the work of feeling is moved from the page onto the person reading. The extent is almost total, and the one story that does not do it is the story that shows why the others do.	A claim, and it is deniable. It also answers the extent demand in the second sentence and promises an exception, which obliges the essay to deliver one.
The clearest cases are the deaths. In The Drover's Wife a child's death is carried by a trailing phrase: she rode nineteen miles for assistance, carrying the dead child. The sentence is about a journey, and the death is grammatically attached to it as luggage. In Our Pipes both of Mitchell's parents are already dead, and their deaths arrive as measurements rather than descriptions, so that a mother becomes seventeen long years and a father becomes twelve. In each case the reader is given a number and has to supply the grief, which is a different experience from being told about grief.	Two stories in one paragraph, and the mechanism is now explained. Grammatically attached to it as luggage is doing analytical work rather than describing.
The same technique operates on the collective. The narrator of The Union Buries Its Dead is explicit that we were all strangers to the corpse, and the story's largest statement shrinks to two words, nothing does. But the withholding there is doubled, because the narrator also tells us what he has chosen not to include: the "sad Australian sunset", left out because the sun was not going down at the time. He is not simply declining to describe. He is advertising the decline.	The claim reaches a second aspect of the same technique rather than a second example of the same claim. And the last sentence names the difference, which is what the band below could not do.

THE RESPONSE	WHAT THE MOVE EARNS
It could be objected that this is period style rather than technique, since the sketch form of the 1890s was brief by convention. But the Billy Boils stories themselves run long whenever the material is comic, and The Loaded Dog spends most of a page on how Andy built the cartridge. The brevity is local. It arrives on the same kind of material every time, and a house style does not know when somebody's mother has died.	The objection is raised in its strong form and answered with evidence from a fourth story. This paragraph is why the response sits above the band below it.
The extent, then, is near total but not uniform, and the exception is instructive. The Loaded Dog is the only one of the five that ends in company rather than in a withdrawal, with the district still calling out to Dave years later. Where Lawson has something a reader can be given, he gives it. Everywhere else he withholds, and the withholding is a judgement about what can be said rather than about what can be felt.	A conclusion that answers the extent demand, uses the exception it promised in the introduction, and does not restate the opening.

4. Response three · the top band

TOP Same length. Same stories. The material is made to do more work.

About 470 words, condensed. Read it beside response two and look for the differences rather than for new content.

THE RESPONSE	WHAT THE MOVE EARNS
Lawson's withholding is not a reticence but a transaction: he consistently gives the reader a measurement where a description is expected, and the reader converts it. The extent is close to total, and the exception proves the rule in the strict sense, because the one story that does not withhold is the only one with nothing painful in it.	The same claim as response two, sharpened by one word. Transaction commits the essay to an economic reading, and the strict sense of proves the rule is used correctly, which is rare and noticeable.
Count what Lawson counts. Nineteen miles, twice. Fourteen mourners. Seven and sixpence for a hide. Seventeen long years, then twelve. Ten years of a friendship, and nine reflections. The numbers arrive exactly where another writer would put an adjective, and the substitution is visible in the sentence that carries the worst thing in the five stories: she rode nineteen miles for assistance, carrying the dead child. The death has no adjective, no date and no scene. It has a distance.	The observation about counting is the single move that separates this from the band below. It is derived from the text rather than imported, it is checkable, and it turns a familiar point about brevity into a claim about substitution.
The technique becomes an argument when Lawson applies it to himself. The Union Buries Its Dead ends with a narrator listing what he declined to include: the "sad Australian sunset", left out because the sun was not going down at the time. That is a writer advertising his own restraint, in a paragraph placed last for maximum effect, and it means the plainness is a stance rather than a limitation. The story that most insists it is not arranging anything is the most arranged of the five.	Two moves at once. The claim escalates from technique to stance, and the last sentence states a paradox the essay has actually earned rather than asserted.
The objection is real and worth conceding ground to. Brevity was the house style of the 1890s sketch, and reading it as design risks finding intention in a convention. But the same writer spends most of a page on Andy building the cartridge in The Loaded Dog, layer by layer through calico, canvas, brown paper, more canvas, tallow and fencing wire, and the Billy Boils stories run long wherever the material is comic. Lawson can write long whenever he chooses to. What he cannot do, or will not, is write long about a death, and the asymmetry is too consistent to be a habit of the period.	The concession costs something, and the evidence answering it is chosen for its specificity: the list of materials is the proof that the man could write at length when he wanted to.
The exception completes the argument. The Loaded Dog is the only one of the five that ends in company, with a whole district still calling out to Dave about the fishing years afterwards, and it is also the only one in which nobody is bereaved. Shooting the Moon proves the same point from the other side: it has a bereavement, and it gives it one word before asking for the matches. Set beside each other they suggest that Lawson withholds not from coldness but from a judgement about the adequacy of sentences: where an experience can be handed over whole, he hands it over, and where it cannot, he gives a number and steps back.	The exception is used to explain the rule rather than merely to acknowledge it, the fifth story finally enters the essay, and the final clause returns to the counting observation from paragraph two without repeating the word.

THE RESPONSE	WHAT THE MOVE EARNS
What the reader is left holding is the part the prose refused. That is the experience these stories actually represent.	A close that answers the question in its first clause and earns a strong final sentence out of the essay's own material. Twenty words.

5. Tracing the difference

The three responses are not separated by knowledge. They are separated by eight specific moves.

ONE OBSERVATION, TWO BANDS

MIDDLE BAND
accurate, and stops one move early

Lawson uses short sentences to show that the drover's wife is emotionally hardened by her difficult life in the bush.

The feature is named and the effect is asserted. Neither clause says how the sentence produces the effect.

TOP BAND
the same observation, one move further

The sentence that carries her worst loss is a trailing phrase: she rode nineteen miles for assistance, carrying the dead child. The death is not described, not dated and not mourned on the page, and the reader supplies all three. Lawson's brevity is not a portrait of hardness; it is a mechanism that transfers the work of feeling to the person reading.

The mechanism is named, and the last clause says what it is for.

The difference is not vocabulary. It is that the second version explains how the effect is produced.

ask of every quotation: what is this doing, and how

Figure 1 · One observation, two bands. The difference is that the second version explains how the effect is produced.

5.1 The eight changes, named

THE MOVE	MIDDLE BAND DOES	TOP BAND DOES
1. The opening sentence	Restates the question's own word.	Makes a claim about method that somebody could refuse.
2. Arrangement	One story per paragraph.	Two or more stories per claim, and the claim needs both.
3. The link	Carried by similarly and another example.	Carried by a claim that escalates from paragraph to paragraph.
4. Mechanism	Asserts that an effect exists.	Explains how a grammatical choice produces it.
5. Evidence	The right quotations, described.	The right quotations, measured. Nineteen miles, seventeen years, nine reflections.
6. The extent demand	Never answered.	Answered in the introduction and completed by an exception in the conclusion.
7. Objection	Absent.	Given a paragraph, conceded ground, and answered with a fourth story.
8. The last sentence	Relists the stories.	Says what the reader was left holding, in the essay's own vocabulary.

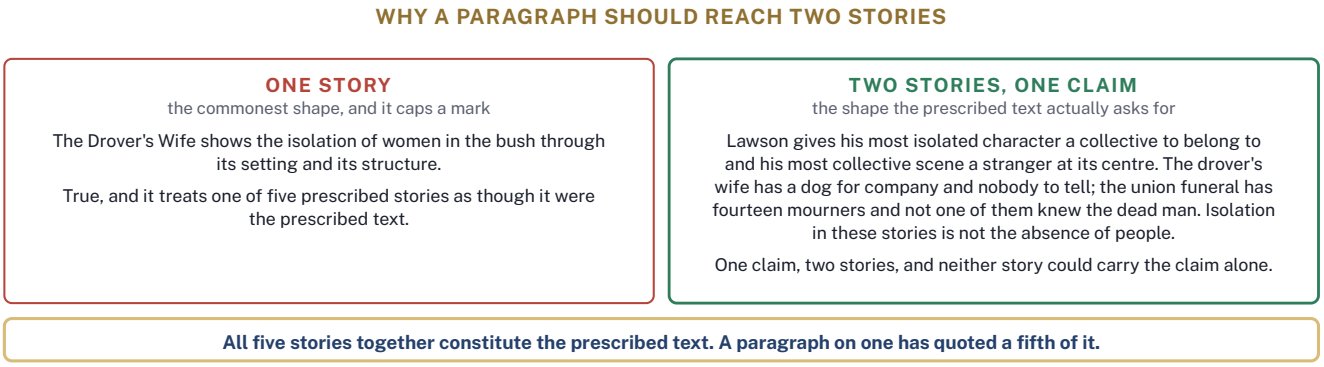


Figure 2 · Why a paragraph should reach two stories. All five together constitute the prescribed text.

5.2 The spread test, applied to all three

BAND	STORIES USED	STORIES PER PARAGRAPH	VERDICT
Middle	Three of five.	One each.	Three summaries of one observation, in a row.
Strong	Four of five.	Two, then one, then one, then one.	The first claim needs both its stories, which is what the form asks.
Top	All five.	Four, then one, then one, then two.	The whole prescribed text is in play, and the last paragraph uses two stories to explain the other three.

Run this on every plan you write. It takes fifteen seconds. If your three claims reach fewer than three of the five stories, change a claim before you write a word, because no amount of good prose repairs it afterwards.

5.3 Where the forty minutes actually went

A reminder about the forty. NESA publishes ninety minutes for the whole of Paper 1 and does not publish a split between its two sections. Fifty on Section I and forty on Section II is this suite's recommendation.

	MIDDLE	STRONG	TOP
Reading the question	2 min	3 min	3 min
Planning, including which stories	3 min	7 min	7 min
Writing	34 min	26 min	26 min
Reading it back	1 min	4 min	4 min
Words in the condensed model	about 250	about 400	about 470

The minutes are the point of this table. The word counts belong to the condensed models above rather than to a real answer. The middle band response wrote for eight minutes longer and still had less on the page, because it was deciding which story to use next while it was writing, which is the most expensive way to decide anything.

5.4 The five sentences that carried the marks

THE SENTENCE	WHAT IT IS DOING
Lawson's withholding is not a reticence but a transaction.	Refuses the obvious category and names a better one. Nine words.
Count what Lawson counts.	Four words, and it converts a familiar point about brevity into a checkable observation about substitution.

THE SENTENCE	WHAT IT IS DOING
The death has no adjective, no date and no scene. It has a distance.	Three absences and one presence, in that order. The rhythm does the analysis.
Lawson can write long whenever he chooses to.	Answers the strongest objection in one sentence, with evidence implied rather than restated.
What the reader is left holding is the part the prose refused.	The essay's thesis, arrived at from the other side, in the last paragraph.

> Five sentences. None of them are long, and none uses a word you do not already own.

6. A second set, on a different question

Shorter. The point is that the eight moves at 5.1 are general.

How does your prescribed text represent the difference between belonging to a group and being known by one? In your response, make close reference to at least three moments. (20 marks)

This is question 7 from Document B. One body paragraph at each of the three bands.

6.1 Middle

THE RESPONSE	WHAT THE MOVE EARNS
In The Union Buries Its Dead, the men attend the funeral of a man they do not know because he was a union member. The narrator says we were all strangers to the corpse. This shows that belonging to a group does not mean the members know each other, and it shows the impersonal nature of unionism in the bush.	Accurate and the right quotation. But shows that and the impersonal nature of are both assertions, and the paragraph stays inside one story, so the difference the question asks about is stated rather than demonstrated.

6.2 Strong

THE RESPONSE	WHAT THE MOVE EARNS
Lawson separates membership from acquaintance and then shows what each one is worth. In The Union Buries Its Dead the men bury a stranger because he was a union man, and the narrator is exact about the terms: we were all strangers to the corpse, and later, asked whether he knew him, one mourner answers No; but I knew he was a union man. Membership is enough to produce a funeral and not enough to produce a name, and the story ends by admitting that the party has already forgotten it. Set against that, the affection in The Loaded Dog is entirely personal and entirely unofficial: they loved him for his good-heartedness and his foolishness, and the him is a dog.	Two stories in one paragraph, three moments as the question demanded, and a claim that neither story could carry alone.