

# 2025 VCE English external assessment report

Student responses reproduced in this report have not been corrected for grammar, spelling or factual information.

This report provides sample answers, or an indication of what answers may have included. Unless otherwise stated, these are not intended to be exemplary or complete responses.

The statistics in this report may be subject to rounding, resulting in a total of more or less than 100 per cent.

## Section A – Analytical response to a text

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Average
%	0.7	1	3	8	16	23	21	14	8	3	1	5.4

In Section A, students were asked about the ideas and associated values that an author presented in a selected text. The tasks were not presented as broad prompts to instigate the student's own wide-ranging consideration of the text; instead, they were narrow topics about specified ideas and values the author presented in relation to these concerns and associated consequences, implications or connections. This had implications for the:

- ways students structured their responses
- ways students sequenced their responses
- types of textual evidence students used to support their responses to examination topics
- conclusions students drew in relation to their reading.

In Units 3 and 4, students explored two of the 20 texts on the *VCE English and English as an Additional Language (EAL) Text List 2025*. The examination invited students to write an essay of analysis on one of these texts. For each text, there was a choice of two topics. These topics invited students to consider the ideas and/or values that the author presented in relation to the topic.

As with other sections, Section A was assessed using the published assessment criteria and expected qualities (EQs). The marking was norm-referenced<sup>1</sup> and criteria-based. Holistic assessment practices were used as each of the three EQs are interconnected.

The first of the EQs in each section referenced the quality of the student's ideas. The complexity of ideas that the student presented then set the level of challenge they faced in EQ2, which was about the way the ideas were structured, elaborated and substantiated. EQ3 was about the student's proficiency with language and capacity to communicate their selected ideas.

<sup>1</sup> Norm-referenced assessment compares student performance across the whole cohort.

Note: EQs are always applied in relation to the topic. For example, EQ1 in Section A was applied in relation to the ideas that the student presented as a response to the chosen topic. A student presenting sound ideas that did not relate to the topic could not score highly. If the student used textual evidence, such as quotations that did not pertain to a relevant discussion, or if a student demonstrated proficiency in language but the content of their response did not relate to the specified topic, the EQ relating to language was not applied independently of the other two criteria. Students were assessed on the textual knowledge, capacity to explain the connections between the ideas they presented, and the language skills they demonstrated in relation to completing the set task.

As always, Section A offered multiple entry points for students. Every student had the opportunity to use one entry point to demonstrate the skills they had developed.

## Topics

Students who had topic interpretation strategies were well-prepared to respond to topics that were presented in both familiar and unfamiliar ways.

### Topic types

	Explanation	Example
<b>Propositional</b>	<p>Students were offered a proposition in relation to ideas/values presented in a text. Students were invited to challenge the proposition where warranted.</p> <p>The conceptual focus/foci of a topic cannot be challenged or dismissed. For example, a discussion of Robbie Arnott's <i>Flames</i>, 'Love and destruction are inseparable in <i>Flames</i>', should have included a discussion about the connection between 'love' and 'destruction'. However, challenging the relationship between them as 'inseparable' was also appropriate.</p> <p>Topics were framed by one of the following instructions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discuss.</li> <li>• Do you agree?</li> <li>• To what extent do you agree?</li> </ul> <p>Students who understood the difference between these command terms were better able to address these propositional essay questions.</p>	<p>Love and destruction are inseparable in <i>Flames</i>.</p> <p><b>Discuss.</b></p> <p>In <i>Oedipus the King</i>, there are no right choices.</p> <p><b>Do you agree?</b></p> <p>In <i>Born a Crime</i>, women exert the most influence on Noah's life.</p> <p><b>To what extent do you agree?</b></p>

<p><b>Quotation</b></p>	<p>Students were offered a quotation as well as an instruction/proposition. The quotation related to the topic and thus the convention was the student would discuss the way in which the quotation addressed a key idea in the topic as part of their answer. For example, in <i>Jane Eyre</i> by Charlotte Brontë, Jane's passionate declaration to Rochester established her ability to determine her own fate. The metaphor used by the character referenced social power imbalances. Considered in its context, the quotation also conveyed ideas about Jane's moral agency, which related directly to her capacity to actively pursue personal freedom from individuals, religion and society. The way in which students used the quotation reflected their understanding of the meaning it conveyed.</p> <p>Students were not obligated to use the quotation in a specific way. They were free to integrate it into their response in a way that related to the reading they presented.</p> <p>Quotation questions contained a proposition and one of three command terms, which were followed by a direct question. Students needed to understand the conventions associated with addressing other types of questions to be well prepared for this section.</p>	<p>'I am no bird; and no net ensnares me ...'</p> <p><i>Jane Eyre</i> is primarily a novel about the pursuit of personal freedom. Do you agree?</p> <p>'Hopeless, homeless, aimless, shameless souls ...'</p> <p>The world of <i>My Brilliant Career</i> is harshly unforgiving. To what extent do you agree?</p> <p>'How can I but take up the call, Charmaine, and yarn right back at you – it's what we do when we connect ...'</p> <p>How does <i>False Claims of Colonial Thieves</i> highlight the necessity of solidarity?</p> <p>'Blood calls to blood.'</p> <p>In <i>The Erratics</i>, Laveau-Harvie highlights the tension between family obligation and self-preservation. Discuss.</p>
<p><b>Direct</b></p>	<p>Students were invited to answer a direct question about the text.</p> <p>Note: While these were the only types of direct questions used in the 2025 examination, there have been different forms of direct questions in previous papers and may be different ones in the future.</p>	<p>To what extent is revenge a form of justice in <i>High Ground</i>?</p> <p>How does <i>Bad Dreams and Other Stories</i> depict the consequences of crossing boundaries?</p>

## Grouping topics by invitation

	Explanation	Examples
<p><b>Explore the relationship between concerns/ concepts</b></p>	<p>Students were asked to consider two or more concerns/concepts along with the <b>validity of a specified relationship</b> between these.</p> <p>Responses could challenge the relationship but must address the ideas presented by the author in relation to the nominated concepts.</p> <p>The following relationships were used in the 2025 examination:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Concept <b>act as a catalyst</b> for a concept (Question 1ii)</li> <li>• Concept <b>caused by</b> (Question 5ii)</li> <li>• Concept <b>can be</b> related to another concept (Question 15ii)</li> <li>• Concept has <b>differences</b> to (Question 16ii)</li> <li>• Concept <b>is/are/essential</b> directly related to another (Question 6ii)</li> <li>• Consequence of (Question 1i)</li> <li>• Concept <b>caused by</b> (Question 17i)</li> <li>• Concept <b>despite</b> concept (Question 8i)</li> <li>• Concept <b>power over</b> another concept (Question 7ii)</li> <li>• Concept <b>leads to</b> concept (Question 19ii)</li> <li>• Concept is <b>more</b> dangerous than concept (Question 9ii)</li> <li>• Concept's <b>lack of connection</b> to another concept (Question 3ii)</li> <li>• Concept <b>requires more than</b> of concept (Question 13ii)</li> <li>• Concept is <b>primarily</b> something in relation to another concept (Question 1i)</li> <li>• Concept has <b>capacity to coexist with</b> another concept (Question 15ii)</li> </ul>	<p>Relationships <b>act as catalysts for</b> self-discovery in <i>Bad Dreams and Other Stories</i>.</p> <p>Discuss.</p>
<p><b>Drill into a specific aspect of a concern/concept presented by the text</b></p>	<p>Students were asked to consider a specified aspect of a concept presented in a text and discuss <b>one (or more) specified aspect(s)</b> of the concept. For example, the topic does not invite students to write about Moss's ideas in relation to <b>glorifying the past</b> but only a specified aspect of this. Students' responses needed to centre on <b>the dangers</b> of glorifying the past. Focusing on this aspect alone, rather than incorporating it in a wider discussion, is the task's invitation.</p>	<p><i>Ghost Wall</i> warns of the <b>danger of</b> glorifying the past.</p> <p>To what extent do you agree?</p>

<p><b>Consideration of concept/idea development in the text</b></p>	<p>Students were asked how a concept/idea was explored in a text both by discussing the way ideas were introduced and developed, and by exploring the way in which these ideas were conveyed by the author.</p>	<p><b>How does Brontë highlight</b> the danger of acting on emotion rather than reason <i>in Jane Eyre</i>?</p>
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## Verbs used in topics

The verbs used in topics related to the author’s purpose in exploring ideas. Understanding the meaning of these verbs was an important aspect to students’ understanding of the topic’s invitation. Responses may have implicitly challenged the verb used in the topic, but it would have been unwise to ignore the verb or to conflate all verbs into a generic concept, such as ‘presents’.

Note: There was no definitive list of verbs used by the assessors to explore the way in which meaning was conveyed by an author, and new terms were introduced. Students would do well to develop their understanding of such terms. Verbs were often nominalised or implied in topics and students should be prepared for this.

Used in 2025	New in 2025
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• celebrates</li> <li>• challenges</li> <li>• condemns</li> <li>• demonstrates</li> <li>• displays</li> <li>• explores</li> <li>• highlights</li> <li>• mocks</li> <li>• shows</li> <li>• suggests</li> </ul> <p>Note: The use of linking verbs implied a direct connection by using is/are or is not /are not.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• is (a cry for)</li> <li>• depicts</li> <li>• glorifies</li> <li>• warns</li> </ul>

## Implications

Considering the implications of a topic meant that students understood the complexity of the question. Thus, there was a correlation between students who could demonstrate an understanding of the implications of the topics, and higher scores. There were often multiple implications in a topic.

### Strategies used in essay topics

Strategy	Examples
The use of absolute terms	In <i>Oedipus the King</i> , there are <b>no</b> right choices. Do you agree?
The use of connotation	Oliver's poems suggest that it is <b>easy to overlook</b> what is important. Discuss.
The 'silence' in a proposition (or quotation)	Despite their lack of power, <b>it is women who display the most courage</b> in <i>Chronicle of a Death Foretold</i> . Do you agree?
The use of comparison	<i>Rainbow's End</i> shows that lasting change <b>requires more than</b> individual effort. Discuss.
The inclusion of a quotation	<b>'Knowledge is power, ladies.'</b> Harrison demonstrates this is true for the women in <i>Rainbow's End</i> . Do you agree?
The use of verbs in relation to the topic	To what extent does Shakespeare <b>mock</b> social expectations in <i>Twelfth Night</i> ?

## Assessment

Responses were assessed holistically using the published assessment criteria and associated EQs. Benchmark student scripts were used to establish the standard required in each of three interrelated skills:

- The capacity to create a reading of the text's ideas/values.
- The capacity to sequence and substantiate ideas relevant to the topic.
- The capacity to communicate these ideas.

Students were assessed on the skills they exhibited.

Note: The following are excerpts from high-scoring responses.

### Strategies that enhanced responses

Skill	Explanation	Examples
<b>Topic selection</b>	<p>Students should remember to mark:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• their chosen text for Section A <i>and</i></li> <li>• which topic they were answering.</li> </ul> <p>Note: Students are encouraged to select the topic that <b>best</b> allowed them to demonstrate their knowledge and skills.</p>	<p>Shade the <b>box</b> of the text you have selected.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> <b>Bad Dreams and Other Stories</b> by Tessa Hadley <i>and</i></p> <p>Shade the <b>box</b> of the topic you have selected.</p> <p>i. <input type="checkbox"/> or ii. <input type="checkbox"/></p>
<b>Topic interpretation</b> Consideration given to implications of the topic.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This response considered what might motivate someone to face such danger and references the values associated with this idea.</li> <li>• Note: An important element of examination preparation was for students to develop strategies that allowed them to interpret and understand unseen topics.</li> </ul>	<p>In <i>Oedipus the King</i>, Sophocles suggests that seeking the truth is dangerous.</p> <p>Discuss.</p> <p>The tragedy of the human experience lies in the tendency for innately human desires, like curiosity, to lead to danger and suffering. Indeed, in his play <i>Oedipus the King</i>, Sophocles provides a nuanced view on the danger of seeking the truth. He illustrates it to indeed be perilous in its ability to expose the horrific, yet predetermined crimes of characters, and the conflict its pursuit spurs causing the straining of political and familial bonds. Yet he also ultimately highlights that regardless of the danger, <b>the truth should be sought, presenting its pursuit and acceptance as a powerful signifier and expression of human agency in an otherwise absurd world of predetermined fates.</b></p>
<b>Argument</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This response used</li> </ul>	<i>Twelfth Night</i> suggests that truth leads to

<p><b>construction</b></p> <p>Strategic sequencing was used to explain the connections between the ideas presented <b>and</b> to guide the reader through the ‘reading’ of the text.</p>	<p>summary sentences in each paragraph to make explicit the ideas being presented and their connection to one another.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The final sentence of each paragraph reinforced the ideas being presented.</li> <li>• Sophisticated ways to link the arguments were presented in each paragraph into a cohesive response.</li> <li>• Conceptual thinking and understanding the ways ideas connected were demonstrated.</li> </ul>	<p>happiness.</p> <p>Do you agree?</p> <p><b>Body paragraph (BP) 1 began</b></p> <p>The allure of disguise as a more attractive version of the truth reflect how human vulnerability and truthful insecurity entice even noble people to choose their own version of the truth.</p> <p><b>BP1 ended</b></p> <p>Indeed, Shakespeare elucidates how the subversion of truth can lead to a form of happiness that may be deemed as synthesised and not real</p> <p><b>BP2 began</b></p> <p><b>The exposé of such disguises</b> curated by subversion of truths reveal how it can be human nature to seek happiness in delusion and falsehoods <b>which can lead to further</b> insecurity and unhappiness.</p> <p><b>BP2 ended</b></p> <p>Here, Shakespeare substantiates the notion that disguise and falsehoods that try to seek gratification do not serve as genuine ways that lead to lasting happiness.</p> <p><b>BP3 began</b></p> <p>The delusion of ‘untying’ of ‘knots’ within the comedy’s resolution ostensibly presents a happy resolution, <b>yet the truths and weaknesses of the human condition</b> threatened such idyllic outcomes.</p> <p><b>BP3 ended</b></p> <p>This sombre note underscores how truths in life are often painful and the seeking of love and happiness often reveals this idea. Feste’s final line, ‘our play is done’ ... blurs the line between theatre and reality ... to recognise Illyria’s illusions as temporary, whereas the ‘wind and rain’ of <b>the truth pertains within both comedy and in life.</b></p> <p><b>End paragraph/conclusion</b></p> <p>Ultimately, truth is shown in <i>Twelfth Night</i> to cause fleeting moments of happiness when superficial and subverted, while more lasting satisfaction arises out of the revelation of truth. Yet in the exposé of</p>
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		<p>truths and reading of disguises  <b>Shakespeare reveals how reality and truth ultimately threaten happiness as part of his life's cyclical 'wind and rain'.</b></p>
<p><b>Argument substantiation</b>  Used a range of evidence to support the 'reading'.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This response considered: the text's linguistic elements, characters, the text's structures, the plot, allusion and the way in which these elements interplayed to support the reading presented.</li> <li>• Ideas were explored through a discussion of the structure of the text and its language.</li> <li>• High-scoring responses, such as this one, were characterised by a more philosophic consideration of the ideas, rather than a literal consideration.</li> </ul>	<p>In <i>The Memory Police</i>, silence is both a tool of oppression and a tool of resistance.</p> <p>Discuss.</p> <p>However, Ogawa illustrates silence as a vital tool of resistance as it allows the citizens of vital means of psychological liberation to escape the regime's control. Ogawa's ambivalent stance towards silence is exemplified in the <b>old man's frank concession to 'never read the narrator's novel to the end', as to do so would be 'wasteful'. The old man's conscious refusal to invest in meaning and instead remain passive reflects more than mere ideological fatigue, suggesting</b> deliberate silence as a vital means of self-preservation that numbs suffering. <b>His calm rationalisations of loss – telling the narrator to 'not worry' about the disappearances underscores the paradox of the novel's tone: gentle and tender, even amid systematic breakdown.</b> Thus, Ogawa reconceptualises silence and a lack of resistance as not a moral failure, but a form of resistance in itself as it allows the residents to psychologically break free of the regime's clutches. <b>This is most powerfully encapsulated in the narrator's ultimate disappearance, which is paradoxically rendered as a form of 'liberation' in itself. The biblical connotations of 'liberation' suggest</b> that silence is the only form of salvation that allows the citizens to escape rather than futile resistance. Thus, though Ogawa ultimately condemns silence, she extols it as a vital form of resistance as it provides avenues of liberation from the regime's control when even resistance cannot.</p>

<p><b>Capacity to resolve the topic</b></p> <p>The topic was resolved, that is, the response showed an understanding of the interplay between the author's context, audience(s) and purpose in relation to the topic.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This response used the conclusion to resolve the topic and, thus, completed the response.</li> </ul>	<p>'Why are we still invisible?'</p> <p><i>False Claims of Colonial Thieves</i> is a cry for justice.</p> <p>To what extent do you agree?</p> <p>... <i>False Claims of Colonial Thieves</i> is a powerful collaboration between late Yamaji poet PaperTalk Green and settler Australian poet Kinsella. <b>To a large extent, the anthology is a cry for justice. [...]</b> <b>conveying hope for contemporary Australia whilst also demanding for justice that is needed.</b></p>
<p><b>Capacity to communicate ideas</b></p> <p>Language was used with precision.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This response used appropriate metalanguage and linking devices to explore complex interconnected ideas.</li> <li>The purposeful use of sophisticated language is very different to including poorly applied polysyllabic words included in the response.</li> </ul> <p>Notes:</p> <p>The purpose of language is to communicate. Thus, a student's primary selection criteria when making language choices is that language should <b>communicate</b> ideas. It is not the sophisticated language alone that results in a high-scoring response, it is the purposeful use of sophisticated language that allows the student to communicate sophisticated ideas.</p> <p>Assessors acknowledged that writing in examination conditions was a 'first draft' completed under timed conditions, and thus fluency was not equated with perfection, rather what the students achieved under</p>	<p>'Look, I want to love this world as though it's the last chance I'm ever going to get to be alive and know it.'</p> <p>Oliver's poems are a celebration of life.</p> <p>Do you agree?</p> <p>Oliver's poetry frames the natural world as a sanctuary of solace suggesting that an immersion within its rhythms transcends grief, imparting a love of life. This is explored within her liberating poem 'Wild Geese' where the speaker suspends self-reproach and humanity's penitential impulses instead asserting that the natural world 'calls out to you' like 'wild geese' 'heading home again'. Through this migratory image Oliver illuminates the cyclical and instinctual belonging that nature provides, one that veers from the soteriological dogma of redemption in human societies. In doing so, Oliver frames the natural world as a site of affective transformation, through which we can find belonging and comforting comfort amidst hardship, allowing individuals to 'love this world' and thus, life. This is further through the anaphoric insistence of 'meanwhile' which constructs a steady and meditative rhythm mirroring the constant sanctuary and support nature proffers. In accentuating this insistence against human 'despair' Oliver illustrates the power of nature to dissolve hardships within its enduring rhythms, leaving individuals with a sense of comfort, thus the ability to 'love' the 'world' around them. This notion is also explored in</p>

	these difficult conditions was celebrated.	<p>'August' where despite the speaker's corporal pain in their 'ripped arms' they nonetheless are 'thinking of nothing' as they cram berries into their mouth, venerating the power of nature to eclipse pain and suffering through its sensory indulgences. By positioning nature as a focus of reprieve, <b>Oliver celebrates its ability to provide a means for individuals to venerate the world around them. This is compounded by the concluding synecdoche of 'this happy tongue' in which Oliver distils the speaker's identity into a singular sensory organ. In doing so Oliver reveres the ability of nature to promote a return to a primal order, suggesting such an instinctual attunement to be a metonymy for a life rooted in sustenance and pleasure, a life to be celebrated. Thus in exemplifying the power of the natural world in ameliorating an individual's grief, Oliver's poetry celebrates life that it provides in which individuals learn 'to love' the 'world' around them.</b></p>
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### Strategies that limited responses

Skill	Explanation
<b>Topic interpretation</b>	<p>Responses may have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>misunderstood that the invitation of the topic was to explore the ideas/values presented by the author and considered the topic through an entirely different lens, missing the point of the task.</li> </ul> <p>For example, a response that primarily discussed the role of the patriarchy in relation to:</p> <p>'I shall be forced to invent, to fictionalize, to imagine.'</p> <p>In the world of <i>We Have Always Lived in the Castle</i>, truth is of little importance.</p> <p>Do you agree?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>read the topic as only inviting a discussion of one concept, when in fact the topic invited consideration of the relationship between two or more concepts.</li> </ul> <p>For example, a response may have only discussed ideas associated with villainy in response to:</p> <p>In <i>Sunset Boulevard</i>, Wilder suggests that individuals can be both victims and villains.</p> <p>Discuss.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>dismissed the concepts and discussed other concept(s) with respect to the relationship offered.</li> </ul>

	<p>For example, argued that lasting change required the forging of strong relationships and consciousness raising rather than considering the concepts in the topic in response to:</p> <p><i>Rainbow's End</i> shows that lasting change requires more than individual effort.</p> <p>Discuss.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>misread the topic or conflated the two topics on offer.</li> </ul> <p>For example, discussed <b>both</b> acting on emotion <b>and</b> the pursuit of personal freedom, and even created a link between the two in response to:</p> <p>How does Brontë highlight the danger of acting on emotion rather than reason in <i>Jane Eyre</i>?</p> <p>Or</p> <p>'I am no bird; and no net ensnares me ...'</p> <p><i>Jane Eyre</i> is primarily a novel about the pursuit of personal freedom.</p> <p>Do you agree?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>misunderstood or ignored terms which limited the discussion to a particular aspect of the topic.</li> </ul> <p>For example, wrote generally on the portrayal of indigenous culture in response to:</p> <p><i>High Ground</i> celebrates <b>the resilience of</b> Indigenous cultures despite colonisation.</p> <p>Discuss.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>missed terms that indicated the relationship between two concepts.</li> </ul> <p>For example, no strategy to deal with unfamiliar terms so substituted <b>and</b> for the term they ignored/misunderstood in response to:</p> <p>In <i>Flames</i>, Arnott <b>condemns</b> the isolation <b>caused by</b> modern society.</p> <p>Note: Students should be reminded to bring dictionaries into the examination.</p>
<p><b>Argument construction</b></p>	<p>Responses may have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>drifted from the topic or spent time <b>discussing irrelevant material</b>, such as an extended discussion about the author's personal attributes.</li> <li>demonstrated no meaningful strategy in their presentation of <b>ideas</b>. For example, a student may have only presented examples of plot points that illustrated their contention.</li> <li>used a strategy that created a <b>tenuous link between the paragraphs</b>.</li> <li><b>unsuccessfully used linking words</b>, such as initially, later and finally (or equivalents), without understanding that these words implied a connection between ideas and this connection needed to exist.</li> <li>used a discussion of characters as their organising structure.</li> <li>presented a discussion of individual stories or poems as their organising structure.</li> <li>considered only <b>one of the concepts</b> presented by the topic, for example, 'villains' but not 'victims'.</li> <li>used a <b>flawed understanding or definition of the terms of a topic</b>, leading to irrelevance.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>only discussed the terms of the topic in relation to other, more familiar ideas. For example, only discussing the impact of the patriarchy when the topic invited a discussion about 'change'.</li> </ul>
<b>Argument substantiation</b>	<p>Responses may have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>presented their evidence as 'facts' rather than as an interpretation of the text.</li> <li><b>tried to 'twist' a topic</b> so they could discuss more familiar textual material.</li> <li><b>referenced only a specific part of a text</b> (for example, only the opening of a text, or one or two stories or poems) and thus reduced their capacity to discuss the way in which ideas were developed.</li> <li><b>demonstrated a limited or incomplete understanding</b> of the author's ideas, presenting (for example) only character-based evidence implying this was the 'only' way ideas were conveyed.</li> <li>used quotations merely to serve as 'proof' that an event occurred in the text rather than as the <b>basis for analysis</b>.</li> <li>used a set of memorised quotations from the texts that were <b>unrelated to the topic</b>. Note: Inclusion of textual evidence was not considered independently from the task.</li> <li>used no evidence at all.</li> <li>relied on the back story only (for example, <i>Oedipus the King</i> and <i>High Ground</i>, where extensive contextual knowledge was taught, and students have not distinguished between context and text).</li> <li>relied on evidence gleaned from beyond the text (such as, Noah's comedy sketches).</li> </ul>
<b>Capacity to conclude essay</b>	<p>Responses may have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>stopped at the end of their body paragraphs without attempting to conclude.</li> <li>been limited to merely restating the argument in the conclusion.</li> </ul>
<b>Capacity to communicate ideas</b>	<p>The effectiveness of a response may have been limited by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>poor vocabulary choices, including using vocabulary inappropriately.</li> <li>struggles with grammar.</li> <li>incoherence.</li> </ul>

## Section B – Creating a text

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Average
%	0.5	0.8	3	8	16	24	22	14	8	3	1	5.4

### Breakdown of Frameworks that students responded to

Framework chosen	% of students	Average score
Writing about country	10%	11.2
Writing about protest	47%	10.9
Writing about personal journeys	25%	10.9
Writing about play	17%	10.8

Section B invited students to create one written text that explored meaningful connections with ideas drawn from one of the four Frameworks of Ideas listed in *VCE English and English as an Additional Language Study Design*: writing about country, protest, personal journeys or play. Students needed to use linguistic features to create a ‘voice’ to connect with the reader in order to facilitate the communication of their ideas. This response needed to achieve one of the four purposes listed in the study design: to explain, express, reflect or argue. It should be noted that responses could achieve more than one purpose. While students could select, adapt or subvert any form of prose writing, they needed to use an understanding of context, audience and purpose to create a cohesive text and an exploration of the ideas for their chosen Framework. Students were also free to use any structure, linguistic features or vocabulary to establish their voice and achieve their purpose – such authorial decisions played an important role in the way the student formed their response.

The examination task required students to use the title specified for their Framework. While there was no preferred method for doing this, the title provided the conceptual parameters of the text that students were invited to create. As well, students needed to incorporate the Framework of Ideas suggested by one or more (if they chose) piece(s) of stimulus material presented in the examination. Students were offered three pieces of stimulus material, including one visual.

Just as students were free to select a purpose, stimulus and form for their writing, they were able to address their writing to any audience – for example, the student body at a school assembly or the recipient of a letter. However, this task formed part of an examination, and as such, there is always a secondary audience for this response – the assessor. Students were encouraged to keep the examination specifications and published assessment criteria front of mind as they made authorial decisions during the examination.

Note: Examination responses are not private texts, therefore, thought needed to be given to appropriate content, as an unknown adult would be reading it for the purposes of assessment.

As part of examination preparation, students should be encouraged to use the text’s structure and linguistic choices to connect in powerful ways to the readership. Sensationalised content, cloying sentiment or use of clichéd language, images or tropes were rarely the most powerful option to convey ideas. Sound examination preparation would empower students with both the skills and agency to avoid such pitfalls.

## Points of note:

- Students are reminded to nominate a framework and stimulus at the beginning of their response to Section B. For example:

Shade the **box** of the Framework of Ideas you have selected.

**Framework 1: Writing about country**

Shade the **box** of the Stimulus you have selected. 1  2  3

Note: It was helpful to the assessor if the student **wrote the title** at the start of their response.

- Selecting a 'title' in Section B meant that the corresponding Framework was also selected. For example, using the title 'Origins' meant that ideas associated with Framework 1: Writing about country must be discussed and the associated stimuli used.

Note: If a student nominated one Framework but used a different title, the assessor used the title as the guide for the student's selection. For instance, if a student selected Framework 1: Writing about country, but wrote on 'Small Acts, Big Wins', the assessor would assume the student had accidentally ticked the wrong Framework box. This strategy assumed that a mistake can be made more easily in selecting a box than in transcribing a title. Students could not 'mix and match' titles and frameworks.

- The same was true of stimulus material. While students could use any ideas they liked, the ideas had to be drawn from the stimulus material of the **selected** Framework.
- The title was fixed. Students could not change or modify the title.
- Mentor texts do not need to be referenced.

Note: If a student did this, no marks were deducted, but the assessor ignored the addition.

As with other areas of the examination, there was no preferred content, style or form for responses. Rather, the assessor's focus was on how the student developed the title and stimulus idea(s) (and others) into and through a cohesive text. Students were assessed on the skills they demonstrated. This was consistent with the approach taken in other areas of the examination.

## Assessment

As in other sections, Section B was assessed holistically using the published assessment criteria and EQs. Benchmarks were used to establish the standard required in each of three interrelated skills:

- quality of Framework ideas that connected to the title and stimulus
- capacity to develop and explore ideas, using voice to achieve purpose
- capacity to communicate ideas through use of linguistic structures.

As in other sections, the EQs in Section B were strategically sequenced. The relevance and quality of the ideas selected for exploration by the student set the challenge in creating a voice to communicate, develop and explore them, and the linguistic structures and devices that amplified them.

### Strategies that enhanced or limited responses

<p>Strategies that enhanced responses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Responded to the title and used it as a focus when exploring ideas from the selected Framework.</li> <li>Created a cohesive text that developed and explored Framework ideas purposefully.</li> <li>Used text structures, language features and vocabulary to amplify and develop ideas.</li> <li>Associated stimulus material with linguistic features that were designed to amplify ideas.</li> </ul>	<p>Strategies that limited responses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Wrote a narrative that used stimulus material in a literal way, for example, two children playing a board game (Framework 4 Stimulus 2) with no other discernible connection to the Framework or title.</li> <li>Wrote a rambling text that did not have an observable purpose.</li> <li>Presented ideas that were unrelated or minimally related to the Framework.</li> </ul>
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Established a voice that strategically connected to the reader to enhance the text's purpose.</li> <li>Trusted that an adult audience could infer meaning and guided such inference strategically to enhance the text's purpose.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engaged with limited or simplistic ideas.</li> <li>Contorted a previously prepared response to connect with the examination title and stimulus.</li> <li>Wrote for self, rather than for the reader.</li> <li>Relied solely on plot to convey ideas.</li> <li>Offered little evidence of considered authorial choices in structure or linguistic features.</li> </ul>
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## Responses

As this is a new area of study, and one that can be completed in many ways, a series of annotated responses are included below to demonstrate and celebrate student success. The annotations indicate factors considered in the assessment of the text but are not an exhaustive or exclusive list of factors considered by assessors. These texts scored in the high-middle and high range.

Note: It must be remembered that this was a timed, first-draft writing by Year 12 students, and perfection was an unrealistic expectation. The range of voices and styles used in the examples do not indicate VCAA-endorsed approaches.

Innovation and individuality were encouraged. Humans will always find new and powerful ways to use language to communicate, even within the confines of an examination. This was embraced.

### Framework 1: Writing about country

Students used this Framework as an opportunity to explore complex ideas around migration and identity.

#### Example 1

This response used the title 'Origins' as an opportunity to explore ideas about the ways in which place of origin can form identity, and how identity might evolve over time.

The idea of 'hearts' caught by country and its associated cultures and understanding, from Stimulus 1, was referenced implicitly and explicitly through using river imagery and figurative associations.

This response mixed reflection and explanation to present an affirmative vision of how a person's country of origin shapes and reflects but does not determine their identity and relationship with country throughout their life.

Length: approximately 1100 words.

<p><b>Origins</b></p> <p><b>The Bosphorus has always felt like more than water to me.</b> It is a body with memory, <b>a restless spine</b> that holds Istanbul together even as it divides it. Its currents do not simply flow, they twist and churn, carrying the taste of salt, diesel and centuries. The ferries that cross it each morning seem <b>like a heartbeat</b> that <b>pulses</b> to the city itself, moving with quiet insistence between Europe and Asia. To locals it is ordinary, a commute, a shimmer at the edge of daily life, but to me <b>it breathes. It sighs</b> under bridges, <b>hums</b> against the hulls of ships, and <b>whispers</b> stories of empires, fishermen and lost sailors. The Bosphorus <b>has a will of its own</b>, and I have always felt <b>it watching, as if measuring</b> how</p>	<p>A thoughtful, confiding reflective voice established at the outset.</p> <p>Strategic reference to the Bosphorus acted as an invitation into the text and located the text. Place name used literally and figuratively throughout the piece as a cohesive device.</p> <p>Personification used to</p>
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<p>much of me belongs to either shore.</p> <p><b>When I returned to Turkey as an adult</b>, I stood on the ferry deck as the boat rocked gently beneath my feet. The air was thick with salt and exhaust, sharp enough to sting the nose and I felt the vibrations of the engine echo through the railing into my palms. Seagulls wheeled above, their cries piercing the heavy air while the call to prayer rippled from one shore, then another, the sound crossing the water like an answer. It was as if even <b>the land itself prayed in harmony</b>, bound by the rhythm of the strait.</p> <p>My cousin nudged me grinning, ‘You look like a tourist,’ he teased in Turkish.</p> <p>I laughed though the word <b>stung</b>, ‘I’m not,’ I said <b>too quickly</b>. But the river seemed to smirk with him, the current curling around the ferry’s side as if to remind me that I stood on borrowed ground. The Bosphorus does not let you belong easily. Its currents tug in two directions at once, as though testing who will resist and who will surrender. Watching it that day, I realised that it was not only a symbol of division, it was a teacher. It carried more than boats; it carried <b>memory</b>. Beneath its surface, the city’s <b>stories</b> swarm, the clang of shipyards laughter from waterfront cafes, the murmured prayer of sailors who once set off into the unknown. <b>It held all</b> of it, refusing to forget. To stand beside it was to feel the pulses of country, <b>not land as possession, but land as presence</b>, as something that watches, remembers, forgives.</p> <p><b>Back in Australia, I miss Turkey</b> in ways that sneak up on me: sometimes I stand by the Yarra River and hear the faint echo of the Bosphorus in its steady flow. <b>The two waters could not be more different, one calm and murky, one fierce and glittering</b>. Yet I imagine them in quiet conversation, sharing stories of who they have carried. I smelled charcoal from a food truck near the tram stop, and for a second I’m back in Istanbul, smoke curling around my face, the <b>scent of grilled lamb thick</b> in the air. Even the flies that hover lazily in Melbourne’s summer heat remind me of afternoons in my grandmother’s courtyard, where the air shimmered with warmth and the <b>scent of rosemary</b>. She would fan herself with a folded newspaper, shooing the flies with one hand and holding a glass of cold ayran in the other. That courtyard was my first lesson in stillness, in what it meant to belong to a place through memory, taste and sound, and no matter what, <b>I know that my body might go, but there is no way that my heart can ever leave</b>. And yet, when I returned to Turkey, <b>the language</b> that once rolled easily from my tongue stumbles, words slip from my grasp when I need them most, leaving me <b>stranded mid-sentence</b>. ‘Australia?’ a shopkeeper asks, hearing the accent I cannot disguise. I nod, and he smiles kindly, but the word settles with my cousins, their voices quick and confident and though I laugh with them, I can feel the city measuring me, sensing my hesitation. The Bosphorus, I imagine, is listening too. It knows when someone belongs by instinct and when they belong by memory alone.</p> <p>In Melbourne, I am too Turkish. At school my lunchbox once drew</p>	<p>accentuate the depth of feeling the narrator has for the river and later country.</p> <p>An economical and smooth indication of the passage of time. Framing of the text’s narrative voice and the implication of childhood migration informed the context. Personification revealed depth of feeling.</p> <p>Careful word choice drew attention to the complex emotional state of the narrator.</p> <p>A series of insightful ideas were explored about the selected Framework.</p> <p>Capacity to economically move between place and time.</p> <p>Comparison amplified ideas.</p> <p>Imagery implied location.</p> <p>Stimulus 1 adapted appropriately to maintain the narrative voice.</p> <p>Figurative language powerfully used to increase the sophistication of the ideas presented.</p> <p>Framework ideas introduced as part of an integrated exploration.</p> <p>Comparison used to</p>
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<p>wrinkled noses, the smell of gözleme turning from comfort to embarrassment. I learned to eat quietly, to pack sandwiches instead. I buried my language under silence so I wouldn't hear it mocked. In Turkey, I am too Australian. My voice is softer, my words uncertain, my gestures marked by distance. The land reads me before I speak.</p> <p><b>Still, the Bosphorus has taught me</b> that belonging is not about choosing one shore. The river does not apologise for being two things at once. Its power lies in connection. It carries fishermen, commuters and lovers across every day, refusing to let the city forget it is one body split by water but joined by flow. Its currents never ask who deserves to cross; it simply moves, constant and knowing. Watching it, <b>I can see that country is not something you own, it is something you are in relationship with. It shapes you, demands respect, and holds your memory even when you leave.</b></p> <p><b>Perhaps</b> the same is true of Australia. The gum trees along the Yarra lean with their own kind of wisdom, the scent of eucalyptus thick in the morning air. When I walk along its path, the soil crunching softly under foot, <b>I feel its quiet steadiness</b>, so unlike the wild pulse of the Bosphorus, but no less alive. The roots of the trees, thick, taking over but nonetheless full of life. <b>The river does not question where I come from; it only asked that I listen.</b> Its water, too, holds stories of the Wurundjeri people, of floods and droughts, of resilience. I am learning to listen, I am learning to hear them, to understand that belonging begins with listening to what the land remembers. <b>Maybe</b> I'm not meant to choose. <b>Maybe</b>, like the rivers that shaped my life, I belong to the flow between them, to the saltwater that divides continents and to the brown river that threads through Melbourne's way, have claimed me. They remind me that country is not one fixed place but a series of crossings, <b>a conversation between where we are and where we came from.</b></p> <p>Where I stand by the Bosphorus now, gulls circling above and the city's hums rising around me. I feel both Istanbul and Melbourne pressing close, <b>not as opposites but as echoes.</b> The water beneath me glimmers, restless, alive. I closed my eyes and listen. In its movement, I hear belonging, not the kind that asks for borders or uncertainty, but the kind that flows endlessly between. <b>There is no separation between anything or anyone, because it is all country, it is all family and everyone is part of that story.</b></p>	<p>develop ideas.</p> <p>Repeated reference to river acted as a tool of cohesion.</p> <p>Framework ideas developed.</p> <p>Adverb develops voice.</p> <p>Implication of duality established both implicitly and explicitly by personification of second river.</p> <p>Framework ideas further developed.</p> <p>Repetition used as a unifying device.</p> <p>Reader guided to text's idea.</p> <p>Figurative language deepened ideas explored.</p> <p>Continual return to the imagery used in the text's opening paragraph created cohesion.</p> <p>A delightfully life-affirming conclusion reached.</p>
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## Example 2

This response used the title 'Origins' as an opportunity to explore the origins of trauma, its associations with country, and the way in which country can also offer reconciliation and healing through developing feelings of stewardship.

This narration reflected on a complex relationship between country and its inhabitants, and illustrated how healing relationships with the land can occur over time.

Reference to Stimulus 3 was inferred through the narrator's understanding of country shaped by family history and association.

Length: approximately 800 words.

<p><b>Origins</b></p> <p><b>The mirror above the sink is cracked.</b> When the morning light hits it, the <b>fractures glint like veins of lightning</b>, running through the glass and across my face. <b>It has been 12 years since the shot</b>—long enough for grass to grow over the paddocks, long enough for the magpies to return—but some things do not fade. The <b>country keeps its scars</b>; it simply learns to hide them under layers of dust and silence</p> <p><b>I used to believe mirrors showed truth.</b> Now I know they only show what the light allows. Out here, light bends differently; harsh and unfiltered in summer, soft as breath in winter. <b>Mum used to say the land remembers everything:</b> the rain, the droughts, the laughter that once filled our kitchen. Maybe that is why I came back. Maybe I want to see what the land remembered of me.</p> <p><b>I still remember</b> the smell of that morning—dust and eucalyptus, sharp in the air after the night's rain. <b>Mum hummed as she packed Dad's lunch</b>, a tune that never had words but always said we're home. I sat by the window watching the fog roll low across the paddocks, folding the world in half. Everything felt smaller then, softer. Memory never shows faces first; it shows the light, the edges of moments before they harden into history.</p> <p><b>They say the country teaches patience.</b> It moves at its own pace, wears down its own edges. But that morning everything changed faster than breath. The dog barked once, twice—each echo wrong, jagged. Then boots hit the floorboards. The world split open.</p> <p>The sound was deafening. <b>The mirror above the sink shattered</b>—a spider web of white lines bursting outward. Through it, I saw two faces fall; hers and his. <b>One gone, one going.</b> I do not remember the scream, though I know it came from me. What remains is the silence that followed, that kind that makes your pulse too loud, as though the land itself had stopped breathing.</p> <p>After that day the country learned to be quieter around me. Neighbours stopped leaving chairs on porches; <b>fences that used to creak stood rigid and unused. Inside, my days</b> rearrange themselves around small silences—the gap where a laugh had lived, the empty seats at the table. The wound was private yet public: everyone could see the boy who returned in pieces. I've come to realise that <b>trauma is not a single event, but a grammar that rewrites how you place verbs.</b> I no longer moved through the world; I paused at it, waiting for reflections to confirm I still existed.</p> <p><b>Mirrors became dangerous things.</b> A face looked back at me with <b>seams I could not stitch.</b> The land did not heal me; it only bore witness, its paddocks storing the echo of a shot the way a river keeps the memory of every stone. In that witness I learned a</p>	<p>Metaphor conveyed a complex relationship between individuals and country.</p> <p>Personification used to amplify an understanding of Framework ideas.</p> <p>Metaphor continued as a unifying feature.</p> <p>Origin of the narrator's understanding of country. Framework ideas developed. Stimulus 3 implied through mother's belief. First-person narration established and maintained. Confiding tone builds a relationship with the reader. Sombre tone acted to foreshadow. A peaceful scene created to contrast sharply with the next one. Reference to a nebulous 'they' indicated the isolation of the narrator.</p> <p>Use of recurring symbol as a cohesive device.</p> <p>Powerful use of understatement to impact the reader as implication brings the reader dawning awareness of tragedy.</p> <p>Targeted reader with metaphor.</p> <p>Imagery used to amplify and connect.</p> <p>Framework ideas developed.</p>
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<p>strange truth; <b>belonging is not simply the presence of others but the ability to stand in the same light without collapsing.</b></p> <p>When I finally left, the silence followed. Cities make a different kind of quiet—mechanical, restless—but even there I could hear the country breathing somewhere beneath the asphalt. Time smoothed the edges of my memory, but it never erased them. <b>Each reflection in a shop window became an echo of the cracked mirror, reminding me that the fractures inside me are the same lines as the land that raised it.</b></p> <p>Years later, I returned—not to fix what was broken but to learn how to live with the fracture. The property had aged with me. Fence posts leaned, and the dam had shrunk to a mirror no wider than a doorway. I spent weeks fixing what I could: gates, windows, the small tasks that tether you to the present. Repair became its own language of forgiveness. When the new <b>windowpanes caught the morning sun, they threw up jagged rays of light; the cracks had not gone, they had simply been given context.</b></p> <p><b>Country, I realised is not the unbroken horizon we sell to ourselves. It is the field where we bury our private histories and till them into something that can grow. The droughts and the floods, the silences and the scream—they belong to the same soil. My mother's voice sometimes returns in the hum of the radio, faint but certain, and when I look into the mirror now, I accept a reflection with seams: a map, not a wound.</b></p> <p><b>Perhaps healing is not a return, but a reckoning—an understanding that the self, like the land, holds its scars as part of its shape. Even cracked glass can still reflect the sun. Even country, scarred and silent, keeps offering light.</b></p>	<p>United two sustained metaphors with previous personification, which connected the ideas introduced.</p> <p>Change in metaphor used to reflect change in understanding</p> <p>Implicit connection to Stimulus 3.</p> <p>Complex ideas resolved with further development of metaphor introduced at text's origin. Cohesion achieved via return to opening image and metaphor.</p> <p>An uplifting ending – not an influence on assessment, just a quiet joy.</p>
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### Example 3

This response used the title 'Origins' to explore the powerful role of culture associated with country of origin, to offer both identity and agency to individuals.

Reference to Stimuli 1 and 3 was inferred through the narrator's understanding of country shaped by family history and association.

The narrative voice reflected on experience and explained their newfound understanding of country and identity.

Length: approximately 800 words.

<p><b>Origins</b></p> <p><b>This was it: the land down under.</b> Up until this point, everything I knew about Australia had come from episodes of <i>Border Security</i>: a weekly family ritual, made complete with popcorn. <b>Dad envisaged this boundless country a welcome escape from the cramped city of Singapore. For me, though, my entire reality had been transformed.</b> The life I had once navigated with certainty had fractured, leaving a gaping hole of vulnerability in its place much like the scrutinised passengers on <i>Border Security</i>.</p> <p>The new rhythm of Australian English often had me stumbling over</p>	<p>Location economically established and narrator's context established.</p> <p>Contrast demonstrated the imposed nature of migration. Framework ideas introduced and developed.</p> <p>Idiomatic speech used to demonstrate how language</p>
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<p>my words, its foreign cadence catching in my throat.</p> <p><b>‘D’youget a snag from Bunnings?’</b></p> <p>The words rolled off the <b>curly haired boy’s tongue</b> with ease. But to me, these strange phrases were cryptic puzzles waiting to be deciphered. Bunnings? Snag? Snag. The word echoed in my mind, conjuring an image far from sausages and barbecues. <b>A reptilian creature coated in emerald like ancient armour stared back at me from two malevolent slots, it’s powerful jaws ready to ‘snag’.</b></p> <p>The vacant stare of my wandering mind had painted on my face prompted the boy to clarify, ‘Snag – as in a sausage’, instantly eradicating the swamp creature. Somehow, <b>the silence stung more than laughter</b> ever would have making me feel alien.</p> <p><b>That evening, I lay under the heavy weight of my blankets,</b> trying to quiet the ache of difference. The laughter of the other children echoed through the thin walls, like a song I didn’t yet know the words too. For now, the deceptive safety of my isolation felt like the lesser burden – easier to bear than the sting of rejection. Still, a part of me yearned to be included in their melody.</p> <p>The homesickness was setting deep into my bones when I found myself thinking of Ah Ma. I thought of her hands – worn, steady, sure – stirring a large pot of kaya on the stove. I could almost feel my heart being physically transported to her Kampong kitchen.</p> <p>‘Come ah, girl, help me with this.’</p> <p>She never learned how to read or write. She had used her hands to speak – to knead, to stir, to build a life out of what little she had. <b>‘Your hands’, she once told me, guiding mine around a wooden spoon, ‘can be used to make anything good.’</b> That memory pulled me into my kitchen. The chill of Australia’s winter air bit my skin with an unfamiliar hostility, yet I was determined to chase a little warmth of my own. I found a recipe online – sugar, eggs, coconut milk, pandan leaves – the same ingredients she had used in her little Kampong kitchen. I followed the recipe carefully, mixing and stirring, and as a cloud of steam curled up around me the <b>scent that rose was faintly sweet and earthy, carrying a trace of my Southeast Asian</b> origins. The kaya had thickened slowly, stubbornly, just as I had in this strange new place. My first attempt was lumpy, uneven and far from Ah Ma’s glossy perfection. But as I tasted the green paste, a smile tugged at my lips. It wasn’t about getting it right. It was about trying. It was about using my hands. The familiar warmth of the kaya lingered on my tongue as I reached for my phone.</p> <p>‘Ah Ma’, I said as she answered, her voice thin but bright through the static.</p> <p>‘Ah girl! You eat already?’</p> <p>I laughed at her question.</p> <p><b>‘I made kaya today’,</b> I told her. ‘Not as good as yours.’ There was a pause, then a small proud chuckle.</p> <p>‘It doesn’t matter. You remember – that’s good enough.’</p>	<p>can exclude.</p> <p>A single feature indicated how unusual this was to the narrator.</p> <p>Imagery purposefully directed the reader to the anxious inner world of the narrator where the innocuous can be a threat.</p> <p>Encouraged sympathy and connection with the narrator’s vulnerability.</p> <p>Effective use of figurative language to explore Framework ideas.</p> <p>Stimulus 3 implicitly referenced by the connections in memory of a place and its people.</p> <p>Associations of culture with family and love illustrated and demonstrated to be part of essential learning about self.</p> <p>Imagery used to demonstrate the link to place.</p> <p>Dialogue used to illustrate the power of connection to</p>
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<p>I swallowed the lump in my throat.</p> <p>‘Thank you, Ah Ma’, I said softly. ‘For teaching me how to use my hands.’</p> <p>The line crackled with silence, but I could almost see her smiling at the other end.</p> <p>‘Use them well, girl.’</p> <p>Standing there, spoon in hand, I realised how much she had given up for me without ever having the same opportunities I now took for granted. She had grown up in a world where she was told that learning was a luxury reserved for men, that her place was not in a classroom but beside a stove. <b>And yet, through her, I had inherited the courage to cross oceans, to learn new words, to belong in more than one place.</b></p> <p>Looking down at <b>my hand, streaked with traces of coconut and sugar</b>, I thought of hers – the same steadiness, the same determination, <b>separated by countries but still somehow connected</b>. My hands were a reminder that, despite the physical distance, the origins of my heart will always remain in that small Kampong village, inscribed with the love of Ah Ma.</p> <p><b>For the first time I wasn’t afraid to let go of what I had left behind.</b></p> <p><b>Instead, I was grateful – for the chance to move on and for the hands that taught me how.</b></p>	<p>culture, people and place.</p> <p>Implicit reference to Stimulus 1.</p> <p>Framework ideas presented earlier are drawn together.</p> <p>Effective use of imagery and symbol. Framework ideas identified and explored.</p> <p>Developed ideas resolved.</p> <p>An uplifting ending, not an influence on assessment, but affirming for the reader.</p>
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### Example 4

This response used the title ‘Origins’ to explore how reconciling with country of origin is central to happiness. This response both reflected on and explained meaningful Framework ideas.

Reference to Stimulus 1 was made by the narrator’s inability to shift their heart until they had acknowledged and paid tribute to the role of country in shaping their identity.

Length: approximately 1100 words.

<p><b>Origins</b></p> <p><b>Two years ago, I left home.</b> In the morning haze of my 18th birthday I packed my bags, <b>slammed</b> the door, and journeyed across the Indian and Atlantic oceans, my sights set on the ‘big smoke’. Life in Tasmania had become stagnant, with there being less for me to progress towards. There was a pressure that surrounded me, from teachers and peers, that I had to go and do great things, be a great person. In my quaint hometown of Bream Creek, nothing remained for me to achieve, and London began to call for me, my idea of a utopia, a perfect world surging with opportunities. Part of me felt ashamed, of having to leave my family and Tasmania behind, my birthplace and the home that shaped me all my childhood. <b>Maybe my shame is why I left so abruptly, never giving them a proper goodbye.</b></p> <p>Life in London was different to what I expected. As excited as I was to be here, it took time for me to adjust, much longer than I</p>	<p>Opening lines offered readers contextual cues.</p> <p>Strategic verb choice revealed the narrator’s state of mind.</p> <p>Strategically planted an ‘idea seed’ at the beginning, which was revisited at the end to ‘frame’ the ideas</p>
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<p>expected. <b>I felt alienated, unaccustomed with this foreign land, land so different to the one I left behind.</b> Mornings in Bream Creek broke out in bird song, the dawn orchestrated by the delicate notes of their melodies. In London, the early hours of the day were accompanied by a percussive of sirens and construction, <b>the rhythm of the city hammered out in steel and smoke.</b> Light that once twinkled off the rippling waters down at Marion Bay became jarring reflections off windowpanes, blinding me as I pushed through the bustling crowds that lined the inner-city streets. With time my body did adjust; it became familiar with the space around me, like the towering buildings that encapsulated me, providing a sense of protection, <b>which was ... different to the open plains of Tasmania's fields and how exposed they made me feel. Over my first 18 months of inhabiting this distant land, my body made sense of my new home ...</b></p> <p><b>But my heart was somewhere else.</b></p> <p>My mind couldn't seem to let go of Tasmania, my place of origin, my birthplace, my true home that <b>it seemed I was tethered to. Memories felt like relapses,</b> taking me back to everything that defined the earliest chapters of my life. Evenings in London where I would gaze up at the stars above reminded me of nights spent wandering winding gravel roads of farmland, her kindness and love providing me with comfort as we wandered endlessly, guided only by the Southern Cross and constellations overhead. Watching the skies of London fade into hues of pink and orange took me back to sunsets in Bream Creek; countless afternoons spent with my grandparents, admiring the horizons as we bid goodnight to the falling sun as it dipped below the bay, bringing peace and tranquilly to their back garden.</p> <p>I felt conflicted, torn between these two lands. As much as I wanted to be in London, making my path on this unexplored land, my heart yearned for Tasmania; for the comfort and sanctuary within it. <b>I had never properly said goodbye when I left those years ago, and so I had never allowed myself to accept what I was leaving behind.</b> Every defining moment of my childhood, every first step or momentous achievement, had taken place on that land. <b>It held the origins of who I am,</b> was the beginning of the person I've become today. I began to long for Tasmania, drawn like a moth to a flame, because when I tried to relive everything I loved about my home, it just didn't feel the same. Watching as the sun's rays peaked through the clouded skies in London and hit my skin, I wish to be down on Marion Bay, feeling the warmth of the southern sun surged through my body as I scorched myself sore, much like those days spent at the bay during my childhood. For as long as I failed to acknowledge all I had left behind, Tasmania would never let me leave.</p> <p>So, four months ago, I packed my bags, locked my apartment, and set off back across the sea to Tasmania, <b>the place where it all started.</b> Arriving back, I worried if I would be accepted, forgiven by the land for my hasty departure years ago. Stepping out onto the tarmac at Hobart Airport, my fears subsided as the <b>familiar scent</b></p>	<p>explored.</p> <p>Framework ideas explored.</p> <p>Imagery used to demonstrate alienation.</p> <p>Ideas of isolation and displacement conveyed via series of comparisons.</p> <p>Interesting separation of the mind and body's reaction to country.</p> <p>Explicit reference to ideas in Stimulus 1.</p> <p>Effective use of figurative language to amplify an idea.</p> <p>Interesting juxtaposition of ideas in a powerful simile.</p> <p>Framework ideas explored.</p> <p>Framework ideas developed further.</p> <p>Revisited and developed Framework ideas.</p> <p>Effective use of figurative</p>
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<p><b>of wattle wrapped around me and embraced me</b> in what felt like a warm welcome home. Back in the comfort and sanctuary of my grandparents' house in Bream Creek, I took the time to properly appreciate Tasmania, <b>thanking it for all it had</b> given me and all the memories I cherished so deeply. For the countless afternoons, I spent my hours frolicking and laying in fields of green with my cousins, watching as neighbouring cows, the ones we saw be born, plodded by in their paddocks, as the whispers of the cool, evening breeze gently rippled the leaves of the treetops. I welcomed the water at Marion Bay, as when I dived beneath the surface I would feel the cool droplets run through my hair and dance across the skin, the same harmonious sensations I could remember from days swimming with my dad. Even the chickens, whose deafening cries used to infuriate me in the early hours of the morning, I now appreciated. On afternoon spent with my grandma, watching as she tended to her garden with care and compassion, picking the same tomatoes I devoured as a baby, the happy chirps of the chooks rang out into the air, their excitement of the delicacies nestled beneath a berry bush reminding me of my own happiness to be home once more.</p> <p><b>Back in London</b>, I think fondly of my trip to Bream Creek. Allowing myself to be there, appreciating everything it had given me and everything is shaped about the person I am today, I was able to bid farewell to the land that loved me so tenderly. As I continue to voyage, exploring these distant places, <b>I feel content in knowing the origins of who I am, the home that I feel honoured to have had, stay within me. No matter the distance that parts us, Bream Creek never feels far away; because although my body might go, my heart will never leave it.</b></p>	<p>language to convey ideas.</p> <p>Further development of Framework ideas.</p> <p>Economic use of expression to convey a change of location and time.</p> <p>Returned to opening images to create a sense of completion.</p> <p>Referenced explicitly idea in Stimulus 1 to create a sense of completion and a cohesive text.</p>
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## Framework 2: Writing about protest

This year there were fewer students who mistook the noun in this Framework title for a verb. Students were encouraged to use the description of the Framework found in the study design as their guide for appropriate Framework ideas. Many students were able to use their passion for social justice to inspire their exploration of appropriate Framework ideas.

### Example 1

This response used the title, 'Small Acts, Big Wins', as an opportunity to explore ideas about what constituted both an act of protest and a win when protesting. The narrator explored what is taught and what is believed, and the forces that allowed ideas to change, develop and adapt.

The idea of 'survival as a win when facing violent oppression' was explored and ultimately challenged. Survival in silence was presented as defeat. It was the survival of stories that was seen as the 'win' in a heart-breaking story of coming to terms with oppression and exile.

This response mixed reflection and explanation to present an affirmative vision of how a person's stories provided a legacy that restored honour and pride even in the face of devastating injustice.

Length: approximately 1300 words.

Small Acts, Big Wins	The word 'fragile' carefully
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<p>A simple, innocent question shatters the <b>fragile</b> peace of the night. 'Baba, why don't we ever visit Kashmir,' my youngest asks, his voice alight with curiosity.</p> <p>A question that births the loudest of silences. A pause weighted with the ghosts of memories I dare not resurrect. To answer this question is a small act. Sometimes, even the most broken of hearts whispers 'small acts, big wins'. <b>But I fail. How could I tell him that the land he longs for exists only in echoes.</b> That the place he craves has since been stripped of its culture, its identity, its people – all long before he took his first breath. That it is not absence that keeps us away from the suffocating presence of history. Small act? I think not.</p> <p>I could say 'It is not safe'. I could explain that we are no longer welcome there. But the truth is neither simple nor kind. The truth is silence. <b>A silence I have carried for years, one that has engulfed me from within. Silence is the inheritance of the defeated.</b> But even inheritance has an expiry date – and when this small act of nothing takes place, there lies the biggest win for us all.</p> <p><b>January 19th 1990</b></p> <p>I look at my son, his brow furrowed in expectation of an answer I do not know how to give. Beyond him, the sound of Bob Marley's <b>'Redemption song' drifts into the night</b>, it's melody curling through the air like the last embers of something long extinguished. 'Won't you help me to ... sing these songs of freedom.' These words are a stone in my chest. Is freedom a small act or a big win? I closed my eyes in anguish. For a moment, I am not here. I am there. There where fires raged through the valley like an unrelenting storm, leaving behind only the bitter sting of a cold January winter. There where winds howl, not merely a bystander but an accomplice to what was unfolding.</p> <p>January 19th 1990.</p> <p><b>By the late 1980s</b>, Kashmir was no longer a land of two faiths. It had become a battlefield of ideologies, insurgencies and betrayal. The violence was no longer communal; it was systematic – an unravelling of century-old coexistence fuelled by political actors both within and beyond our borders.</p> <p>I remember my mother. Her hands trembled as she packed our lives into a single, frayed suitcase. Outside, the voices swelled – their words etching themselves into my skin like unhealed wounds. <b>'Raliv, Tsaliv, ya Galiv' – leave, convert or perish.</b> These were the options that we were left with.</p> <p>January 19th 1990.</p> <p>On this day, the last of the of the fires engulfed the homes of Kashiri Pandits. Thousands of Kashmiri Hindus were exiled from their land – <b>no money, no place to go, only loss, only sorrow.</b></p> <p>I was one of them.</p> <p>Our home in Srinagar was the only sanctuary my family had ever known. I still think of it, even today. Whether the stark white snow still blankets the wooden rooftops, or whether the ashes of burned</p>	<p>selected to reveal the narrator's tenuous grip on peace even years after their experiences as an exploration of Framework ideas.</p> <p>Thoughtful, reflective and honest voice created to speak directly to the reader.</p> <p>Narrator's desire to shield the child from the truth presented as part of the burden of silence. Complex ideas about the consequences of protesting or not protesting were explored.</p> <p>The date of the night that the forced displacements began in huge numbers was used repeatedly throughout the text, and the repetition reflected the way it haunted the narrator.</p> <p>Allusion to Marley's song, about the intergenerational impact of terrible injustice, implied the overwhelming impact of this on the narrator and universalised the experience. As did the metaphor to describe the injustice.</p> <p>Narrative voice moves easily between time and place.</p> <p>The use of this infamous chant grounds the reader in the well-known events.</p> <p>Repetition and short sentences to stress horror.</p>
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homes had **tainted their purity forever**. But memory is a cruel gift. It brings not only joy but the last of loss. I remember the night they came. Their rifles gleamed under the cold moonlight, their boots caked in the filth of war. It was clear: eviction had become erasure.

**I remember my father whispering, 'Stay quiet. Stay hidden.' And so I did.**

And I have ever since.

January 19th 1990.

But silence does not ease the past. Survival, stripped of dignity becomes another form of death. The question surfaces again. Perhaps silence is the small act and freedom is the big win. Our elders withered away in unfamiliar lands, their bones longing for the soil that once rejected them. Our children were raised on borrowed history – their tongues learning to associate 'home' with a place they had never seen.

I remember marching through those streets, signs lifted high like sailors defying an unrelenting storm. Yet, like the walls we hope to scale, the bullets that rained down upon us only ensured our descent into silence. Our cries for justice were swallowed by the indifference of the world – our resistance **reduced into a mere hammer crashing into an impenetrable wall**. I often think of my late uncle. His hammer did in fact cause cracks to form but this was only until those soldiers made him fall. I can still see the stain that bloomed across his chest – dark and endless.

January 19th 1990.

And then I remembered what I did. Nothing. **No small act. No big win.**

I remember turning to my father, once a man of unwavering conviction – a proud Kashmiri Pandit who had taught me of our land's beauty and grace. But that night, he stood head bowed – his reservation of the helplessness that gripped our people. When they dragged my uncle's body away, when they erased his name from the records, when they rewrote history to paint Kashmir Hindus as ghosts – I did not fight back. Instead I packed a bag and left. And in doing so, my story got lost in the ashes.

**My son tilts his head, waiting. I should tell him of the silence that swallowed our screams.** They say history is written by the victors but who writes the stories of those who were never allowed to fight?

We do. I long to explain how the small act of one results in the big win for many. That when we do not protest, we accept. But as I open my mouth, **my hammer hits nothing**.

January 19th 1990

'What happened there Bubba' his voice is gentle but it cuts through me.

I exhale slowly. 'People asked to be heard.'

'And then?'

'They gave up when responded to with silence.'

The metaphor implied the horror was so great that the natural world will carry the impact to amplify Framework ideas.

The complex relationship the narrator had with his father strategically introduced here.

Ideas about the Framework explicitly explored as were the consequences of these ideas.

Stimulus 2 introduced, metaphor used and developed throughout the text.

Title repeated throughout. (Note: Not merely to centre the text on the title but because the text was a consideration of what these apparently straight-forward words meant.)

Link to the child reinforced the concept of legacy and emphasised the intergenerational impacts that actions must explore Framework ideas.

Stimulus 2 metaphor developed as ideas developed.

Child's kindness highlighted the cruelty of others.

Ideas about the impact of bystanders explored.



<p><b>Small Acts, Big Wins</b></p> <p>Protest is <b>seeking someone</b> who will turn a pebble into a mountain ...</p> <p><b>Name:</b> Protest</p> <p><b>Age:</b> as old as the first cry that shattered silence, but trust me, I've aged rebelliously well.</p> <p><b>Location:</b> wherever a spark from a voice that refuses to be extinguished lies.</p> <p>~About me~</p> <p><b>I stem from love.</b> Wild, deficient, impossible-to-tame love. Love for the silenced, the broken, and for those who have been told they are powerless. I emerge when the suffocating lie of, 'Nothing can be done,' collapses under the weight of those who know of the possibilities. <b>If you've ever stood in a crowd where voices merge into one, had your heartbeat sync with the beat of the drum or had your feet dissolve into solidarity then you have met me before.</b></p> <p><b>I exist because power lacks accountability.</b> Because truth, gagged and gasping, still finds a way to speak out. Because <b>silence is a difficult lover</b>, too hard and too impossible to maintain. I am the collective release, the joining of voices, the reminder that huge moments come for small actions.</p> <p>~Hobbies~</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interrupting silence and <b>puncturing complacency</b></li> <li>• Poetry and songwriting (I sing in slogans, write in chants, and carve my presence into banners held aloft in the sky)</li> <li>• <b>Dancing in defiance</b> of riot shields</li> <li>• <b>Burning brightly</b> with candlelight vigils</li> <li>• <b>Making silence blush</b></li> </ul> <p>~Can you handle me?~</p> <p>I am all heart with much heat. A paradox of fury and compassion colliding in every march. You say you wanted challenge? <b>See if you can keep pace with me.</b> I'll lure you into my whirlwind and hold you there longer than reason allows. <b>Some mistake me for destruction</b>, for sometimes I wear its mask. But at my core, I am the urgent belief that we can <b>change the world, one person at a time.</b></p> <p><b>As an agitator, I stir. As a liberator, I loosen chains. As a mirror, I reflect what others would rather not see.</b> My profession is truth-telling even when truth hurts because every life denied dignity fuels my work. My occupation is not glamorous, but it is essential. To enable people to go above and beyond, break the mould and hold on. I'm able to turn your everyday actions into moments of power. <b>Do you still think you can keep up?</b></p> <p>~Love languages~</p> <p><b>My kind of love?</b> It doesn't whisper-, it chants. <b>My words of affirmation are painted across cardboard, scrawled across walls. My acts of service</b> spent standing together, shoulder to shoulder as lives of authority closed in. I'm reassured that</p>	<p>Familiar contextual cues of a dating site orientated the reader.</p> <p>The 'voice' adopted – ostensibly of 'Protest' itself. Protest presented as confident, strong and benign, presenting Framework ideas.</p> <p>The second person connected directly to the reader.</p> <p>Framework ideas presented and explored.</p> <p>Language associated with form explored ideas.</p> <p>Linguistic structures, harnessed to present protest as having a sense of fun, increasing its attractiveness.</p> <p>Other abstract nouns personified adding to the illusion of protest as a potential partner – building on authentic form.</p> <p>Protest presented as having agency and confidence – a sophisticated way to explore Framework ideas.</p> <p>Challenges offered directly to readers – an example of how the text's voice works.</p> <p>Framework ideas considered.</p> <p>Clear reference to the ideas in Stimulus 3.</p> <p>Repeated sentence structure</p>
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<p>thousands rise alongside me. If I'm able to assist and help the person, I've done my job. My words of affirmation are in the quiet moments after the march. Sitting in exhausted silence knowing you don't have to explain the weariness. <b>These minute details matter to me.</b></p> <p>~What inspires me?~</p> <p>I'm in awe of the <b>quiet kind of courage</b>. The kind that shudders yet doesn't turn away. Ordinary people who dare to imagine more, they are the ones who enkindle me. <b>To the teacher who risks censure to plant seeds of justice in their students, you have my heart.</b></p> <p>To the exhausted parents who still make signs even after a long day of work, I see you. To the shy student who finds their roar, that sing in my favourite tune. Their courage keeps me going. No <b>matter how big of an impact</b>, their defiance shapes my dream. To be loved into obsolescence. In truth, some might say its vast and too impossible, but then again, when have I ever been one to settle for what's 'possible'. As long as someone continues to try, that's who I'm interested in the most.</p> <p>~What I'm looking for in a partner~</p> <p>I'm <b>looking for</b> someone who won't give up, someone who will meet my fire with their own, someone who won't mistake my righteousness for infallibility. <b>The partner I seek must be</b> able to endure the long, exhausting march, for if you only join me for a moment of glory, you are not for me. <b>I require someone</b> who is willing to go above and beyond and continue to chip away despite the tiredness.</p> <p><b>What matters most to me is that you understand your role.</b> You need not be the loudest or the most supportive, but you must continue to fight until you no longer can. If you bring your voice, your presence, and your conviction, I'll amplify it until it shakes mountains. The journey you must run will not be pretty, but eventually it will eventuate into something much greater than anything you could think of. So, if you're willing to love someone who is loud and unrelenting, someone who won't whisper or settle for anything less than your best. Then maybe, just maybe, I've found my match.</p> <p>~Me in a nutshell~</p> <p>If you're looking for some fun, then I'm not your gal. I'm neither a pastime nor trend, nor am I a fleeting spark to be ignored. I'm older than kings, stronger than tyrants and more persistent than silence. I love the small wins and battles you face every day cause together, we can make anything possible. If that sounds like a good time, then hop on down. I am Protest. And it's time for us to change the world.</p>	<p>used for effect.</p> <p>Consistently maintained voice, which pumped out complex, thought-provoking ideas.</p> <p>Examples clarify ideas for the reader.</p> <p>Title referenced.</p> <p>Reader directly invited to see if they 'measure up' and implicitly challenged to be worthy as Protest's partner. Designed to engage the reader actively with the ideas.</p> <p>The imperative presents the idea of Protest's power.</p> <p>Call to action – powerful, fresh and engaging – creates a sense of completion</p> <p>Not an assessable point, but an upbeat and refreshing ending.</p>
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### Example 3

This response used the title, 'Small Acts, Big Wins', to analyse a photograph. The action of taking a photograph was presented to promote and inspire protest, and the action within the photograph was also shown to be a small act that generated big wins. The student managed to balance the two ideas effectively in this piece seeking to both explain and argue a case for small acts of protest as justified by the big wins they result in.

The imagery from Stimulus 3 was introduced and developed throughout the text.

Length: approximately 1000 words.

<p><b>Small Acts, Big Wins</b></p> <p><b>Danuta Danielsson, Sweden, 1985</b></p> <p><b>The Woman with the Handbag</b></p> <p>Taken in Växjö, Sweden by photojournalist Hans Runesson, during a demonstration by the neo-Nazi Nordic Reich Party, the photograph depicts 38-year-old Danuta Danielsson, hitting one of the marchers with her handbag. <b>A small action.</b></p> <p>Though described as an act of 'impulsivity' a fleeting instance that did not escalate further in the moment with the marcher doing 'nothing [but] walked further'-the photograph lives on as a symbol: a silent-rallying cry of anti-fascist resistance, <b>a small act of everyday courage. A protest. A big win.</b></p> <p>The immortalisation of moments like these are a powerful tool of protest, working as a louder voice. <b>Photographs such as The Woman in Red (Turkey, 2013) or Tankman (China, 1989) serve as enduring symbols of bravery and resistance.</b> Small, individual acts, that become lasting images that inspire and mobilise broader audiences. Small actions that become big wins.</p> <p>The ability of a photograph to communicate an entire story through an impulsively composed frame, ultimately reveals the complexity of the human condition and stands as a lasting testament of resistance.</p> <p>Danuta Danielsson embodies this.</p> <p>A small act, hitting a marcher with her handbag. A big win – the photograph.</p> <p>The foreground:</p> <p>Danuta Danielsson dominates the foreground of this photo. With a firm grounded stance, her arm fully extended. She delivers a striking blow, with her handbag to one of the neo-Nazi marchers. Her posture conveys defiance and strength making her and her small act of isolated resistance the central focus of the image.</p> <p>Though not an intentionally symbolic choice, <b>Danielsson's weaponisation of an inherently feminine object, the handbag subverts gender expectations.</b> Representing the power of an ordinary individual, a woman, to stand up against hate and fuel the chorus. She transforms the handbag from a simple accessory to an emblem of social and political resistance.</p> <p>Throughout feminist history, the handbag has symbolised freedom, independency and self-autonomy with <b>Danielsson's act joining</b></p>	<p>Initially it seemed a 'new' title was added, however, the text was framed by the name of the photograph that it discussed, and this (and other strategies) acted as devices to promote cohesion within the text.</p> <p>The title used as a unifying device.</p> <p>The informative tone established and maintained.</p> <p>Short paragraphs acted to stress Framework ideas.</p> <p>Text divided into discussions of aspects of the photograph (Framework) punctuated by subheadings in keeping with the informative style.</p> <p>A range of types of protest discussed and the implications of them analysed.</p> <p>Reference to ideas in Stimulus 3. These ideas were expanded later.</p>
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**the voices of those before her** evident from the suffragette era, when it evolved from a reticule to a functional bag capable of carrying pamphlets and other materials- small act that had big wins. Enabling women to participate more actively in society, signalling their independence.

*The Woman with the Handbag* embodies this notion. Her act while small, symbolises the power in protest, ultimately having a lasting effect. A big win.

Middleground:

The middleground shows neo-Nazis from the Nordic Reich party, a right wing extremist group, with one marcher holding a flag that visually anchors the image. Their uniformity and militarised conformity, emphasises the conflict between the collective ideology and the small act of personal courage.

**In technical terms, this neo-Nazi march fits the definition of a protest but its purpose undermines the very principle of justice, protest seeks to uphold. Small acts, big consequences. A protest is defined as a statement expressing disapproval or objection to something. In this case, their objections are rooted in promoting white supremacy, racial purity and opposing immigration and multi-culturalism. While neo-Nazis met the technical criteria of a protest their objectives and the harm they promote, place them on the side of the oppressor rather than the oppressed, undermining the ‘legitimacy of their ‘protest’.**

This juxtaposes Danuta Danielsson, whose small act was a statement of disapproval against the neo-Nazis and a symbol of defiance. The photo’s publication and continued circulation, amplify her action far beyond the immediate moment, making her voice heard louder than ever. It’s both the act and the representation, *The Woman with the Handbag* fulfils the word far more powerfully than any ‘typical’ neo-Nazi marcher. A small act that brings big wins.

Background:

As indicated by the background of the photograph, the scene takes place in an urban/city setting, with bicycles, cobblestones and surrounding buildings. Onlookers are visible, some smiling or laughing, no action, suggesting amusement, support or detachment.

Streets and public squares have long served as a stage for the expression of voices and practise of protest, as their chorus voices echo throughout cities. Cities become accessible and visible arenas for citizens to gather and join together to voice dissent, demand change and stand up for what they believe in. These urban spaces are inherently political, designed for public assembly dating back to the Viking age where these gathering spaces were used for communal decision making and public discourse. **Part of the power of protest lies in its ability to disrupt routine and normality.**

Small actions that have big disruptions, thereby big wins. *The Woman with the Handbag* embodies this in a different form, rather than passively observing the march becoming an onlooker, she interrupts their routine, disrupting the flow of the march.

With a small action, she made her voice heard even louder. A big

A really challenging Framework idea explored and resolved about who can claim the moral high ground in protest and under what circumstances.

The dual discussion of the photograph, and the act it illustrated, discussed in relation to Framework ideas. Narrator’s capacity to navigate the difficulties of a simultaneous discussion demonstrates structural and linguistic control.

Framework ideas directly discussed within the discussion of the photograph’s construction.

<p>win</p> <p>The photograph:</p> <p>As discussed, this moment is a powerful tool of protest but what holds equal power is the immortalisation of this moment through the photograph, transforming a small action into a big win. Though fleeting in reality, this image captures the exact moment of impact- a small act of resistance compressed into a single frame. The ability of a photo to capture the complexity of a protest – the tension, emotion, courage- is an art form that freezes and amplifies a single small moment in time that might have been otherwise been the click of a camera, such a miniscule act, generating big wins.</p> <p>The circulation of these images extended the impact of the protest far beyond the immediate moment or location. Ultimately amplifying Danielsson's voice as she is joined by all those who see her. Once captured, these images are published in newspapers, social media documentaries, exhibitions and even more. <i>The Woman with the Handbag</i> was published the next day on the front page of a Swedish national newspaper, Dagens Nyheter, a small act, subsequently, her image published in the British newspaper, <i>The Times</i> and the <i>Daily Express</i>, in the immediate following days. A big win. Now forty years later <b>I share the same image with my mum, my</b> sister, my friends. Forty years later her image and voice still circulates social media – and I write of her resistance.</p> <p>This dissemination, transforms her small act into a powerful win, ultimately, inspiring solidarity, empathy and a continued fight.</p> <p>In this way, the photograph transcends mere documentation, evolving into a visual rebellion- an act of protest that breathes life – and a voice into the silent and unseen.</p> <p>Danuta Danielsson, hit a marcher with her handbag- a small action. Hans Runesson, captured it, a small act, Dagens Nyheter published it – a big win.</p> <p><b>Now I join her chorus – a big win.</b></p> <p>The silent now heard and the unseen now sought.</p> <p><b>Danuta Danielsson Sweden, 1985</b></p> <p><b>The Woman with the Handbag</b></p>	<p>Abrupt introduction of a personal element could have been jarring given the formal style to this point, instead the reference to 'my mum' revealed narrator's age and highlighted the maturity of the narrator's voice, ideas and idealism.</p> <p>Personal voice became a clear indicator of the narrator's passion and belief that the photograph (and by extrapolation this text) were designed to persuade others to act.</p> <p>The framing, set up at the beginning, was clear in these final lines – obviously a unifying structural device.</p>
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#### Example 4

This response used the title 'Small Acts, Big Wins' to promote the work of an international non-governmental organisation and created an argument for the reader to join the group, suggesting that the individual's actions were part of a larger humanitarian struggle. Thus, the text both explained and presented a case.

The student used the ideas of Stimulus 3 as the basis of their argument.

Length: approximately 1000 words.

<b>Small Acts, Big Wins:</b> [organisation name redacted] feature article	Student additions to the title
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<p>on the need of small acts of protest to bring monumental moments of change</p> <p>by K Yoshi, activist at [redacted]</p> <p><b>A bird in which is caged will never experience the freedom to spread its wings for it is the confined space of the birdcage in which entraps it. The birdcage IS oppression, the suppression of human voices that call out for change.</b></p> <p><b>At [redacted], we believe</b> it is our moral obligation to protect these small acts of protest and examine how these myriad of motivators grow into monumental acts of change and victory. From the streets of Kyiv, to the streets in Washington or the shores of Gaza, the gift of protest allows humanity to rise up in the face of injustice. Yet we must ask ourselves</p> <p>Why do we protest?</p> <p>How does it let us stand up against the bars of oppression?</p> <p><b>Protest itself at its core is the refusal to conform.</b> The refusal to conform to injustice, racism, inequality, oppression, war. It is the power for the birds within the cage, for humanity itself, to unlock the key to the birdcage and set the Ukrainians, the Americans, the Palestinians free. <b>To attain that Big Win.</b></p> <p><b>To achieve big wins, small acts of protest must first dismantle the bars of the cage.</b></p> <p>Many witness injustice firsthand, but as silent in facing it, often suppressed through fear and compliance. Small acts of protest, if people join together <b>become the chorus that people will stand up and take down those bars of protest.</b> Protest itself is not a form of chaos, but an act of courage in seeking out the big win at the edge of the horizon. It is the moment when the <b>bird, the voices in the cage, dares to sing the tune for freedom, in what humanity believes in, which will crumble the iron bars of oppression in which once trapped mankind.</b></p> <p>[Redacted] has found, the American Civil rights movement serves as a testament to the small acts of struggle when faced with powerful oppression. <b>Rosa Parks with her boycott and Martin Luther King served as these initial small acts that allowed people to band together in unison to stand up for what they believe.</b> Yet Martin Luther King's actions of protest are not bound by time and place, as Iranian women today who cut their hair in defiance or <b>Greta Thunberg getting detained for civil disobedience reflect</b> the struggle that King's protesters once had against the onslaught of fire hoses. The small acts of resistance to seek out the victory of becoming free and demanding change transcends time itself and knows no bounds. It is the determination that brings down the iron bars of oppression that once stood tall no matter the time period.</p> <p><b>The small constant struggle against the bars of oppression may be just for the light of truth.</b></p> <p>Contrasted to Martin Luther King's struggle, the Tiananmen Square protests serve as a monument where protest knows no</p>	<p>were ignored for assessment.</p> <p>Metaphor repeated throughout the text introduced at the beginning and used as a unifying structure throughout.</p> <p>Appropriate strategy to indicate context, audience and purpose to the assessor. (Note: Strategy more effective because it was assessable.)</p> <p>Framework ideas introduced.</p> <p>Framework ideas linked to the title.</p> <p>Subheadings consistent with style also highlighted argument progression.</p> <p>Stimulus 3 introduced.</p> <p>Metaphor introduced at the beginning extended.</p> <p>Ideas supported by historical evidence as this response builds a case relating to Framework ideas.</p> <p>Recent examples included to add immediacy to the argument.</p> <p>Subheadings consistent with the adopted style.</p>
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<p>bounds spanning across countries. In the face of democratic injustice, a lone man known by the press as ‘Tank Man’ stood against a live military tank as a small act of protest, his bravery memorialised today. <b>Decades apart, and on different soil,</b> protest is not bound by national borders. Despite the slaughtering of thousands of protesters within Beijing, their bravery was undeniable as they shed light on the truth of Chinese authoritarian regime.</p> <p>The age of oppression may look different in each country but the yearning for freedom remains the same these small acts no matter the time or place, all strive for the big win, and the victory over oppression that awaits them.</p> <p>The key to the birdcage lies in the hands of protesters and us.</p> <p>On October 3rd 2025, Greta Thunberg, alongside her companions on a humanitarian aid flotilla, was detained for attempting to bring support to the struggling victims of war in Gaza. <b>As a result, her small active resistance, triggered global condemnation of the struggling lives of the people in Gaza.</b> Her small act of courage, to change the world, was not only a reflection of the struggle of one nation, but a reflection of humanity's global struggle for human rights.</p> <p>As of October 13th 2025, the streets were filled with celebrators as the monumental win of a ceasefire was announced and prisoners of Israel and Palestine were reunited with their families. The world had been changed and that had been from the courage of countless protesters who had united in chorus to end the war.</p> <p><b>While the cage of oppression may be built upon injustice, war, inequality or racism, the key, that of protest, remains the same.</b></p> <p><b>To break free from the confines of the cage by turning that key for change.</b></p> <p>Protest itself starts with these small acts of struggle. The moments when the key of protest constantly struggling in the unlocking the rusty cage of injustice. Yet, [redacted] has seen, we have seen, that no matter the decade, no matter the nation, the key of protest will unlock the birdcage and let humanity, the bird, take flight to a better world.</p> <p>This is the big win awaiting them, and <b>ultimately us. We must</b> protect and help these small acts, these small struggles of the bird in the cage, by unlocking and dismantling the confines of the cage for mankind to become free in the new world it has envisaged. Free from injustice and oppression.</p>	<p>Examples across different geographic regions implied that the idea was universally applicable.</p> <p>The truth (as understood by the narrative voice here) perhaps simplified a more complex situation. However, the basic point remains valid.</p> <p>Repeated metaphor acted as a cohesive devise.</p> <p>The change to the first-person plural designed to speak directly to the reader. Inclusive pronoun and imperative played a role in the call to action. Text reached inspiring crescendo.</p>
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## Framework 3: Writing about personal journeys

Many responses to this task reflected the causes and consequences of changes of direction in lives as well as the role these changes mark in maturity and wisdom.

### Example 1

This response considered the role of sibling relationships in personal journeys and how these change with time. It used the title 'Changing Direction' as an opportunity to also consider the role forgiveness plays in relationships and life's direction.

This response referenced the ideas of emergence and development from Stimulus 2 as well as adopting the imagery as a recurring symbol through the text. Stimulus 3 was used as the idea to drive the whole piece.

Length: approximately 600 words.

<p><b>Changing Direction</b></p> <p><b>From the moment I could walk, I trailed behind my older sister like a loyal shadow.</b> She was everything I wanted to be – composed, admired, strong. Everywhere she went, I would follow. No matter how many times she changed directions, I would eagerly chase after her shadow.</p> <p>My favourite memory of us was when we would fold origamis. It was a silent activity, but I admired my sister's <b>neat folding and perfect paper sculptures</b>. Meanwhile, I could only fold a paper boat. I had a difficult time learning origami. But that didn't matter to my sister. She would keep folding boats with me, and I hoped that would never change.</p> <p>However, when she entered high school, she got busy. <b>Our origami sessions were halted. She changed directions too fast, and I was left behind.</b> Her eyebrows would knit, her jaw would clench, and I'd flinch, pretending I never cared. I told myself that being the older one came with its own burdens. While she kept moving forward in her own direction, I had to navigate a whole new journey by myself.</p> <p>Years crept by and I too reached high school. The distance between us grew. Time was like a quiet thief – it stole the comfort of closeness and replaced it with the <b>ache of distancing</b> apart. I grew taller, my footsteps heavier. No longer <b>did I fit neatly inside my sister's shadow</b>. Yet, admiration still lingered like a stubborn ghost. I caught myself watching her back. The same firm posture, the same unshakable confidence. I sometimes would whisper, wishing she would turn back. But she never heard. Never saw that <b>I kept folding paper boats, waiting for her return.</b></p> <p>Then she changed when I was in eighth grade. <b>The sharpness of her eyes softened. The tightness of her voice dissolved into something almost gentle.</b> My sister's busy schedule suddenly cleared, and she began appearing at my doorway, casually leaning against the frame as if she had always belonged there.</p> <p>Each time, I froze. Why the sudden change of direction? You can't just patch years of silence and neglect over small talk. Her laughter – the same sound I chased as a child – now filled the</p>	<p>Context established effectively and economically.</p> <p>Very literal use of Stimulus 2 developed through the text as both a symbol and a linking device.</p> <p>Narrative voice characterised by simple sentence structure and language. Confiding first-person tone developed and maintained. These features established the text's voice.</p> <p>Framework ideas considered through figurative language.</p> <p>Image of origami used as a uniting thread.</p> <p>Narrative voice conveyed more than the narrator was aware of – strategic implication employed here to achieve this.</p> <p>Metaphor used effectively to</p>
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<p>room too loudly. Just when <b>I finally left her shadow, she had to appear in my life again.</b> It wasn't fair.</p> <p>But she kept trying. Each visit she'd find an excuse to stay longer, her voice softer, her gaze patient. <b>The walls I fought so hard to protect began to crumble.</b> Somewhere between her questions and my half-hearted answers, a warmth began to stir. This was what I'd always admired about my sister – she was always stubbornly persistent.</p> <p>One night, we began folding origamis again. But this time, it was different. Instead of folding a boat, my sister taught me something new. <b>She gently guided my hands, overlapping sheets of paper. My hands, clumsy, manage to fold a new sculpture. It was a paper crane.</b> Looking at the clumsy folding, a chuckle escaped my lips. It was small, unexpected but it cracked open the air. My sister smiled too, and I realised – forgiveness wasn't a single decision, it was a long stumbling journey. One full of changing twists and turns.</p> <p>I learned that I couldn't make boats forever. <b>Changing directions is sometimes inevitable in life.</b> I felt proud of our paper crane. In the sea of boats, two cranes floated together.</p> <p><b>Now, when we walk home together, our shadows would stretch long, side by side.</b> One was neither longer than the other. Just two figures moving forward, in the same direction.</p>	<p>convey Framework ideas.</p> <p>Recurring symbol reflected development and maturity in narrator.</p> <p>Framework ideas considered via lens of title.</p> <p>Metaphor reflected change, and extended consideration of Framework ideas.</p> <p>The ending was uplifting – not required by the task but delightful.</p>
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## Example 2

This response considered the changes of direction forced by fate and the impact these have on fundamental beliefs that form identity.

The text, set during a single church service, explored the way humans can change direction from rage to acceptance. Thus, the title 'Changing Direction' was explored.

Stimulus 3 was the idea that drove the whole response: the implicit reference could not be missed.

Length: approximately 900 words.

<p><b>Changing Direction</b></p> <p><b>You swivel your head.</b> A baby's cry echoes around the chamber, its ringing reverberating and pound on your ears from all directions. Sounds of hushed whispers and seeping indignation pull your attention from the service. But your mother taps on your back, urging you to keep listening, urging you to find some direction amidst all the change and the storm you have weathered.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Romans 5: 3-5</p> <p><b>'Let us glory in our suffering,'</b> Father intones, his voice steady with faith. <b>'For the same hands that guide us, send the wind which twists and turns our sails.'</b></p> <p>Something about this irks you. <b>How could you glory in what seems as cruel an undeserved suffering. How could you have belief in this higher power who seems to keep changing the way your life takes you, without ever hearing your say.</b></p>	<p>Interesting use of second person introduced and sustained throughout.</p> <p>Narrative voice invited the reader into the experience.</p> <p>Context established effectively and economically.</p> <p>Biblical references used to create context but also strategically selected to raise philosophical questions, which related to the narrator's personal</p>
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<p>You glance up at 'Him'. <b>His sunken eyes. His hollowed cheeks. His ribs caging pressing against his lifeless skin.</b> Is this what faith is? Punishment for piety, loyalty to a sealed fate. It angers you how throughout all this change and misdirection it all leads to the same morbid fate.</p> <p><b>The cicadas sing a relentless whine that sounds like a cry for help.</b> This protest bleeds into the chapel drowning out the voices of the choir. The sun radiates through the lancet windows, its sweltering heat becoming unbearable, you feel your linen shirt moisten with sweat.</p> <p><b>The wooden pew shifts beneath you, creaking and groaning as the congregation twitches and shuffles.</b> Each man and woman, pushed by the unpredictable wing winds, yet holding onto a foolish faith that all will end well.</p> <p><b>Everything seems out of place.</b></p> <p>The way you tilt your head, lean on the bench, it all makes you uncomfortable. This virtue and faith has not answered your prayers and pleas for some guidance.</p> <p>Your mother rests her hand over yours. You notice her wrinkled skin, blotches of yellow and purple, blue vessels protruding from her skinny, frail hands. <b>You remember how she was before she came ill. Everything seemed to make sense. You went to school, you wanted to be a doctor, you wanted to leave from mum's care and get some independence for once. But the winds pushed you back here.</b> Keeping you docked and anchored by the bay. You feel guilty, how selfish of you to not appreciate her as she is. You feel your subconscious, telling you to appreciate how things are, misdirection and all. You try to find some sense within your memories of her.</p> <p><b>You remember</b> how she used to always invite new friends and neighbours over to your house. Their laughter from the dining table which would rouse you from your slumber. <b>You remember</b> peeking around the corner, spying on the adults until you were finally noticed and carried back to bed. <b>You remember</b> how mum would curl up beside you, and that flowery fragrance from her shampoo that lingered on your pillow as you slept.</p> <p><b>There is a solace being with her.</b></p> <p><b>You remember</b> sitting beside her. In the ward, where she'd languish after a gruelling two- hour session on the chemo drip. As she drifted in and out, passing through the pain, you would be there, sharing an earphone with her, as you listened to <b>One Direction. Her favourite band. How ironic.</b> Your mind would wander outside the walls of the dark stringently sterile room, beyond the nurses' whispers in the narrow corridors, without any direction. Yet the reality was still there. You were witnessing a fleeting life and that unavoidable fate, yet you watched her toss and turn, <b>shaped by the winds that changed her and your lives.</b></p> <p>You glanced down at your lap. The <b>black book</b> which weighed on your thighs. You run your fingers over its surface and open it up.</p>	<p>struggle. Framework questions explicitly referenced.</p> <p>Narrator's perception of Jesus reflected the narrator's feelings.</p> <p>The natural world reflecting the narrator's state of mind reinforced readers' perceptions.</p> <p>The imagery showed the narrator's unhappiness to be ubiquitous, extending to inanimate objects.</p> <p>Short sentence to emphasise a point.</p> <p>The text occurs over a brief period but moved forward and back in time via the narrator's reflections, in a linguistically economical way.</p> <p>Repetition used to stress what was lost.</p> <p>Short sentence used to foreshadow the change.</p> <p>Clever reference to the title – maintains focus on its conceptual boundaries.</p> <p>Continued use of figurative language to explore Framework ideas.</p> <p>Allusion and imagery worked in linguistic</p>
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<p>Tiny words set in neat rows across each crumbled page, telling stories of resilience and purpose amidst cruel and challenging lives. How faith guided them no matter how life misdirected and changed its course. You turn each page carefully, trying to follow from where Father is reading.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Luke 8: 43-48</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>‘And a woman, who has had had bled for twelve years, reached for the edge of his cloak, and with one touch she was healed.’</b></p> <p><b>You wonder if mum ever wished for her faith to be rewarded.</b> Guiding her to a miraculous recovery.</p> <p><b>‘Go in peace, my daughter, your faith has healed you’</b> he said. Or does her faith serve a different purpose. As a guiding light. That these Sunday mornings are a way for her to find some direction, a way to connect with in a world that seems less hostile and more forgiving.</p> <p>You glance up once more at the crucifix. <b>The cicadas are quietened, as if the world has paused in its endless turning.</b> A faint breeze slips through the open window, kissing the back of your neck. Father's voice fades into the soft hum of the organ as the assembly stands up, their movements solemn and practised.</p> <p><b>For a moment everything stills.</b></p> <p>You close your eyes, breathing in the scent of old wood, wax, and faint incense. It mingles with your memory of her flowery fragrance, not as a lost ghost, but as something enduring.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Isaiah: 41:10</p> <p style="text-align: center;">‘Don't be afraid for I am with you’</p> <p>Perhaps faith is not about finding answers. Sometimes, it is the quiet act of being here. Of showing up, even when life seems to not make sense. <b>Even when you have lost your way and faith in his plans.</b> This changing direction has caused so much angst within you, making you forget what faith is supposed to mean. That even though you await that morbid future, being present with faith and hope is all that you can control.</p> <p>Your hand tightens over hers, trying to hold on to this moment of clarity, this sense of direction, for you've found your faith has finally answered your prayers for guidance.</p>	<p>counterpoint.</p> <p>The idea ‘healed’ was considered in multiple ways by its placement within the text, which opened multiple interpretations.</p> <p>Natural world used to reflect the change in the narrator.</p> <p>Short sentence used to mark significant developments in the narrator's thinking.</p> <p>Change of direction – ultimately a return to a previous state. Reference to Stimulus 3 implicit as the narrator moved from a state of unknowing to knowing.</p> <p>Framework ideas considered and resolved, and a personal truth explained.</p>
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### Example 3

This response encouraged readers to reflect through the narration on the impact of trauma, the power of guilt and the change that atonement brings to a life's direction, and thus, the ‘Changing Direction’.

The student used Stimulus 2 in many ways, imagery of boats morphed as the piece progressed into imagery of cranes, which explored ideas of change. The implied and explicit links to the stimulus were seamlessly integrated into a powerful narrative.

Length: approximately 1100 words.

<p><b>Changing Direction</b></p> <p><b>They buried him beneath a sky too clean for war.</b></p> <p>The clouds drifted, indifferent, across the pale morning, and the wind moved as if it had forgotten how to carry the weight of a name. The coffin lowered slowly, swallowed by the earth, and I stood among them, stiff in uniform, that had a purpose I no longer recognised. <b>My hands remained in my pockets, not from the cold, but to steady the trembling memory had etched into my bones.</b></p> <p><b>The mourners wept. I didn't.</b> I had spent too long staring into death's face without flinching. What was one more? The past clings like dust onto my skin, but its outlines no longer fit me. I used to be a different man, a man who walked through gunfire without feeling the burn, who could watch bodies collapse and mistake the silence that followed for peace. His heartbeat almost stagnant, <b>like a ship, idle at sea</b>, it echoed to the rhythms of gunfire, where mercy became foreign. Humanity thinned, stripped away, until only reflex remained.</p> <p>The priest spoke his last words, scattered the ashes into the wind. In war, death never had ceremonies, only zips, tags and coordinates. This was almost beautiful. Too beautiful.</p> <p><b>And then I saw it.</b></p> <p>A small cerulean blue paper bird, resting beside his still hands. Its delicateness reminded me of a crane. Its wings slightly bent, as though it had flown too far. A child must've placed it there. A small act of love that managed to fracture the numbness I had wrapped myself within.</p> <p><b>We used to fold them out in the field, between shootings and silence</b>, we would crease ration paper, our calloused hands remembering gentleness, in a world that demanded violence. <b>He once told us that a thousand cranes would grant a wish.</b> I laughed then, I didn't understand what us men could possibly wish for, we only followed orders.</p> <p>But that one bird, that single, clumsy folded piece of paper hit me harder than any bullet ever had. <b>It was as if every crease and fold of that fragile bird, mirrored the fractures within me</b>, each edge, a reminder of a man I had drifted from, to change directions away from.</p> <p><b>My vision of the ceremony blurred and I was back there.</b> Dry, scorching heat. Blinding dust. A boy darted from a crumbled doorway. A flicker of metal in his hand. Training kicked in before thought could. I fired. His body collapsing like a marionette with its strings severed. My breath didn't catch, and my heartbeat didn't falter, still idle as a ship at sea. <b>He was just another threat neutralised, another objective completed.</b></p> <p><b>But now I see him.</b></p> <p>Each life I had taken were not just lines in a report. They were fathers, brothers and sons. <b>Each of them had a version of a crane, a small gesture of remembrance, folded by hands that</b></p>	<p>Context established effectively and economically.</p> <p>Narrative voice established, and character's state of mind established.</p> <p>Comparison allowed reader to infer.</p> <p>Stimulus 2 imagery used to characterise a state of mind and to foreshadow the change.</p> <p>Short sentence emphasised important aspect.</p> <p>Narrative voice economically moved between time and space – reinforced by alliteration.</p> <p>The motif of the origami from Stimulus 2 used and developed in multiple ways throughout the text.</p> <p>Powerful use of figurative language.</p> <p>Economical way of changing time and space to introduce new ideas.</p> <p>Careful linguistic choices to reflect narrator's state of mind.</p> <p>Short paragraph to emphasise significant development.</p> <p>Beautiful use of figurative</p>
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<p><b>would never hold them again. And I had reduced them to mere targets.</b></p> <p><b>Like dust settling after an explosion</b>, the quiet understanding that I was not only burying my friend but the fragments of every life I had taken crept through. Grief did not strike, it unfolded, slow and suffocating, until it filled all the hollow spaces I mistook for strength. <b>It unfolded like an origami boat transforming into a bird, free and in liberty.</b> This grief was not just for my friend, it was for all the lives I had erased without ceremony.</p> <p>I left quietly, walking mindlessly through a city too intact. Too unbroken. Every face I passed looked too unscarred by the truth I now carry like a second skin.</p> <p>There was no use going back, only forward, but in a different direction, the man I had been no longer fit the outlines of my own skin. <b>Beneath the hum of traffic, the faint, uncertain pulse of something returning arises, perhaps it was the beginning of where I finally changed directions from the path war had led me to.</b></p> <p>Civilian life felt artificial. The lights were too bright and the conversations too shallow. I couldn't sleep at night. The dead would line up in silence, not angry, just waiting to be remembered, because the man before refused to get attacked.</p> <p>My trembling fingers grab hold of a piece of paper. <b>My skin was still coarse, mapped by the scars that refused to fade, yet the page beneath was impossibly smooth.</b> Every crease and fold met with quiet precision, each edge a fault line between who I was now and who I no longer am. Somewhere in that stillness, I realised I had transformed, maybe not fully, perhaps in the process of becoming that crane, but no longer the man I used to be, <b>he was buried among the names I had forgotten.</b></p> <p>Hundreds of cranes followed, I didn't know why at first. <b>Maybe I was chasing the thousand crane myth. Maybe</b> I thought if I folded enough, somehow I would be able to unfold the lives I had taken. Every time I finished one, I whispered something, not names because I never knew them, but moments. <b>The boy</b> in the red shirt. <b>The man</b> who shielded the girl. <b>The one</b> who didn't shoot back.</p> <p><b>Each crane felt like a confession.</b></p> <p>As I let go of each one, my path shifts slightly, away from the shallow man I used to be.</p> <p>I saw the widow and the child later on. <b>The same child who must've placed the folded bird there. I didn't say anything. What could I offer? A story? An apology? A thousand cranes that would not bring her father, my friend back?</b></p> <p>But she simply smiled. Her eyes held no accusation, just warmth that brightened her surroundings.</p> <p>There were people who saw me as a man, instead of a ruthless weapon. <b>Instead of a stagnant ship, that held no emotion, even as bullets hit it.</b> For a long time, I didn't know how to live with that mercy, but slowly I began to understand that redemption isn't loud,</p>	<p>language to convey and amplify complex Framework ideas.</p> <p>Simile referenced narrator's mindset.</p> <p>Explicit reference to literal and figurative elements of Stimulus 2.</p> <p>Linked explicitly to the concepts of the title.</p> <p>Comparison made possibilities clear.</p> <p>Careful verb choice to reflect narrator's state of mind.</p> <p>Continued use of linking motif.</p> <p>Repetition used to explore options.</p> <p>Short paragraph style consistently maintained as part of narrator's voice.</p> <p>Narrative voice created and sustained throughout the piece via the narrator's use of imagery and by its reflective qualities.</p> <p>Reference to imagery used at the beginning of the piece acted as a tool to create a</p>
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<p>changing pathways also isn't loud, it unfolds gently, in the same way hands learned to create instead of destroy.</p> <p><b>Now I teach children</b> how to also create. To turn fragile squares into wings. They never ask about war. They simply asked how to keep the keep the creases clean, <b>how to make the birds fly</b>. Their laughter filled the room like wind beneath the birds, and I wonder who I might've been if I had only ever folded paper, if I only ever took this path and not a direction paved by gunfire and orders.</p> <p>I still wake in the middle of the night, hearing the echoes of my own choices. But I no longer flinch, I let the ache rise because it means I remember. Because forgetting made me a soldier, and remembering is what makes me become human again, a direction changed for the better, freeing like an origami bird itself.</p> <p>They say a thousand cranes grant you a wish. I don't have one wish. But I have a thousand regrets and I hold every single one.</p>	<p>cohesive text.</p> <p>Economical way of indicating movement in time.</p> <p>Symbolism of the movement from ship to bird used powerfully to present the text's uplifting message of the power of redemption.</p> <p>Realistic ending explored the degree to which change was possible. One carried the burdens of previous experience even as one changed path.</p>
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### Example 4

This response used the title 'Changing Direction' to consider the limitations we set ourselves and considered the changes and options that can appear if we remove these self-imposed restrictions.

This response used Stimulus 1 and its metaphor throughout the text to make a point about the agency of individuals.

Length: approximately 1000 words.

<p><b>Changing Direction</b></p> <p><b>There's a drawer in my cousin's house in Saigon that no one opens.</b> Behind it, they said, <b>lives a yellow crocodile</b>. They told me not to worry – it only comes out at night.</p> <p>I'd only been in Vietnam for six hours when I heard the story. My cousin's English was patchy, though my Vietnamese was worse. I nodded and didn't ask questions. I didn't want to admit I didn't understand, so I laughed, pretended it was funny, and avoided the draw for days.</p> <p>Without realising it, I let the image grow teeth in my mind. Scales. Eyes that watched me sleep. I didn't know it at the time, but the yellow crocodile would explain more about this trip than anything else. <b>Not because of what it was – but because of what I thought it was.</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">***</p> <p><b>The first day I set stepped foot in Vietnam, the air wrapped around me like a warm phở broth – thick, humid, and laced with motorbike smoke.</b> I was 16 and carrying more assumptions than luggage. My mum had insisted I went on this journey before Year 12 started. 'You need to see where you come from,' she said. I didn't have the heart to tell her that I didn't feel like I came from anywhere.</p> <p><b>Ever since I was a kid, I always felt like I was waiting outside a locked door.</b> My mum and my aunts would talk about the</p>	<p>Context established effectively and economically.</p> <p>Anecdote appeared to be merely scene setting but came to have strategic purpose by the text's end. This revealed careful crafting by the student.</p> <p>Narrative voice foreshadowed the purpose of the piece.</p> <p>The narrative voice established as thoughtful, observant and reflective.</p> <p>Metaphor based on Stimulus 1 introduced and</p>
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<p>motherland like it was a place I was supposed to remember, but how could I miss something I'd never known? My uncles would <b>blast karaoke at every annual Tết party</b>, the room echoing with laughter and lyrics I couldn't keep up with, like I was standing outside the door of a celebration I wasn't invited to. I knew the character I was meant to play – the Vietnamese-Australian girl who nodded without understanding, who didn't belong but didn't make it a problem. Yet there were moments when I wanted to <b>change direction</b> – to ask, to try, to step closer.</p> <p>To transform. But despite years of searching, I never found the <b>key to that locked door</b>.</p> <p><b>The bright green Grab Taxi from Tân Sơn Nhất airport – that odd shade between grass and plastic – rattled</b> down the streets that buzzed with life. Motorbikes weaved through traffic, dodging pedestrians and stray dogs skillfully. Vendors wearing bamboo hats lined to the sidewalks, shouting out prices in a language I only understood halfway, handing out bags of Bánh mì and fried bananas like clockwork. My cousins waved from the front gate, their smiles wide, their sentences faster than I could translate. <b>I nodded a lot, laughed when they laughed. Smiled until my cheeks hurt.</b> Inside, I felt like an impostor – folding and unfolding myself to fit in.</p> <p>At dinner, I fumbled with chopsticks and said 'cám ơn' too late. My relatives filled the room with stories I couldn't quite reach, while I counted the folds in the tablecloth, hoping my silence would go unnoticed, and let the language move past me like a current I wasn't strong enough to step into. <b>The fish stared at me from its plate, mouth open in accusation.</b></p> <p>There were <b>a lot of yellow crocodiles</b> that first week – things I didn't understand but avoided anyway. Still, I kept waiting for my direction to change – to suddenly feel more Vietnamese, more certain, more whole. I kept expecting this place to change who I was, as if the key to that locked door might be found lingering in the street signs or piping bowls of phở. <b>But the key I was searching for wasn't out there – maybe it had always been in my hand.</b></p> <p>Later in the week I sat beside my grandmother in the humid stillness of her courtyard, swatting at mosquitoes and peeling a vibrant mango she had picked that morning. She spoke to me in slow, careful Tiếng Việt, and this time, I replied with clumsy phrases, the tones wobbling out of my mouth like uncertain first steps. <b>First steps in the right direction.</b> She laughed – not unkindly – and nodded. It was the first real conversation we'd had, even if most of it was gestures and guesswork.</p> <p>That night, my grandmother took my hand in hers – <b>wrinkled, warm, a map of stories.</b> She handed me an old, washed-out photo of my mum as a child, standing barefoot in the same courtyard. Would I someday grow into the face my mum wears now? Would my hands someday become calloused and cracked, yet strong and resilient, like my grandmother's? I didn't say much,</p>	<p>used throughout the piece.</p> <p>Imagery created scene and context.</p> <p>Explicit reference to the title and associated concepts.</p> <p>Recurring metaphor associated with Stimulus 1.</p> <p>Powerful imagery to evoke a sense of place.</p> <p>Strategic inclusion of Vietnamese to evoke a sense of both place and displacement.</p> <p>Powerful use of imagery to reflect narrator's mindset.</p> <p>Reference to what becomes a powerful metaphor used as a unifying device.</p> <p>Metaphor used to reveal significant moment of narrator's self-awareness.</p> <p>Explicit reference to the title and its concepts.</p> <p>Framework ideas become apparent through strategic use of imagery and figurative language.</p>
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<p>but something shifted in me – like the click of a puzzle piece sliding into place. I realised then that I didn't need to be fluent or 'authentically' <b>Vietnamese to belong in this story, nor did I need anyone's permission – I was already a part of it, even if my chapter looked different.</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">***</p> <p><b>Before I left, I asked my cousin – what is it, really behind the drawer?</b> He pulled out his phone and pointed to a photo. All I saw was a gecko. 'It's called tắc kè, but I don't know the English word for it.'</p> <p>It turns out, 'yellow crocodile' wasn't the right word, but it was the best translation he could find. <b>Like all stories passed between languages, it took on a life of its own.</b> I'd let the yellow crocodile become a monster before I even saw what it really was. I'd done the same with myself. No one here made me feel unwelcome, but I'd <b>told myself I didn't fit, as if the door hadn't been wide open for me this entire time.</b> In the end, the real journey was the one within. <b>The one where I had to admit I'd built my own distance – removed myself from the tale. But I had to be the one to leap back in. After all, I didn't need to change who I was. All I needed to change was my perspective – how I saw myself.</b></p> <p>We all carry our own yellow crocodiles – fear dressed up in bad translations, hiding quietly behind the drawers we never open. The hardest part is learning to change direction and look behind the drawer. So I'm no longer standing back and waiting for someone to tell me the direction of my story. I've found enough words – even Vietnamese ones – to begin writing it.</p>	<p>Figurative language increased sophistication of Framework ideas.</p> <p>Story of the dragon became a unifying textual feature as it was referenced again – to make a point about agency and change of direction.</p> <p>Beautiful exploration of the idiosyncrasies of both stories and language and the connection and changes that they evoked.</p> <p>Final reference to metaphor used throughout to unify text. Framework ideas made explicit.</p> <p>The fact that the ending was uplifting was not an assessable factor, but it did bring joy to the reader.</p>
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## Framework 4: Writing about play

Many students explored the lessons learned via game playing and found parallels with the rules and structures of life in this task. Some students accepted the Framework's invitation to play with form, language and expectations.

### Example 1

This response used the title 'Life is a Game' as an opportunity to explore ideas about the learning that playing both games and roles offered as preparation for engagement with life.

Stimulus 1 was explored explicitly and the text was an illustration of this idea. This response was elevated by its powerful reflective narrative voice that explored both an individual and contemporary truth. The ending was thoughtful and nuanced in its resolution and the optimism was uplifting. Thus, this student achieved their purposes of both reflecting and persuading.

Length: approximately 600 words. (Note: This response is an excellent example of how an economical text can be effective when exploring complex Framework ideas.)

<p><b>Life is a Game</b></p> <p>We talk about life like it's a start, middle and end. But really there's never a clear relation between events, no cause and effect. We're always thrown into different environments, whether that be sudden conversations, unexpected problems even awkward silences – yet we always wait for some sort of cue. What I'd come to realise on my time on stage was that sometimes we have to spark that ourselves, and stop waiting start riding the momentum.</p> <p><b>No one wanted to do it.</b></p> <p>As soon as theatre sports was announced in Year 11, the room fell silent. Everyone suddenly fascinated by the ceiling, avoiding eye contact like it was contagious. No one wanted to be the sacrificial lamb this year – honestly, neither did I. But for some reason, I raised my hand.</p> <p><b>We lost, sure. But something about my time on stage: the spontaneity, the excitement, the emotion, it stayed with me.</b></p> <p>For someone who is usually preparing for every single outcome, this was a strangely liberating experience. I was finally giving myself some room to play with my emotions. <b>At its core, it was an exercise of imagination – and currently mine was worse than the fear of a neglected hip flexor the day of house cross-country.</b></p> <p>Theatre Sports came around again, and we faced the two houses that had beaten us the year before. It's almost as if I was stepping into someone else's territory. Limbs jittery, heart racing, my mind trying to prepare for a game that couldn't be planned for. And all of a sudden, I had that familiar sense of anxiety seeping in. Then – my teammates dropped to the floor as a part of a skit. Without any thought I jumped in and exclaimed 'I'm a chiropractor,' mimicking a <b>neck crack with an exaggerated clicking noise. But something else clicked in my mind too.</b></p> <p>I've always struggled with anxiety. In the real world, the flux of unstructured play, preparation just wasn't an option, it's all a game. Something about jumping off the train of momentum just scares me. In school I prepare for everything, I script responses, rehearse them over and over in my head. Thinking on the spot and not preparing almost felt like running head-first into oncoming traffic – <b>blindfolded.</b></p> <p><b>By no means was the final smooth. Our first scene landed flat.</b></p> <p>Then came the next prompt: 'Birthday party in different genres' – our pirate scene dragged. Then that feeling of having already lost and failed crept into my mind. The teacher announced: 'David Attenborough'. Without a cue, I hunched over like a three-hundred-year-old turtle, while my teammates narrated in hoarse British accents and another miming <b>the clicking photos.</b></p> <p><b>'click, click, click'</b></p> <p>Just like that, we were a puzzle <b>clicking together</b> flowing easily, and the audience had come to life with us.</p> <p><b>We won.</b> But it wasn't the announcement or the score that stayed</p>	<p>Reflective voice established in the opening line.</p> <p>Confiding tone and inclusive pronouns used to establish a connection with the reader, sharing the problem of 'talk' being different to 'reality'.</p> <p>Short paragraph used to stress the idea.</p> <p>Exploration of Framework ideas extended.</p> <p>Dismissal of 'loss as unimportant' framed a discussion of what was 'important' in the Framework ideas.</p> <p>Unusual but effective example. Reinforced narrative voice.</p> <p>Movement of time efficiently handled. Narrator left much unexplained in their actions, which highlighted their epiphany – also stressed by the pun of clicking.</p> <p>Ideas relevant to the Framework.</p> <p>Additional text after the dash worked as a powerful image and thus stressed the idea.</p> <p>Text avoided the cheap trick of an easy victory and thus presented more nuanced ideas.</p> <p>The metaphor associated with 'clicking' was used repeatedly in different ways – very 'meta' for the narrator to become more playful with</p>
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<p>with me, it was that I had not only built up the courage to speak, yet the ability to respond. I'd like to think that's what this performance had given me – I didn't need a cue anymore.</p> <p>Yet so many of us, especially boys, seem to freeze at the edge of risk. We talk ourselves out of jumping in because the fall is often too steep. Well I know this version of me, instinctive, ready and willing to jump out on stage, may have only landed on two feet this time. <b>But I know it exists, and I know it's there somewhere. I know it's ready for the stage of life.</b></p>	<p>language.</p> <p>Repetition of 'We lost' 'We won' as paragraph starters and the dismissal of both 'winning' and 'losing' guided the readers' thought process to the narrator's conclusion.</p> <p>Final paragraph extrapolated from the individual to the general and offered the reader an inspiring image of what might be a shared human experience.</p>
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## Example 2

This response explored the life lessons learned from golf, which mimicked the lessons needed to 'play life successfully'. The student presented a clear explanation of how this could be achieved by referencing a golfing career. This response was a speech given to young golf enthusiasts to highlight the importance of the game.

Stimulus 3 was used as one of those life lessons.

Length: approximately 1100 words.

<p><b>Life is a Game</b></p> <p><b>First, I wish to express my gratitude to Sharon Stevens, the editor of this illustrious journal for the invitation to share my experiences of life and golf with the readers of Golf International.</b> I have titled my piece -'<b>From Fairway to Fairplay</b>', not as a guide to perfect swings, but the life lessons golf offers beyond the course. <b>Lessons that come from playing life as a game.</b> I hope my reflection serves as a reminder to young aspiring golfers that the game is far more than trophies and technique. It's about enduring the challenge and obstacles of the course and translating it into the cycle of life. On the <b>following pages</b>, I will tee off on the road to recollections, presenting to you how my love for the game was shaped and strengthened through playing it truly and fairly.</p> <p><b>Living within the game: From Fairway to Fairplay</b></p> <p>Playing golf, for me, was a dialogue between reality and imagination. On that final round, every swing, every pause and every quiet moment of reflection became a chapter in a story only I could author. <b>Golf was never merely a sport; It was a canvas, a mirror and a classroom. It taught me to navigate life's unpredictable terrain, to reconcile expectation with reality, and to discover joy in the process of play itself, even when I found myself in the rough patches of life.</b></p> <p><b>Beginning of the Game: Learning to Play</b></p>	<p>Context established effectively and economically.</p> <p>The 'meta' concept of a text within a text created.</p> <p>Explicit reference to the title and its conceptual boundaries.</p> <p>Some confusion of form – speech or text? (Note: This sometimes happens in first-draft writing.)</p> <p>Headings used as a structural device.</p> <p>Metaphor of golf explained life implicitly and created links with Framework ideas and title.</p> <p>Genuine golf quotations</p>
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<p><b>'Every shot counts' – Henry Cotton</b></p> <p>The first time I learned to play golf wasn't on a manicured course, but in the square paddock that lived behind my family's farm house. I can still picture it – a boy in a red shirt, wearing a crooked cap, swinging the branches ripped off the dead gum tree like it was a driver. The grass was patchy, the ground uneven, and the air smelled of dust and summer. There was no audience, no scorecard, just a boy with a pure imagination, with the dream of how he wants to <b>play out the course of life</b>.</p> <p>Some evenings, when the light faded across the paddock, Mum would call out: 'Last shot!' Mum had rules about my playtime that I was obliged to follow, especially when it was dinner time. I'd reply, 'Just one more Mum!' Here in the paddock, I could hit the invisible ball wherever and whenever I wanted. There were no rules here, and Mum knew not to spoil the obsession I had for the game.</p> <p>Each lie in that field brought a new challenge. A branch became a hazard, a wombat hole became a bunker and every awkward lie or rough patch became a chance to visualise and adjust. Dad would often lean against the metal fence, saying – 'Enjoy it while you can son, the real course may not be so kind.' Immune to his advice, I kept swinging, unaware that the game of golf – and life – would present challenges that demanded more than just imagination and creativity. <b>I would always think that life is a game, and my childhood dreams and imagination allowed me to construct how I wanted to play.</b> In a way, it felt endless, untouched by rules or disappointment. This was the game I truly loved.</p> <p><b>Flying through the life of the Fairway</b></p> <p>'The harder you work, the luckier you'll get' – Gary Player.</p> <p><b>Stepping onto the first tee of a proper course</b>, I felt a familiar thrill of possibility, though the stakes were higher now. The fairways stretched wide, the greens were immaculate and the trees lining each hole seemed almost deliberately placed, daring me to make a choice.</p> <p>The course presented challenges no paddock ever had. There was an unforgiving landscape here and no room to rely solely on imagination. Simultaneously, as the course got harder, life got harder, as there were now rules put in place where I was no longer able to play with freedom, imagination or creativity.</p> <p><b>However, as I grew older, playing the game became spontaneous.</b> The more I struck the ball, the more consistency I discovered. The more challenges I faced, the better prepared I became for the challenges that lay ahead. This was play at its truest, and I was able to forge my life to evolve the way my technique, patience and imagination evolved in the game. I began to realise that if life is a game, why don't I use my imagination and mastery that could coexist on every hole.</p> <p><b>The final tee off</b></p> <p>'Forget your opponents, you will always play for yourself' – Sam Snead.</p>	<p>added to the text's authentic voice.</p> <p>Links made between title and Framework ideas.</p> <p>Authorial voice – informal confiding, established and maintained</p> <p>Chronological structure used as a cohesive device.</p> <p>Framework ideas and the title consistently explored, albeit implicitly.</p> <p>Structure and voice</p>
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<p>I am old now and I could feel my eidetic memory activating on the 18th tee box. I took my final deep breath, of the clean, pure blue air. I listened to the constant howl, winds that brushed over the tall elegant oak trees that had sheltered me for countless rounds during my playtime. My time playing the game of life was almost over and it was time to take my final swing of the dead branch (driver).</p> <p>I struck the ball with force and spin, watching it fly high into the air and settle amid the trees. My three partners wore expressions that I could instantly read: 'Why wouldn't you retee?' I smiled and replied with a quiet confidence, 'I'll find it.' I didn't see <b>the point of cheating my way through the game of life</b>. While my partners were chasing eagles and birdies, I endured the final challenges before me to test the patience and persistence I had cultivated over years. This was play at its truest. Playing life fairly by following the rules. Although my partner succeeded, I found that my true enjoyment emerged through taking little and challenging steps of life.</p> <p><b>Stepping off the green</b></p> <p>'The most fascinating thing about golf is how reflects the cycle of life' – Peter Jacobsen.</p> <p>Having traversed down the fairways for so long now, I hope my insight towards playing the game of golf like life assists many of you in partaking in a sport full of challenge, joy and most importantly growth.</p> <p>A month after finishing my final hole. I took my son back to the paddock where my own journey began. I watched him swing, miss and laugh, just as I once had. Whether it was golf, footy, cricket or basketball, I wanted him to find enjoyment and use his own imagination to shape how he wants to play and to use it as a template for the ongoing challenges of life. Life is truly a game, in my gametime, well, it's over. For me to look at my son, it was enough to stand back and see the spirit of fair game live on through him.</p>	<p>maintained.</p> <p>Framework ideas and the title consistently explored, albeit implicitly, and implicit reference made to Stimulus 3.</p> <p>By returning to the beginning, a sense of cohesion and finality achieved.</p> <p>A non-assessable bonus of an uplifting ending!</p>
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### Example 3

This response used the title 'Life is a Game' to promote the difference between the triviality of games (which it suggested life had become) and the serious value of play (which it suggested should form the focus of life), presenting the case that the education system (and English assessors in particular!) have lost sight of this important distinction to the detriment of their and others' humanity.

Stimulus 3 was considered at a societal level as well as an individual level.

Length: approximately 1000 words.

<p><b>Life is a Game</b></p> <p><b>Staring at the red-ink on my draft, a harsh slash across my sentences, bleeding criticism through the page,</b> – 'another four out of ten! Where is your structure?' – I returned to the page, not with excitement, but with obligation. I've been tasked, once again, with shaping thoughts into something assessable, something</p>	<p>Context effectively and efficiently established. Created sympathy for the narrator. The agony of harsh feedback powerfully evoked – strategic targeting of</p>
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<p>structured, <b>more</b> structured than others, <b>more</b> assessable by markers, and <b>simply better</b> than others. Like a game, I write, <b>following every rule</b>, squeezing ideas into a rubric, trimming sentences for clarity.</p> <p>I remember when writing was a state of being, no rule, no whistle, no marking criteria, and no voice 'appropriate to task and audience'. Just scribbles that sang, now I find myself chiselling at my imagination, chiselling myself to better fit the silent blueprint of a rubric the exam demands. <b>And I do, but with every polish, something wilder slips away.</b></p> <p>We are all born as children, small walking suns each emitting a soft, glowing white light. <b>This light was not a single thing, but a perfect humming blend of our authenticity, who we were, and all that we felt.</b> It was the red of my stomping feet in puddles of rain, the orange of that afternoon <b>where we laughed until our stomachs ached</b>, collapsing in helpless breathes; it was the yellow of whispering my crush's name to a friend, cheeks burning, both of us giggling behind cupped hands as if the secret may float away. It was the blue calm of <b>lying on cool grass, watching clouds morph</b>; the indigo mystery of <b>believing shadows were portals to other worlds</b>; the green kindness that made me <b>pat the head of a crying dog</b>, and the violet reverence for a <b>dandelion held aloft</b> like a diamond. This was the very essence of play, not a game, competition nor performance, just a glorious state of being ourselves. In this boundless freedom, the authentic blend of our colours; our fury and our kindness, our chaos and our calm, fused together into a style celebrated <b>white luminescence</b>. Although this <b>luminescence glowed white in all of us</b>, it was never identical, our memories shaped by families and friends combined to reflect this white differently. Still white, still whole, but irreversibly our own.</p> <p>Yet this whiteness is the very thing our systems are engineered to dismantle. We begin our formal education by learning to admire the clarity of a circle and to and the purity of a triangle. <b>But the most transformative lesson came from the prism, and its celebrated ability to disperse a unified beam of white light into a scattered spectrum.</b> We are taught to name those new colours, to study them in isolation, not realising we are not mere observers of this lesson, we are the beam. This is where crucial distortion of meaning begins, play becomes a game, reinforced by the whistle of expectation. The word itself becomes a homonym, where the innocence of childhood play is redefined as performing a role, following every rule. <b>This duality is not new, as Johan Huizinga writes in Homo Ludens, 'Play has something profoundly serious about it.'</b> Indeed, the player's awareness that they are temporarily inhabiting a restrictive role, is what defines play, as separate from life and free. But society no longer permits this distinction, <b>the whistle</b> becomes fixed in everyday life, the roles, compulsory. The prism, the whistle of societal expectation angles itself into our light, refracting it into roles we are expected to embody: To be the athlete is to let the 'red' of your passion blaze</p>	<p>audience!</p> <p>Repetition underlined the similarities between 'life' and 'games'.</p> <p>Connection to the ideas of Stimulus 3.</p> <p>Difference between the status quo – games and the ideal. Play emphasised by what it lost.</p> <p>Comparison of children to light introduced, built and established. Metaphor used as a linking device and illustrative tool throughout the text.</p> <p>Imagery used to build an attractive picture of innocence to compound the impact when damaged.</p> <p>Light metaphor developed to explore meaningful Framework ideas.</p> <p>Reference to experts reinforced the credibility of the writer.</p> <p>Symbols of control used to reframe the concept of games from free to</p>
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<p>so far the ‘blue’ of your introspection fades. To be the ‘caregiver’ is to tilt your green compassion so far towards others it erodes your personal joy. We lose ourselves as we play is redefined, and we pull our fragments apart, refining certain hues and muting others to respect the rules of the game, the expectations of life.</p> <p>This future only deepens with age, where we dim our stronger but beautiful glows out of primal fear and desperate comfort in uniformity. To be a complex, full authentic self is to be misunderstood, a standout, a cheater of the rules; And to be misunderstood is to be alone. Society celebrates this fragmentation, it believes that by assembling the specialists – the brilliant reds and the efficient blues – will combine to form a white functional glow once again. It believes that the collaboration in forcing broken pieces together will recreate the wholeness it initially dismantled.</p> <p>But it cannot, the result of dispersal of dispersed colours combining collectively produces not light, <b>but its absence, a perfect darkness.</b> You cannot reconstruct a soul from job titles, nor synthesize humanity with a set of segregated functions. The rigid competition of a game which society frames the world as creates broken pieces, and the collection of broken pieces do not make a self, but a cold, sterile machine.</p> <p><b>This very essay, this text you are reading right now serves as a testament to the structure of life the rubric demanding critiques.</b> And <b>the irony is not lost on me</b>, writing about ‘play’ in a form that leaves little room for it. It is written in orderly paragraphs, its metaphors neatly developed, its grammar obedient. I am following every rule, as the role of ‘writer’, respecting every whistle blown in the form of the marking scheme.</p> <p>But what happens when the writer refuses. What if I cheat the rubric, and the sentence itself begin to rebel.</p> <p>What if?</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">[Line break]</p> <p style="padding-left: 80px;">[Line break]</p> <p style="padding-left: 120px;">THIS SPACE,</p> <p>Is the most important part?</p> <p style="padding-left: 80px;">THIS.                      THIS BREATH.</p> <p><b>Is where structure ends, and self begins.</b></p> <p><b>I am not a player,</b></p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">I am a spectrum,</p> <p style="padding-left: 120px;">I am myself, playing</p> <p>It is the messy concoction of my fragments harmonically resonating, which make me authentically me.</p> <p>This is the reclamation. Not of a grade. But of what was always mine. I am luminous. Defiant. Whole. Life is not a game, it is to play.</p> <p><b>The ultimate rebellion then, is to cheat</b>, not to act immorally, but to refuse what others expect from us in the game of life, and to</p>	<p>constrained.</p> <p>Metaphor framed as compelling symbolic evidence in support of the narrator’s position.</p> <p>Immediacy of the narrator’s concerns speaks to the reader.</p> <p>Irony was not lost on the reader either!</p> <p>Narrative voice explored rule breaking and subversion and illustrated its capacity to communicate. An effective argument!</p> <p>Visual incorporated in the text illustrated the effectiveness of rule breaking to communicate, and by extrapolation, to live more authentically and playfully.</p> <p>Rule-breaking word placement visually stressed the ‘steps’ to freedom and play as opposed to playing the game.</p>
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<p>abandon the refraction of society's pre-determined angles. Act on your innate beliefs, not to win, not for an audience but for yourself. Reclaim the definition of play as what was always yours, as you are only yourself when you begin this playful. This looks like laughing with no care in the world, a sudden pause for a flower, an appreciation of beauty that bloomed just for you; or taking up a forgotten hobby, once abandoned in embarrassment and judgement from sceptical eyes. <b>Play life's game not as a governed space of rules, but reclaim play's definition; it is the profound joy that needs no justification, – a space which Huizinga called 'outside ordinary life' yet 'absorbs the player intensely and utterly'. Ignite the light, once shaded within you, respect yourself, not the whistle. The red ink, no matter how bold, will never mark my words out.</b></p>	<p>Stimulus 3 referenced and subverted – the text's proposition in relation to the text's title!</p> <p>A complex exploration of the title and Framework ideas.</p> <p>By returning to the opening image the writer achieved a sense of completion and cohesion within the text.</p> <p>A text framed with its readers in mind!</p>
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#### Example 4

This response used the title 'Life is a Game' to condemn games played as if they were an authentic substitute for life and suggested that a return to more authentic play would lead to a more fulfilling life.

Ideas from Stimulus 1 were referenced throughout this response – not necessarily suggesting that 'our true selves' is an ideal state but making the case that sometimes we need to learn something of more value before we can understand the possibilities of being human.

Length: approximately 800 words.

<p><b>Life is a Game</b></p> <p><b>They said</b> the game was simple. Thirty cards, one table, three players. But I learned early that simplicity is the mask every game wears before it begins to hurt.</p> <p><b>When I was a child, play meant freedom. Chalk lines on rough asphalt,</b> marbles clattering like rain, the sun deciding when the round would end. <b>No scoreboard, no prizes, only laughter</b> stretching time thin. Back then I didn't know that adults still play, only with rules invisible and stakes that draw blood.</p> <p>Now I sit in a boardroom where the dice are words and the table gleams like polished armour. Everyone smiles, dealing compliments like counterfeit coins. <b>We call it strategy. They call it professionalism. I call it survival.</b> Yet somewhere beneath the tailored jacket, the child with chalk-stained knees kicks against the ribs, asking to come out, he can't breathe.</p> <p>I remember my father teaching me chess. <b>'Every piece has a purpose,' he said. 'But only the pawn moves by faith.'</b> I believed him then, pawns reached the other side, they became anything. Lately, I wonder if the <b>board</b> ever ends, or if the squares just loop, black and white forever repeating the same polite wars.</p> <p>When the meeting ends, someone jokes, 'Game well played.' The room erupts in corporate laughter, safe and hollow, practised smiles. I laughed too because that's how you win here. But walking</p>	<p>Nebulous use of the pronoun sets up the context of the narrator at odds with the world.</p> <p>Images introduced and referenced throughout as a strategy to achieve cohesion.</p> <p>Repetition and contrast work to stress the ideas. Change of pronouns adds to the text's voice – promoting the readers' understanding of the narrator's marginalisation.</p> <p>Quotation appears to be a part of the narrator's reflection but was carefully placed to create complex self-deprecating humour at the end, which endeared the writer to the reader.</p> <p>Strategic use of the word</p>
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<p>out, I feel the word stick. <b>'Game well played'? Have I played, or performed?</b></p> <p><b>Outside, rain softens the city's sharp edges.</b> A puddle mirrors my reflection, a face older than it feels. I crouch, knees snap-crackle and popping, flick the surface, watch the ripples erase me. In that brief distortion I see her again, the child who ran barefoot throughout storms, who screamed rules into wind and made them leave. She grins, dares me to tag her, then vanishes in the blur. I'm sorry little guy, I didn't mean for you to see me like this.</p> <p>Maybe play isn't the opposite of work. Maybe it's the language of truth we forget to speak. When we pretend, we reveal what we want, when we laugh, we drop the armour. The office, the contracts, the endless polite duals, these are only different boards. <b>The trick is remembering which pieces still move from joy.</b></p> <p>That night, I walk past a playground closed for repairs. The sign reads 'Do not enter,' <b>but the rain has smudged the letters into something closer resembling a suggestion than a rule.</b> I step over the barrier. Swings swaying slightly in the cool night breeze, chains creaking under the weight of countless memories. I sit, push off, rising into the blur of streetlights. For a heartbeat, the world tilts the way it used to when gravity was optional and forgiving. The rain stings, cold and clear.</p> <p>At the arc's height I remember another lesson. 'You can only balance for so long,' <b>her voice echoes in my head,</b> her hand steadying me. 'That's why we throw the stone, to remind ourselves where to land next!' She laughed when I miss the square again, unfiltered, genuine laughter. 'Don't worry,' she said, 'No one wins at hopscotch. You just keep hopping.'</p> <p>The swing slows. I land, shoes splashing. The playground glows in sodium light, slides, monkey bars, all gleaming like forgotten relics. I realise, the city hasn't stolen play, it's just changed its shape. <b>People chase buses instead of friends, court profits instead of points, build towers instead of sandcastles.</b> But the instinct is the same to me, to move, compete, imagine meaning, imagine something different. Maybe adulthood is just childhood with higher scores.</p> <p>My phone broke vibrates, a message from the office, another draft needed by morning. Another round, another move. I slip my phone back into my pocket. Not tonight. Tonight, the game is mine.</p> <p>By the time I reach home, my shoes leave little of the mud left on from the playground. Tomorrow I'll clean them, file the report, answer emails. The game will remain with its mad seriousness. Yet somewhere between the inbox and the deadlines, I'll keep a secret rule, <b>to find a move that's mine alone,</b> and by the look of the grinning soggy child in my bathroom mirror, she agrees.</p> <p>Before bed, I set my father's chess board on the desk. The pieces wait exactly where we left them. I pick up a pawn, advance in one square, and whisper, 'Your turn.' For the first time in years, I'm not playing to win, just to keep the game going.</p> <p>The rain soon subsides. The city exhales, and in that quiet I finally</p>	<p>'board' linked the activities of the game to 'real life' in complex ways.</p> <p>Natural world foreshadowed the narrator's inner world.</p> <p>Narrator's fondness for the lost child encouraged the reader to yearn with the narrator to 'find her again' and thus positioned them in the text's contention.</p> <p>Image of what 'moves' people used as a linking thread throughout the piece.</p> <p>Again, the natural world foreshadowed the narrator's actions – legitimising them and this text's contention.</p> <p>Strategically placed memory served to reframe the narrator's (and thus the readers') understanding of how to approach the dilemma.</p> <p>Comparison used to present Framework ideas.</p> <p>Third reference to 'moves' where the narrator found 'truth'. Nice use of triad – implicit reference to Stimulus 2.</p> <p>Explicit reference made to Stimulus 1 and ideas challenged.</p> <p>Writer's use of humour</p>
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understand the line that has haunted me for years. 'We are only truly ourselves when we play.' Because play is not an escape, it's remembrance. It is the moment we stop performing and start living. I snap the light off. The board remains, half finished, luminous in the dark. Life, after all, is still the same game, endless, unfinished, but finally mine to play again. 'Tch ... Asshole,' I mutter into my pillow, glancing at the framed picture of my dad on the desk before rolling over to sleep. 'Leaving me such cryptic last words.'

suggested they were 'playing with' the reader through this artificial construct. The joke was on us – the reader. Life is indeed a game, and we were just played.

The cleverness of the strategy, the confidence of the writer to construct the text and their ability to do this under time constraints – delighted the reader, by suggesting boundless limits of human capacity and audacity!

## Section C: Analysis of argument and language

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Average
%	0.5	0.5	1	6	15	26	25	16	7	2	0.6	5.5

In Section C, students were asked to analyse the persuasive strategies and devices in a letter to a community newspaper calling for change.

As with the other sections, Section C was assessed holistically using the published assessment criteria and EQs. Benchmarks were used to establish the standard required in each of three interrelated skills:

- an analysis of argument:
  - the capacity to explain strategic sequencing of ideas to persuade
- an analysis of language:
  - the capacity to explain the role of written and visual language in presenting and developing an argument designed to persuade the intended audience
  - the capacity to explain the ways argument and language function together to persuade the intended audience
- the capacity to communicate these ideas.

As in past examinations, crucial information about the text's context and audience were given to the students in the 'background information'. In this scenario, the stimulus text was published in a community newsletter. The implication of the publication details, along with the information that this was a regional town, needed to be used by students to infer both the audience and their interests. The author was presented as a 'local resident'. Most students were able to infer from this the author's altruistic motivation and extrapolate this information to determine a way in which the author established credibility with the intended audience. Many responses demonstrated an understanding of the text's purpose – to promote community acceptance of a change in the way the town marked an annual celebration. While the details of the change were explored in the text, the timing of the change was left vague. The text did not present a sense of urgency, rather it presented a proposed alternative as part of an evolution towards a more inclusive society.

This 'background information' derived by inferential reading was vital for students as they demonstrated their skill in analytical thinking while completing the task. This allowed them to present a more focused and insightful analysis.

There was no preferred structure or content. Students were free to adopt their own strategy to explain the ways in which the text was structured to persuade the intended audience. They were also free to select what they felt were the most important ways in which the written language and visuals were harnessed to convey and amplify the ideas presented. Higher-scoring students were able to explain the ways in which these elements complemented one another to form a cohesive text.

As in previous sections of the examination, the task was designed to allow students multiple entry points so that they could demonstrate their skills to the best of their ability.

Students found the text highly accessible, and most recognised the ideas presented within the text such as:

- strategically establishing a shared value and appreciation of the celebration with the intended audience
- pointing out previously unconsidered problems: the environmental impact, the impact on pets (including a visual), noise-sensitive humans and cost, in a way that aligned with community values
- rebutting of reasons to maintain the status quo
- calling to adopt the alternative as a 'win-win' solution (including a visual).

Most students submitted complete responses for this section. Students were able to identify the arguments; however, not all students were able to explain how the sequencing of the ideas or the connection between them reflected the text's purpose.

The photograph of a very cute dog frightened by the noise of the fireworks, engaged most students in one way or another. Most were able to identify the ways the images presented ideas that related to the argument. Their capacity to determine the contribution that the images made to the development of the argument was often indicative of their skill level.

Most students were able to identify some of the linguistic techniques used. More skilful responses were able to explain how these elements were designed to persuade the intended audience and the role these elements played in the persuasion. The most successful responses were able to discuss the interplay between the elements used to form a cohesive text. The ability to explain connections between ideas and textual elements was frequently indicative of the level of success.

Common linguistic elements discussed in responses:

- Appealed to audience values:
  - parochial pride ('beautiful setting of Timberoona Park')
  - social justice ('offer the chance for some residents to attend ... for the first time ever')
  - economic responsibility ('cheaper and smarter investment')
- Strategised characterisation ('highlight of my social calendar', 'serious safety and fire risk', 'beloved pets', 'little Fido or Fluffy', 'frantic owners', 'children covering their ears and crying', 'cheaper and smarter', 'romantic kiss', 'magic', 'safe, spectacular sustainable')
- Compared the status quo with an ideal ('No more ... no more ...')
- Highlighted key values ('money better spent on ...')
- Presented a simple solution ('offers so many advantages')
- Used language to escalate emotional responses ('collective countdown', 'a single mistake, a single wayward spark ... devastating consequences', 'owners desperately searching', 'a single environmentally and financially disastrous event that lasts for 10 minutes')
- Used language to encourage reflection ('are these ... traditions really dependent on ...?')
- Used language to inspire ('we could have actual music', 'Together we have the opportunity ...', 'to lead the way', 'spectacular, safe and sustainable')
- Highlighted dichotomies ('do I go out or do I ...?')
- Used the language of logic ('this [similar] event was a stunning success ...')
- Used language to reassure ('would this be more spectacular ...?')
- Used language to present the solution as the only option ('a no-brainer').

Some strategic visual cues used in the images included:

- presenting a single relatable pet to represent the cohort
- encouraging emotional response via the pet's size and isolation
- highlighting the pet's vulnerability and need for an advocate
- using symbols
- presenting examples of 'the magic' that could be created to inspire and excite.

Students were not expected to laboriously identify and discuss every element. Indeed, to do so within the time constraints would have been impossible. They were expected to select what was most pertinent to the process of persuasion to demonstrate their analytical capacity. The strategic selection of elements central to the persuasion had a high correlation with student success in completing the task. As was the students' capacity to accept the task's invitation to discuss the interplay between argument, language and visual elements of the text.

## Assessment

Students needed to first read and understand the text to exercise the skills addressed in this section. Evidence of this capacity has been included in the annotations below.

Assessors read every word the student wrote to determine skill level. The following examples provide insight into the range of skill, not examples of the elements that alone determined the assessment. These are examples of typical skills demonstrated – a single example would never determine a student’s mark.

Note: The examples used to demonstrate low skill levels are fabricated examples that demonstrate typical features exhibited at this level. Work of a high-middle and high skill level are examples of actual responses in the examination. Multiple responses at the high skill level have been included to show that there are many ways to demonstrate skill level.

### Understanding context, audience and purpose is a necessary pre-skill

Typical features	Example	Annotations
<p><b>A low skill level response</b></p> <p>Demonstrated limited understanding of context, and while they identified a contention, they demonstrated little understanding of the way the text was constructed for an audience.</p>	<p>Every year Timberoona hosts a fireworks show. Jack Adut is <b>not the only resident who believes</b> that the town should find other ways to celebrate New Year’s Eve. <b>This article shows that the celebration has to change.</b></p>	<p>Context was identified, but only a limited consideration of context.</p> <p>An understanding of the text’s contention, but no extrapolation to the purpose of the text.</p> <p>No evidence of the understanding of the relationship between writer and reader.</p>
<p><b>A low-middle skill level response</b></p> <p>Demonstrated more understanding of context, the way this might relate to the audience, and they began to see the text’s purpose.</p>	<p>Jack Adut has written an opinion article entitled ‘Lighting the way’ to consider the impacts of New Year’s fireworks. This piece targets the residents of Timberoona that the fireworks should be replaced with a lightshow for the next celebration. The writer does this in an inclusive and explanatory tone. He also includes a picture of a sad dog and a lovely lightshow.</p>	<p>This response identified the text type, apparently at the expense of a consideration of the text’s context.</p> <p>The readership was identified but not their role in constructing meaning.</p> <p>There was an attempt to identify tone. It was unclear why this information was included as no analysis follows as would be expected when a linguistic feature was identified.</p> <p>It was unclear why the images were identified. No marks were deducted for this, but there was no reason to award marks for this information either as identification is not an assessment criterion.</p>

<p><b>A high-middle skill level response</b></p> <p>Indicated an understanding of the motivation of the writer, and the impact of context and audience in the text's construction.</p>	<p>Showing the expression of concern for the fireworks display in regional town, Timberoona, author and local resident Jack Adut proposes a reasonable alternative to the event in his article, 'Lighting the way: a new year, and a new celebration'. Published in 2025 to the community newsletter, Adut attempts to prove to the audience of local residents that a light display is a more environmentally sustainable, safe and feasible alternative for families.</p>	<p>This response presented what motivated the writer, and how the writer chose to connect with their readership. It also made clear what the writer's purpose was in communicating with the readership and the role they wanted the readership to play in the issue.</p> <p>When responses explained these connections, typically there was evidence of a capacity to use this information to inform their analysis.</p> <p>As one would expect, errors of expression are common in first-draft writing.</p>
<p><b>A high skill level response</b></p> <p>Indicated an understanding of context, audience and purpose, and a capacity to explain specifically how this knowledge was used to guide the readers' response.</p>	<p>Example 1: In his article 'Lighting the way: a new year, a new celebration' published in <i>Timberoona: Talk of the town</i> (2025) local resident <b>Jack Adut argues that the town should replace its longstanding New Year's Eve fireworks display with a projected light show</b>. Writing for a community audience attached to tradition yet increasingly concerned about cost and safety and the environment, Adut constructs a sequence of arguments <b>designed to shift nostalgia to pride and innovation</b>. By combining appeals to empathy practicality and civic responsibility, with carefully selected visual imagery, <b>he positions readers to view change not as loss but as progress towards a safer, more inclusive and sustainable celebration</b>. Ultimately his <b>persuasive goal is to unite residents of Timberoona behind the idea that a lightshow</b> will preserve the wonder of New Year's Eve, while <b>reflecting modern community values</b>.</p> <p>Example 2: The regional town of Timberoona hosts an annual New Year's fireworks show; a <b>highly valued tradition of over 50 years</b>. However, <b>recent concern has been raised by community members in relation to the harmful impacts of the display on the town</b>. In his article 'Lighting the way: a new year, a new celebration',</p>	<p>There was an understanding of the role readership plays in this situation and the complexity involved in persuading an audience to change their opinion.</p> <p>There was recognition of the relationship between the writer and readership, which showed insight into the purpose of the piece and the author's strategy in achieving it.</p> <p>There was recognition of the development of expectations around community events that led to the publication of this text.</p> <p>(Note: Even at this skill level we see students including information about</p>

	<p>published in the community's newsletter <i>Timberoona: Talk of the town, 2025</i>, <b>Jack Adut presents his own views on the matter in an appreciative yet pragmatic tone.</b> Adut contends that while celebrating the new year is an important tradition, the fireworks display has <b>devastating consequences on the town that far outweigh its nostalgic appeal.</b> He further contends that it should be replaced by a quieter light show, supporting his arguments with two images. <b>Adut writes to readers of Timberoona's newsletter appealing particularly to community members who are fond of the fireworks but are conscious of the local environment, involved in community initiatives and have pets or young children.</b></p>	<p>tone and visuals for no clear purpose.)</p> <p>Marks are never deducted, but in this case, there was little to reward for this information. There were, however, evidence of skill that can be rewarded. It was clear that the student demonstrated and understood the purpose of the text and how the text strategically aligned its values with those of the readership to achieve success.</p>
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### Structure of the argument

Typical feature	Example	Annotations
<p><b>A low skill level response</b></p> <p>Identified elements of the text's development.</p>	<p><b>BP1</b> Jack ensures his readers have an understanding of ... to let the readers into his thoughts ...</p> <p><b>BP2</b> Jack raises up a concern that ... This allows the reader to understand.</p> <p><b>BP3</b> Jack expands on ... so that readers know.</p>	<p>While the elements of the argument were identified, there was no or limited analysis of the argument. This response only identified the points raised and the explanation into the author's strategy was merely a claim that the author believed these things to be true.</p>
<p><b>A low-middle skill level response</b></p> <p>Identified stages of the argument but did not explain strategic sequencing.</p>	<p><b>BP1</b> This <b>article begins by</b> establishing ... Jack enjoys the celebrations each year ... <b>this establishes</b> his connection ... to the reader.</p> <p><b>BP2</b> The <b>article continues by...</b> this <b>encourages the readers to jump board the change</b> for their pets...</p> <p><b>BP3</b> Jack <b>immediately introduces</b> ... this <b>wraps up the argument by making a clear stance on the issue.</b></p>	<p>In this response there was an approximation only of analysis. Stages of the argument were identified and there was only a claim that a particular outcome has been achieved without explaining how such an outcome was achieved or why it had a strategic purpose.</p> <p>Typically, responses at this skill level did not link the element discussed to the text's overall purpose, for example, the student explained how 'Jack connected to his readership' by outlining his enjoyment of the previous celebration, which related to his purpose of changing the celebration.</p>

<p><b>A high-middle skill level response</b></p> <p>Presented an understanding of elements of the strategic sequencing of ideas and considered aspects of why this might resonate with the reader.</p>	<p><b>BP1 Adut opens his piece by ... to foster a sense that he is presenting a collective idea ... by establishing this sense of shared values he encourages the readers to understand that his proposal aligns with their values</b> and their desire to celebrate New Year's Eve in a respectful way.</p> <p><b>BP2 Adut taps into the worries of his readership by ... by pointing out the many concerns associated with the fireworks he primes his readership to be receptive to a change in their celebration.</b></p> <p><b>BP3 Ultimately Adut contends that his proposal offers an opportunity to the readership ... he reframes their feelings so that they can be excited about change instead of fearful.</b></p>	<p>This classic BP3 structure often made its way into Section C. This response explained the strategy behind the stages and connected these to the writer's purpose. The paragraph that was about 'the worries' covered half of Adut's article and thus this strategy led to long and cumbersome paragraphs.</p> <p>Responses were rewarded for their capacity to analyse argument. Adopting a more flexible understanding of structuring a response may have enabled a better demonstration of the student's skills.</p>
<p><b>A high skill level response</b></p> <p>Explained the sequence of the argument and outlined a coherent explanation of how and why this impacted the reader.</p>	<p>Example 1: <b>BP1</b> Adut establishes his genuine admiration for the fireworks... <b>he intends to reassure his audience ...</b> that he supports the aesthetics and social elements of the event to alleviate fear that he may be arguing to dim the magic ... <b>he aims to inspire curiosity rather than disappointment ...</b> his admission that 'it wasn't until [he] saw first hand' ... is intended to alleviate guilt they may have felt...<b>he positions the readership to see him as a genuinely concerned...rather than self-interested ... to promote [trust in] his consequent arguments...</b></p> <p><b>BP2 ...</b>various ways the display is a threat to the town ... suggesting the continuation of the show is inherently selfish and dangerous ... <b>Adut precedes his more empathetic arguments with practical ones to create a diverse and comprehensive case ...</b> that make his article more difficult to dismiss. Hence he <b>hopes to persuade more pragmatic readers to support the lightshow by presenting the harms as irrefutable ...</b></p> <p><b>BP3</b> He aims to elicit fear and sadness [in relation to the fireworks] by...hoping to evoke a protective</p>	<p>One of the features that characterised these high-level responses was that they do not delineate between argument, language and visual analysis – instead they integrate these into a cohesive analysis reflecting their understanding of the interplay between these elements, rather than systematically 'checking off' a list of elements seen as independent of each other as was frequently seen in mid-range scripts.</p> <p>In this response there was an explanation of the strategy that the author adopted to position the readership to be receptive to their views, and an explanation of why the readership may respond to this.</p>

	<p>instinct from readers... reinforcing the responsibility faced by... <b>By alternating these poignantly emotional arguments with his rational ones, Adut demonstrates that fireworks are unethical in a multitude of ways ...</b></p> <p><b>BP4 Adut creates a dichotomy between the two choices ...</b> By implying that fireworks hold no unique value beyond tradition, he suggests light shows are an improvement, not a sacrifice, <b>thus presenting a New Year's light show as an ideal replacement for the fireworks, encouraging all Timberrona residents to support the switch ....</b></p> <p>Example 2: <b>BP1 Adut begins by establishing rapport with his audience through a shared experience, enthusiasm for New Year's Eve ...</b> Establishing Adut as part of the community and creating common ground <b>inviting his readers to see him as one of them avoiding appearing as an outsider challenging tradition ...</b></p> <p><b>BP2 By framing his change of mind as personal experience than rather ideology, Adut implicitly invites readers to undergo the same reflection to back up his reasoning ...</b></p> <p><b>BP3</b> He personalises the moral dilemma... <b>This works to reframe fireworks as cruel prompting guilt in the mind of the reader who still equates them with joy</b></p> <p><b>BP4 ...</b> in doing so <b>Adut effectively converts a tradition many cherish into a problem that a compassionate citizen would want to solve...</b></p> <p><b>BP5</b> Adut broadens his focus from <b>individual distress to collective wellbeing thereby enlarging his appeal ...</b></p> <p><b>BP6</b> Adut <b>morally elevates his argument by ...</b></p> <p><b>BP7</b> Anticipating reticence rooted in <b>sentiment Adut devotes ...</b></p>	<p>This response demonstrated development of this analysis by explaining how the piece progressed from emotional to pragmatic. It also offered insight into this strategic choice on the part of the author as to why this might engage diverse views and how a predisposition to dismiss his arguments can be systematically dismantled.</p> <p>There were many successful strategies used in this example. This response indicated a different strategy to the one used in the previous response. There are many ways to be right in English – assessors were looking for skill rather than specific content.</p> <p>An understanding was shown in this response of how the author had reframed the proposition for the audience and why the audience had participated in this reframing.</p>
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	<p><b>BP8</b> The final section <b>consolidates Adut’s argument through visual and tonal crescendo ...</b></p> <p><b>BP9</b> He elevates Timberoona from a small town to a moral exemplar to...</p>	<p>Here, more stages of the argument were marked than in the previous example. This response based the structure of their analysis around the different ways in which the readership was targeted. This strategy worked well in this instance by highlighting the analysis that was undertaken in relation to the argument.</p>
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### Analysing language and visual material

Typical features	Example	Annotations
<p><b>A low skill level response</b></p> <p>Identification but limited attempt at analysis.</p>	<p>His tone is serious. He offers a lot of evidence. <b>This proves that he cares about the situation and his audience ...</b></p> <p>Adult finishes by reminding the audience that the celebration should be ‘about balance’ and is ‘mindful of the needs of others’. <b>This reminds the reader he is purposeful and not just ranting ...</b></p> <p><b>The sad dog, left alone under a blanket, persuades readers to want a lightshow ...</b></p>	<p>At this skill level, linguistic elements were identified or described, but only an attempt was made at an explanation of the role the author played in the persuasion.</p>
<p><b>A low-middle skill level response</b></p> <p>Identified elements but could only claim, rather than explain how they achieved their effect.</p>	<p>Adut explains that the new year’s celebration costs ‘1.6 million annually’. <b>This makes the reader feel shocked.</b></p> <p>He offers examples of ‘feeding the homeless’ as where the money could be spent <b>making the readers feel really bad about the fireworks.</b></p> <p>He uses inclusive language to show the reader is included in the response. <b>Because they are included they care more.</b></p> <p>By saying that the fireworks poses a ‘serious safety threat’ to the community and his New Year’s celebration is ‘environmentally sustainable’ <b>he forces his reader to consider the impact that ‘9 tonnes of fireworks’ and associated debris have on the environment and compare it to his ‘no brainer’ solution.</b></p> <p>The reader is made to conclude that the damage is not worth ‘10 minutes of fun’.</p>	<p>These responses overstated the impact of language and struggled to connect the examples that were discussed with the text’s purpose. They tended to consider individual examples of persuasive language rather than seeing the way they were connected.</p> <p>At this skill level, responses often stressed very familiar linguistic devices – inclusive language, rhetorical questions – and demonstrated generic analysis rather than exploring how the specific example contributed towards persuasion.</p> <p>Typically, at this skill level, responses identified language and linguistic strategies that had persuasive potential, but there was a struggle to explain how effect was achieved. Rather, there tended to be only claims that there was persuasive</p>

		potential.
<p><b>A high-middle skill level response</b></p> <p>The stages of analysis were methodically presented.</p>	<p>... Furthermore he appeals to members of the town who are involved in finance to understand the financial benefit of having a celebration that is cheaper. The costs will dramatically decrease he claims from 1.6 million to 750 000. When he suggests that these savings could be better spent on 'vital community projects', Adut is using his understanding of the community's social conscience to highlight the selfishness of a '10 minute' display and how much the community can save by supporting Adut's solution. Additionally he ...</p> <p>The cowering dog in the photo might be Fido or Fluffy and his fearful face seen under a blanket reminds readers that pet owners have a responsibility towards their pets that extends to New Year's Eve when they are out...</p>	<p>At this skill level, responses tended to demonstrate systematic analysis. They were thorough, but often unselective in what was analysed, analysing everything as it appeared in the text rather than selecting the elements that worked most powerfully as persuasion.</p> <p>These responses used clear and appropriate language and sentence construction.</p> <p>These responses conscientiously identified single points at which the text's elements connected rather than seeing the connections as interwoven throughout the text. Visual analysis skills were well developed at this skill level as opposed to mere claims.</p>
<p><b>A high skill level response</b></p> <p>Strategic selection of powerful elements for discussion and an integrated and full explanation of the interconnections that created meaning.</p>	<p>Example 1: Adut then argues that all members of the community, including adults, children, and even pets deserve to feel safe during the New Year's festivities. <b>Building off the fear</b> he established at the end of his first argument, Adut uses this to then introduce other locals who could be feeling this fear, invoking feelings of sympathy in his readers. He opens by talking about 'beloved pets'; <b>painting them in a vulnerable innocent light that aims to encourage his audience to feel sorry for them.</b> This is enforced through the image showing a dog cowering under a blanket. <b>By choosing an image of a small puppy, Adut is able to paint pets in a helpless light. that they are only able to be saved by his readers.</b> Furthermore, including the writing on the sign explicitly stating 'I am scared,' along with the polite use of 'please', only <b>reinforces the innocence of the animals he is arguing for.</b> Adut once again, foreshadows an undesirable event, this time owners searching for lost pets, recreating that sense of doom and <b>re-establishing the fear he had slowly been building through his article. By then going on to advocate for the</b></p>	<p>This response showed capacity to explain interplay between the text's elements.</p> <p>Showed the capacity to use language with precision to communicate ideas.</p> <p>Explained the interplay between the elements of the text – how language and visual features amplified ideas and the role of this in positioning an audience.</p> <p>Showed capacity to see how linguistic and visual elements played a role in the whole.</p> <p>Demonstrated an understanding of the reader's role in the persuasion process and explained how they have been targeted and why this connects with them.</p>

	<p><b>locals who are sensitive to loud sounds, as well as children, Adut has been inclusive in caring for all members of the community, appealing to a wide range of locals now targeting pet owners and parents both of whom would feel protective over those in their care and wanting them to be able to enjoy New Year's Eve without fear.</b> Adut ends by including anecdotes of his personal experiences, once <b>again solidifying and reinforcing the strength of his opinions as a Timberoona local.</b></p> <p>Example 2: Continues his article by addressing stakeholders such as pet owners and parents. <b>He begins by further establishing credibility by revealing he, himself as a pet owner, and thus knows</b> how upsetting fireworks can be for dogs. <b>Adut portrays pets as vulnerable and describes them as 'cowering under a couch' in panic this is accompanied by a photograph of a distressed looking dog hiding under a blanket.</b> This aims to evoke sympathy from Timberoona locals who may not be pet owners, and also creates relatability for those who are. <b>In the image the dog wears a sign reading, 'no fireworks ... I'm scared,' which further depicts pets as vulnerable and helpless, evoking more sympathy.</b> Adut also mentions scared and lost pets winding up at the animal shelter due to fireworks. This makes the light show especially appealing to pet owners who have lost a pet before, and this suggestion that fireworks may cause that evokes fear and concern. <b>This section not only evokes sympathy for dogs' owners – Adut suggests that pet owners may not even attend the fireworks as they will need to comfort their pet. This sets up his next argument – that a light show is more inclusive, meaning everyone can attend.</b> Here, Adut mentions locals with noise sensitivity, <b>appealing to beliefs in equality and also mentions 'distressed children' which stresses parents as stakeholders and implies Adut's solution of a light show would eliminate children's fear of being</b></p>	<p>It was apparent when considering high skill level responses that the scaffolding that often underpins mid-range responses had been abandoned in favour of a more fluid style that enabled students to move between textual elements highlighting their connections.</p> <p>These responses tended to move beyond the use of scaffolding. This allowed understanding to emerge more naturally.</p> <p>In this example Adut's strategic targeting of the audience was explored and there was a consideration of the way linguistic features formed a web of meaning with the visual, and the ways in which linguistic features were used to amplify ideas.</p> <p>Capacity to see the complex interplay between the text's elements as opposed to single points of connection can be a distinguishing feature between high-middle and high range responses.</p> <p>Identifying how implied meaning impacts a reader was a feature of a high-middle or high range response.</p> <p>While there were a few errors in expression, overall, language was used with precision to present an</p>
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	<b>'panicked and upset' ...</b>	insightful point of view.
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## Capacity to use language

In Section C, it was apparent that a student's capacity to use language (EQ3) mirrored other cognitive processes. In desiring to express complex ideas, students naturally developed vocabulary and phrases that enabled communication. Equally, possessing a rich and varied vocabulary enabled students to express their ideas with more precision. However, it must be remembered that the primary function of language is to communicate. In this instance, to communicate how the text was designed to persuade a specific audience. Thus, a student's time was most wisely spent on that task rather than on merely identifying linguistic elements using polysyllabic nomenclature. As in other sections of the course, the function of language is to communicate relevant ideas. Vocabulary needed to be harnessed purposefully for the task.

Analysis is a complex cognitive task, and many students were well prepared for the examination.

## Text selection and average scores

The following table shows the Section A texts selected by students in 2025, and the average Section A scores achieved by those students, shown as a percentage of the possible marks.

The table also shows the average scores achieved by the same students for Sections B and C, again shown as a percentage of the possible marks for each of those sections.

Section A text selection		Average student score per section		
Section A text	% of students	% Average score Section A	% Average score Section B	% Average score Section C
<i>Bad Dreams and Other Stories</i>	2	59	56	58
<i>Born a Crime</i>	5	53	53	54
<i>Chronicle of a Death Foretold</i>	2	58	59	61
<i>False Claims of Colonial Thieves</i>	1	62	56	58
<i>Flames</i>	3	54	55	56
<i>Ghost Wall</i>	0.6	54	53	54
<i>Go, Went, Gone</i>	0.1	65	59	58
<i>High Ground</i>	12	51	49	51
<i>Jane Eyre</i>	2	71	65	66
<i>My Brilliant Career</i>	0.5	66	62	61
<i>New and Selected Poems, Volume One</i>	2	63	64	65
<i>Oedipus the King</i>	18	58	58	58
<i>Rainbow's End</i>	7	50	52	53
<i>Requiem for a Beast</i>	0.4	58	57	57
<i>Sunset Boulevard</i>	24	53	53	54
<i>The Complete Stories</i>	0.4	60	56	58
<i>The Erratics</i>	0.6	63	59	56
<i>The Memory Police</i>	5	58	56	57
<i>Twelfth Night</i>	3	61	63	63
<i>We Have Always Lived in the Castle</i>	12	53	54	55