



NAME: _____

VCE® ENGLISH Written Practice Examination

Reading time: 15 minutes

Writing time: 3 hours

TASK BOOK

<i>Section</i>	<i>Number of questions</i>	<i>Number of questions to be answered</i>	<i>Marks</i>
A – Analytical interpretation of a text	20	1	20
B – Comparative analysis of texts	8	1	20
C – Argument and persuasive language	1	1	20
			Total 60

- Students are to write in blue or black pen.
- Students are permitted to bring into the examination room: pens, pencils, highlighters, erasers, sharpeners, rulers and an English and/or bilingual printed dictionary.
- Students are NOT permitted to bring into the examination room: blank sheets of paper and/or correction fluid/tape.
- No calculator is allowed in this examination.

Materials supplied

- Task book of 17 pages, including **assessment criteria** on page 17.
- Answer book or paper **provided by your teacher**.

Instructions

- Write your **student name** on the front cover of the answer book.
- Complete each section in the correct part of the answer book.
- If you choose to write on a multimodal text in Section A, you must not write on a text pair that includes a multimodal text in Section B.
- You may ask the supervisor for extra answer books.
- All written responses must be in English.

At the end of the examination

- Place all other used answer books inside the front cover of the first answer book.
- You may keep this task book.

Students are NOT permitted to bring into the examination room mobile phones and/or any other unauthorised electronic devices.

SECTION A – Analytical interpretation of a text**Instructions for Section A**

Section A requires students to write an analytical interpretation of a selected text in response to one topic (either **i.** or **ii.**) on **one** text.

Your response should be supported by close reference to the selected text.

If your selected text is a collection of poetry or short stories, you may write on several poems or stories, or on **at least two** in close detail.

If you choose to write on a multimodal text in Section A, you must **not** write on a text pair that includes a multimodal text in Section B.

In the answer book, indicate which text you have chosen to write on and whether you have chosen to answer **i.** or **ii.**

Your response will be assessed according to the assessment criteria set out on page 17 of this book.

Section A is worth one-third of the total marks for the examination.

Text list

1. *After Darkness*.....Christine Piper
2. *All the Light We Cannot See*.....Anthony Doerr
3. *Behind the Beautiful Forevers: Life, Death, and Hope in a Mumbai Undercity*.....Katherine Boo
4. *Extinction*.....Hannie Rayson
5. *In Cold Blood*Truman Capote
6. *Like a House on Fire*.....Cate Kennedy
7. *Much Ado About Nothing*.....William Shakespeare
8. *Nine Days*.....Toni Jordan
9. *Old/New World: New & Selected Poems*.....Peter Skrzynecki
10. *Persepolis: The Story of a Childhood*.....Marjane Satrapi
11. *Pride and Prejudice*.....Jane Austen
12. *Rear Window*.....Alfred Hitchcock (Director)
13. *Runaway*.....Alice Munro
14. *Station Eleven*.....Emily St John Mandel
15. *Stories we Tell*.....Sarah Polly (Director)
16. *The Golden Age*.....Joan London
17. *The Lieutenant*.....Kate Grenville
18. *The Women of Troy*.....Euripides
19. *Things Fall Apart*.....Chinua Achebe
20. *William Wordsworth: Poems selected by Seamus Heaney*.....William Wordsworth

SECTION A – continued

1. *After Darkness* by Christine Piper

- i. How significant are female characters in Christine Piper's *After Darkness*?

OR

- ii. "If I didn't put it into words it might not be true."
Discuss the role of silence, and its consequences, in Christine Piper's *After Darkness*.

2. *All the Light We Cannot See* by Anthony Doerr

- i. Doerr's novel celebrates the power of imagination and the ability for individuals to endure.
Discuss.

OR

- ii. The characters in *All the Light We Cannot See* must come to terms with the choices they have made.
Do you agree?

3. *Behind the Beautiful Forevers: Life, Death, and hope in a Mumbai Undercity* by Katherine Boo

- i. 'Life in Annawadi is less about financial gain and more about minimizing what is lost.'
Discuss.

OR

- ii. How does *Behind the Beautiful Forevers* demonstrate that when corruption prevents people from improving their lives corruption is the only option that is left?

4. *Extinction* by Hannie Rayson

- i. 'In *Extinction* the characters are too consumed by their personal problems to really care about conservation.'
Do you agree?

OR

- ii. In the play, *Extinction*, Hannie Rayson suggests that finding a resolution can only occur through compromise.
Discuss.

**SECTION A – continued
TURN OVER**

5. *In Cold Blood* by Truman Capote

- i. Despite the horrific crimes Capote depicts, *In Cold Blood* strongly opposes the death penalty.
Discuss.

OR

- ii. “This hitherto peaceful congregation of neighbours and old friends had suddenly to endure the unique experience of distrusting each other.”
The murder of the Clutters symbolises what can occur when two sides of America crash into each other.
Do you agree?

6. *Like a House on Fire* by Cate Kennedy

- i. “Peeled. That’s how you feel, when it happens. Flayed.”
Like a House on Fire offers the reader a critical view of males and their ability to communicate.
Discuss.

OR

- ii. How does Kennedy use setting to convey messages to her reader?

7. *Much Ado About Nothing* by William Shakespeare

- i. At the end of the play Benedick reflects that “...man is a giddy thing.”
To what extent do the events of the play support this conclusion?

OR

- ii. ‘Deception is largely a comedic device in Shakespeare’s *Much Ado about Nothing*.’
Discuss.

8. *Nine Days* by Toni Jordan

- i. ‘Toni Jordan’s *Nine Days* is primarily a love story.’
To what extent do you agree?

OR

- ii. “There are people missing who should be dancing and talking and living and breathing.”
‘How one deals with loss is a defining characteristic in *Nine Days*.’
Discuss.

**SECTION A – continued
TURN OVER**

9. *Old/New World: New & Selected Poems* by Peter Skrzynecki

- i. How does Skrzynecki explore the impacts of migration on identity through his poetry?

OR

- ii. Throughout his poetry, Skrzynecki explores the notion that migration causes dispossession and an everlasting longing for home.
Discuss.

10. *Persepolis: The Story of a Childhood* by Marjane Satrapi

- i. In her graphic novel, *Persepolis: The Story of a Childhood*, Marjane Satrapi explores how women are victimised as a means to create political control.
Discuss.

OR

- ii. How does Satrapi explore the conflict between Eastern and Western culture in her graphic novel, *Persepolis: The Story of a Childhood*?

11. *Pride and Prejudice* by Jane Austen

- i. ‘In her novel *Pride and Prejudice*, Jane Austen quietly agitates for social change.’
Discuss.

OR

- ii. “Until that moment I never knew myself.”
How does *Pride and Prejudice* explore the notion of self-knowledge?

12. *Rear Window* by Alfred Hitchcock (Director)

- i. “A man is assaulting a woman at 125 West 9th Street.”
‘In *Rear Window*, Hitchcock presents a critical view of male behaviour.’
Discuss.

OR

- ii. How does Hitchcock use the set to create intrigue and suspense?

SECTION A – continued
TURN OVER
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13. *Runaway* by Alice Munro

- i. ‘The stories in this collection focus just as much on the people left behind as they do on the ‘runaway’.’
Do you agree?

OR

- ii. “If she got married ... she would waste all her hard work ... and if she didn’t get married she would probably become bleak and isolated ...”
‘Munro’s stories explore the complexities that women are forced to navigate in the latter half of the twentieth century.’
Discuss.

14. *Station Eleven* by Emily St John Mandel

- i. How does Mandel explore the best as well as the worst of the pre and post pandemic world?

OR

- ii. “What choice do I have? this time we live in, you know how it forces a person to do things.”
At the core of *Station Eleven* is the struggle to remain civilised in an uncivilised world.
Discuss

15. *Stories We Tell* by Sarah Polley (Director)

- i. ‘In *Stories We Tell*, Sarah Polley attempts to document the search for her biological father, but what she is really doing is searching for her mother.’
Discuss.

OR

- ii. “I was transfixed by this glorious lady who was on stage.”
‘Despite all of the drama and uncertainty, love is the most powerful emotion expressed in *Stories We Tell*.’
Do you agree?

SECTION A – continued
TURN OVER

16. *The Golden Age* by Joan London

- i. What role does symbolism play in depicting the growth and recovery of Frank Gold?

OR

- ii. ‘Being alone does not always lead to loneliness.’
How is this concept explored in *The Golden Age*?

17. *The Lieutenant* by Kate Grenville

- i. “No is not an answer... it is an order.”
In what way do ‘orders’ shape the experiences and decisions of Rooke in Grenville’s *The Lieutenant*?

OR

- ii. “It is in the interplay of characters that Grenville conveys the human experience of colonisation.”
Discuss.

18. *The Women of Troy* by Euripides

- i. ‘*The Women of Troy* depicts a world where individuals have little power over their fate.’
Discuss.

OR

- ii. What does *The Women of Troy* reveal about love and marriage?

19. *Things Fall Apart* by Chinua Achebe

- i. ‘*Things Fall Apart* explores a traditional world confronted by change.’
Discuss.

OR

- ii. “It’s an abomination for a man to take his own life.”
‘Okonkwo’s decision to take his own life is a sign of his personal failings.’
Do you agree?

20. *William Wordsworth: Poems selected by Seamus Heaney* by William Wordsworth

- i. In Wordsworth’s poetry, the natural world becomes transcendental.

OR

- ii. How does Wordsworth explore the nature of human existence?

END OF SECTION A

SECTION B – Comparative analysis of texts**Instructions for Section B**

Section B requires students to write a comparative analysis of a selected pair of texts in response to one topic (either **i.** or **ii.**) on **one** pair of texts.

Your response should analyse how the two texts present ideas and/or issues, and should be supported by close reference to **both** texts in the pair.

If you choose to write on a multimodal text in Section A, you must **not** write on a text pair that includes a multimodal text in Section B.

In the answer book, indicate which text pair you have chosen to write on and whether you have chosen to answer **i.** or **ii.**

Your response will be assessed according to the assessment criteria set out on page 19 of this book.

Section B is worth one-third of the total marks for the examination.

SECTION B – continued
TURN OVER

Pair 1 *Tracks* by Robyn Davidson and *Charlie's Country* by Rolf de Heer

- i. Compare how *Tracks* and *Charlie's Country* explore the connection between landscape and personal identity.

OR

- ii. "... being alone got awfully boring ... I needed people, wanted them." (*Tracks*)
"Charlie, Charlie, I thought I told you to look after yourself." (*Charlie's Country*)
Compare how the two texts explore the importance of companionship.

Pair 2 *The Queen* directed by Stephen Frears and *Ransom* by David Malouf

- i. 'Both texts demonstrate that disastrous events provide opportunities for individual growth.'
Discuss.

OR

- ii. "Duty first, self, second." (*The Queen*)
"The grief that racks him is not only for his son Hector. It is also for a kingdom ravaged and threatened with extinction..." (*Ransom*)
Compare how the texts portray the burden of responsibility.

Pair 3 *Stasiland* by Anna Funder and *Never Let Me Go* by Kazuo Ishiguro

- i. "Memory, like so much else is unreliable. Not for what it hides and what it alters, but also for what it reveals." (*Stasiland*)
What role does memory play in both *Never Let Me Go* and *Stasiland*?

OR

- ii. Both *Stasiland* and *Never Let Me Go* are primarily concerned with the misuse of power.
Discuss.

Pair 4 *Reckoning* by Magda Szubanski and *The Namesake* by Jhumpa Lahiri

- i. Compare the ways Magda and Gogol approach travelling back to their parents' countries.

OR

- ii. Compare the ways the migrant parents in *Reckoning* and *The Namesake* pressure their children.

SECTION B – continued
TURN OVER

Pair 5 *The Crucible* by Arthur Miller and *The Dressmaker* by Rosalie Ham

- i. Compare the ways in which isolation is explored in both texts.

OR

- ii. “Yet there was the matter of the sour people of Dungatar. In light of all they had done, and what they had not done, what they had decided not to do - they mustn’t be abandoned. Not yet.” (*The Dressmaker*)

Compare how the concept of revenge is examined in both texts.

Pair 6 *Photograph 51* by Anna Ziegler and *The Penelopiad: The Myth of Penelope and Odysseus* by Margaret Atwood

- i. Compare the ways in which relationships with men can limit women, with reference to both texts.

OR

- ii. “...It’s my turn to do a little story-making. I owe it to myself.” (*The Penelopiad*)
“... whole worlds of things we wish had happened are as real in our heads as what actually did occur.” (*Photograph 51*)

How is the concept of storytelling explored in these texts?

Pair 7 *The 7 Stages of Grieving* by Wesley Enoch and Deborah Mailman and *The Longest Memory* by Fred D’Aguiar

- i. ‘I was asked if slavery would ever come to an end.’ (*The Longest Memory*)
‘Everything has its time ...’ (*The 7 Stages of Grieving*)
What role does societal change play in the lives of the characters in *The 7 Stages of Grieving* and *The Longest Memory*?

OR

- ii. Compare how the two texts explore the challenges faced by female characters.

**SECTION B – continued
TURN OVER**

Pair 8 *I Am Malala: The Girl Who Stood Up for Education and Was Shot by the Taliban* by Malala Yousafzai with Christine Lamb and *Pride* by Matthew Warchus (director)

- i. ‘Malala and the protesters in *Pride* demonstrate that the brave will not be silenced.’
Compare how the texts *I Am Malala* and *Pride* explore the importance of speaking out.

OR

- ii. Compare how the texts *I Am Malala* and *Pride* explore the notion of powerful realisations.

**END OF SECTION B
TURN OVER**

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SECTION C – Argument and persuasive language**Instructions for Section C**

Section C requires students to write an analysis of the ways in which argument and language are used to persuade others to share a point(s) of view.

Read the background information on this page and the material on pages 13-16 and write an analytical response to the task below.

For the purposes of this task, the term ‘language’ refers to written, spoken and visual language.

Your response will be assessed according to the assessment criteria set out on page 19 of this book.

Section C will be worth one-third of the total marks for the examination.

Task

Write an analysis of the ways in which argument and written and visual language are used in the material on pages 14 to 16 to try to persuade others to share the points of view presented.

Background information

Writing on the Website - The Ethical Investor - Jane Bowman argues in her editorial *The Cost of Convenience* that millennials and their desire for convenience is having a detrimental impact on the economy and society. Writing in direct response to Bowman, *Millennial and Mad* attacks her argument and defends her generation.

SECTION C – continued
TURN OVER

The Ethical Investor**THE COST OF CONVENIENCE****Lifestyle Editor:** Jane Bowman

The Disney-Pixar film “Wall-E” painted a picture of humans as idle and naive consumers of large corporations who indulge their superficial desires which leaves them bored and unfulfilled. What is shocking is that that the comically obese people moving around in robotic couches could easily be us soon if something does not change.

Convenience, or to put it bluntly, only wanting to do something if no real effort is required, would appear to be the cause of our possible dark future. This modern-day desire to reduce effort appears to be the most important consideration for some when deciding whether to choose to do something or not and it is an attitude that seems to be pervasive amongst that most closely studied of generations, the millennials.

Loosely defined as people born in the early 1980s until the late 1990s, millennials have surpassed the baby boomers as the largest demographic and the decisions made by this age group around their employment and lifestyle choices have been heavily scrutinised and criticised. They now also hold much of the consumer power and their choices are highly influential. In the food industry, their decisions may translate to them having a direct influence on the future of home-cooked and commercially prepared meals.

While baby-boomers and Gen X’s automatically reached for pots and pans, millennials are reaching for their phones and computers. This increased reliance on food delivery services to provide groceries and meals can be attributed to this behaviour, as can the possible consequences of laziness and a lack of self-sufficiency.

SECTION C – continued
TURN OVER

Millennials, who are they?

In a report published in 2019 “Did Someone Kill the Kitchen?” investment bank ALPHA forecast delivery sales could rise from \$35 billion a year by an annual average of more than 20% to \$365 billion worldwide by 2030. The report, which includes a survey of 10,000-plus consumers worldwide, also found millennials are three times as likely to order food as their parents, and food delivery apps are in the top 40 most-downloaded apps.

A driving factor behind this revolution for food delivery is the ease of ordering and the time saved. However, this creates a routine in which millennials become conditioned to having things delivered to them, instead of having to go out to get them.

If we consider the projections of the ALPHA report, by 2030 most meals currently cooked at home could easily instead be ordered online and delivered from either restaurants or purpose-built central kitchens. The knowledge and skill that currently resides in homes (to cook, as it once did to knit a jumper) could potentially be made irrelevant or simply recede to preparing breakfast from a cardboard box. We could sadly be at the first stage of industrializing meal production and delivery.

And the cost of this self-entitled convenience? On an economic front, think of the jobs to be lost as supermarkets and others in the traditional food retail spaces become collateral damage. Kitchens would be comparatively underused resulting in a decreased use of appliances and therefore further cuts to employment in manufacturing. But it is the death of cafes and restaurants in local shopping strips which could be of equal concern. It is here that the hastening of the decreasing sense of connection and community that comes with that most basic of human experiences, eating food together, that could be the most damaging consequence of this convenience. In this new Covid world where isolation has become the new norm consider this lost sense of community and the image of obesity the next time you consider placing an order for food to be delivered instead of making a short trip to your local provider.

SECTION C – continued TURN OVER

Comment:

Jane, how convenient that your argument perpetuates the stereotype of millennials as lazy and entitled narcissists. Yes, we are different to previous generations. That is nothing new as each generation is marked by its own unique characteristics. There is a deep significance to the main difference that makes this age group stand out from previous generations; Millennials are unique problem-solvers who seek to work smarter, not harder. Having food delivered and saving time seems to be the most logical answer.

However, while the cost of restaurant food delivery may be low enough to make it an easy decision for consumers to decide not to cook, plenty of other studies show consumers, including millennials, are spending more time at home (even before Covid) and they are actually cooking as part of a personalised experience. You may have noticed many of us brag about it on social media!

Technological change and new generations will always influence how we live and function as a society but to predict the decline of social connections and imagine some kind of economic Armageddon and lay the blame on millennials is simply the stuff of dystopian fantasy.

Millennial and Mad

**END OF SECTION C
TURN OVER**

Assessment criteria

Section A will be assessed against the following criteria:

- knowledge and understanding of the text, and the ideas and issues it explores
- development of a coherent analysis in response to the topic
- use of textual evidence to support the interpretation
- control and effectiveness of language use, as appropriate to the task.

Section B will be assessed against the following criteria:

- knowledge and understanding of both texts, and the ideas and issues they present
- discussion of meaningful connections, similarities or differences between the texts, in response to the topic
- use of textual evidence to support the comparative analysis
- control and effectiveness of language use, as appropriate to the task.

Section C will be assessed against the following criteria:

- understanding of the argument(s) presented and point(s) of view expressed
- analysis of ways in which language and visual features are used to present an argument and to persuade
- control and effectiveness of language use, as appropriate to the task.

END OF TASK BOOK



Solution Pathway

NOTE: This task is sold on condition that it is NOT placed on any school network or social media site (such as Facebook, Google Docs etc.) at any time.

NOT FOR PRIVATE TUTOR USE.

SECTION A – Analytical interpretation of a text

After Darkness by Christine Piper

- i. How significant are female characters in Christine Piper’s *After Darkness*?

Students should directly respond to the prompt and acknowledge the significant role female characters play in the novel, particularly as they pertain to supporting Piper’s characterisation of Ibaraki. Students will likely focus on two specific female characters in responding to this prompt - Kayoko and Sister Bernice. Ibaraki’s relationship with Kayoko and her sense of abandonment are integral to the reader’s understanding of the impact of Ibaraki’s commitment to discretion. Indeed, Kayoko symbolises both the scale and cost of Ibaraki’s silence. It is also through Kayoko that we see Ibaraki’s burden as his wistful admission that “To have been on the verge of sharing the pain, and then to have the comfort snatched away” at once evokes a sense of empathy and also judgement from the reader. This helps Piper to build a flawed yet ultimately likeable character. Ibaraki and Kayoko remain estranged throughout much of the novel and Piper’s decision to have Kayoko killed in the bombing of Tokyo also highlights the civilian cost of war. It is also pointed that Kayoko and Ibaraki do not reconcile as this allows Piper to explore his regret - evident when the reader learns that in 1989 (over 40 years after her death) he still visits her grave. Ultimately, it is through Kayoko’s miscarriage and her premature death that readers are able to see ‘what could have been’ and the personal cost of Ibaraki’s ‘discretion’.

So too, students should explore Sister Bernice’s role in the text. As a nun she can be perceived as a possible avenue for redemption for Ibaraki although her Christian faith highlights Japanese-Australian cultural differences. References to a potential romance between Sister Bernice and Ibaraki reveal his faulting attempts to redress his personal flaws and his potential to connect with others. It is through an exchange of symbolically selected books that we see the blossoming of their relationships yet Sister Bernice’s question about the wooden tag reveals the level of trauma Ibaraki suffered when working for Unit 731. Unable to let go of this permanent reminder of the horror of his work, Ibaraki rebukes Bernice and this

perhaps reflects his deep sense of abiding shame over his actions. We also see Ibaraki as honourable in not exploring a possible romantic relationship with Sister Bernice given her vocation and his marriage. Bernice’s comment that “As soon as you show a part of yourself, almost at once you hide it” is prophetic and her character acts to bookend the novel as it is a re-reading of her letter that ultimately leads Ibaraki to reconcile his past: “Sister Bernice’s words open up to me. I’d clung to the ideal of discretion, when it was courage – and forgiveness – I’d needed all along.”

Students should also consider the peripheral and often unnamed female characters in the novel - the deceased Chinese mother of the boy who required autopsy represents the inhumanity of Unit 731 and the image of a mother trying to protect her child even in death evokes a visceral response from the reader. Reference to the Japanese girls dressed in modern clothing and labelled as “whores” highlights gendered expectations and issues of cultural conformity whilst Harada’s Aboriginal partner Minnie provides fleeting reference to broader issues of race in 1930s Australia. Finally, it is Ibaraki’s connection with another woman - his neighbour - that provides him with an avenue to redress the past as this is ultimately what spurs him to take action and reveal his past publicly.

- ii. “If I didn’t put it into words it might not be true.”
Discuss the role of silence, and its consequences, in Christine Piper’s *After Darkness*.

*In preparing to respond to this prompt students should consider the complexity of silence as a theme within the text. In *After Darkness*, silence is a product of a commitment to ‘discretion’ (to patriotic duty) and also an inability to be able to cope with trauma. This theme primarily centres on Ibaraki but students should consider the theme of silence at the level of the individual and the nation and the related issue of culpability. Driven by cultural expectations of compliance and in the context of the Sino-Japanese War, Ibaraki agrees with Kimura’s command “You can’t talk about your work to anybody – not your spouse, your parents, your friends, your children, not even to each other” and in doing so, unwittingly commits himself to a life of isolation under the guise of national security and patriotic duty. Feelings of duty and racial affiliation also initially silence Ibaraki’s suspicion that Yamada was responsible for the attack on Stan Suzuki.*

Students might consider how the theme of silence evolves over the course of the plot. Initially, Ibaraki hid behind his silence - it was a form of self-protection - as evident in the quote included in the essay prompt. Later, having experienced the immediate consequences of his silence (marital separation) Ibaraki learns to listen to others and to speak up for those who are being victimised. In doing so, he refuses to be silenced by the enormous burden of cultural expectation and this is a watershed moment for Ibaraki. Whilst his support of Stan Suzuki reflects growth in the character of Ibaraki, this doesn’t easily translate to other aspects of Ibaraki’s life. Upon return to Japan, he tries to reconcile with Kayoko but she

silences his requests first by asking for more time and second by dying and thus permanently silencing Ibaraki on the matter.

Whilst much of the novel focuses on the reasons for, and negative consequences of, silence; Piper also explores the positive impact of silence. Silence can also be viewed as solitude and it can provide an avenue for self-reflection and possible healing as Ibaraki commits to “regrow the embers of my former life, like a mallee tree destroyed by bushfire.”

Piper’s After Darkness also provides commentary on the consequences of silence at a national level and on the importance of admitting past wrongs. The image of excavated skeletons (metaphorically the skeletons in the closet) is a powerful reminder of his Ibaraki’s role in Japanese war crimes against the Chinese and it is what ultimately incites him to act as he acknowledges ““there is something the Japanese people should know.”

All the Light We Cannot See by Anthony Doerr

- i. Doerr’s novel celebrates the power of imagination and the ability for individuals to endure.
Discuss.

This topic asks students to consider the link between the ability to think beyond the realms of one’s immediate existence - to imagine all possibilities, new concepts and ideas - and an individual’s ability to show resourcefulness and resilience and survive through hardship. Students should approach this topic via an investigation of various characters. The most obviously relevant being the central protagonists who are children at the start of the novel – Marie-Laure and Werner and their comparable journeys. Jutta could also be a character who could form a major part of their exploration as we see her both as a child and then later in life as a survivor and a mother.

Marie-Laure, despite her blindness, which is not “a curse” as others suggest, transcends the boundaries of vision or ‘light’ and continually surprises with her capability and endurance. Her father names her his “emerveillement” – a wonder. Even after her father’s disappearance she continues to read and learn as much about the natural world as she can and her desire to learn about the beach environment of Saint Malo gives Marie-Laure hope. She eventually becomes a scientist who explores unknown regions and identifies new species. As Doerr suggests, Marie-Laure is like the brain “which lives without a spark of light” but will “build for us a world full of light” and enable us to see endless possibilities. Likewise, Werner continues trying to learn everything he can about technology and science. In the thick of war he never gives up on the hope that he will discover the origin of the mysterious radio program that stimulated his mind, made him dream of other possibilities beyond the mines of Zollverein and helps him endure his experience as a soldier.

Students could also consider the ways in which the novel further supports the potential for hope and renewal, or ‘light’. It is in the darkness of the cellar that Werner considers the new path he must take such as the “repairs to make” that drive him to survive this ordeal.

Etienne observes Marie-Laure as they broadcast the concerto and he is reminded of the world outside, the “red pools of light” at sunset. Despite her inability to see, Marie-Laure comprehends instead through the sounds that “ribbon in shoals through the air.”

A sophisticated response might consider how we endure long after we have gone through the stories that may be told about us or by the way we are kept alive by our belongings and others' memories of us. Students could reference Volkheimer returning Werner's belongings to Jutta and how Doerr alludes to her son having a strong resemblance to her brother. Here students could reference how Marie-Laure notes in the novel's conclusion, “We rise again in the grass. In the flowers. In songs – not light alone.”

- ii. The characters in *All the Light We Cannot See* must come to terms with the choices they have made.
Do you agree?

Doerr's novel questions and celebrates human will and choice. Viewed through a Humanist lens he contends that humanity must take responsibility for its own destiny. The children in the narrative are born into a time of extraordinary change both in a personal and wider social context, including being plunged into a war in which they must make profound moral decisions. The placing of the narrative just before and then during World War II enables Doerr to highlight the central idea of choosing to adapt in order to survive an epoch of extreme change and chaos.

Werner must choose whether to follow the ideas of National Socialism that surround him, to conform to the dominant ideology which Doerr starkly depicts in the torturing of a prisoner at the National Institute. Doerr contrasts Werner's choice's with those of both his sister Jutta and Frederick. Jutta chooses to strongly oppose Werner's decision to enter Schulpforta and asks him to consider “Is it right to do something only because everyone else is doing it?” She strongly disagrees with the actions Germany is taking against other countries and Jewish people. Doerr portrays her as a girl with a strong sense of what's right. Later, as an adult he depicts her as a woman who has tried to forget the trauma of the war but who feels guilty for what her country has done despite her choice to resist Nazi ideology.

The author further reinforces this profound feeling of responsibility through the isolated and guilt-ridden portrayal of a minor character, Frederick's mother. Initially she is characterized as a proud, arrogant, and social woman and her sense of entitlement in taking the bigger apartment of the Jewish woman hints at the horrible fate that awaits those considered inferior by the ideology that swept up many Germans. When we see her again later in the narrative, she is characterized as isolated and full of guilt. She, like many others, is then left to deal with the consequences of being complicit in the rise of an evil regime and all the destruction that ensued. The consequences of her choices will continue to haunt her as she is left to deal with her son's decision to demonstrate a sense of power and declare, “I will not” conform, when he refuses to participate in the torture of the prisoner.

Students could also explore how Marie-Laure must choose whether to participate in the resistance in a way that may endanger others, at one point asking, “But we are the good guys. Aren’t we, Uncle?”

A high-level response could reference the Sea of Flames allegory which may hint at a sort of planned destiny of living forever among the suffering of others, but Doerr suggests that there is also a choice in the matter, that one could simply toss the stone into the sea and discharge the curse.

Behind the Beautiful Forevers: Life, Death, and Hope in a Mumbai Undercity by Katherine Boo

- i. ‘Life in Annawadi is less about financial gain and more about minimizing what is lost.’
Discuss.

Behind the Beautiful Forevers is a non-fiction text that takes place in the Mumbai slum of Annawadi. It follows the lives of several people in the slum from 2007 to 2011. Living conditions in Annawadi are poor, with people living on top of each other, amenities like running water available for only two hours a day and a nearby “sewage lake” prone to flooding. In the slum, it is every man, woman and child for themselves and basic day-to-day survival instincts are required. Those who do not learn how to traverse the slum and play by its rules face starvation.

The residents hoard waste and engage in recyclable scavenging, metal thievery and for a lucky few, regular service jobs in the hotels. The nearby international airport is a source of some hopes for success, but a wall plastered with the words of an Italian tile company separates the prosperous area near the airport from its surrounding slums. Annawadi is a society that survives on the leftovers and castoffs from this affluence. It is a society with its own diversity and hierarchy where corruption for survival and immediate gain runs rampant. Residents must make payments to police officers and even to each other, as a sort of Annawadi insurance policy. However, there is little realistic hope of ever achieving more than a basic level of existence and aspirations are mostly focussed on survival.

Zehrunisa Husain, portrays the idea of systemic obstacles dashing any hope for long-term improvement on a personal level. With her husband Karam left hopeless by his constant illnesses, she becomes the main authority figure in her family and is forced to take it upon herself to ensure her sons work hard to earn a living, her other children stay in school and her daughters are married. When her daughter and husband are jailed, she is left alone to navigate the complex world of red tape and the cruel legal system. However, students could discuss that she also represents a sense of hope in rising above the basic minimal means of existence and optimism of tangible material progression.

Students could explore the idea of the inherent and inevitable corruption through the character of Subhash Sawant the Corporator (political representative) of the Shiv Sena Party in Annawadi's ward. He pretends to be low-caste so that he can run in elections meant to help low-caste people earn a voice in government. The low-caste people of Annawadi know that Subhash lies and is corrupt, but they support him as he spends a small percentage of government funds on real improvements in Annawadi. However, Subhash is an example of the ways that government programs meant to improve the conditions and end discrimination against low-caste people rarely involve real long-term improvement for those in need.

- ii. How does *Behind the Beautiful Forevers* demonstrate that when corruption prevents people from improving their lives corruption is the only option that is left?

Annawadi is a rubbish-strewn slum by the Mumbai international airport and surrounded entirely by luxury hotels that reflect India's position as one of the fastest growing economies on earth. Katherine Boo's narrative nonfiction recounts the story of the new India hidden behind these new buildings. She documents three years in the lives of the families who struggle to survive in affluence's shadow, and who call Annawadi their home.

Students could discuss how Boo frames her account around the work and life of central character Abdul Hakim Husain. She recounts his wrongful imprisonment by a brutal police force as well as showing how corruption in institutions such as public hospitals, charities and the educational system damages community life, rendering the situation hopeless and without hope for many of the inhabitants. Her extensive research and experience as a journalist allow her to create a detailed factual portrait of the slum life.

Boo depicts a society where the hope of greater opportunities across the social divide that capitalism and globalization promised has not materialized as the traditional inequalities remain entrenched and dominate 21st century Indian life. In fact, these opportunities have been far more transformative to the lives of the more privileged segments of society as the division between the classes has increased. Boo suggests that opportunities for social mobility are for a select few and mainly those already of higher social status. It is only the poor people who know how to work the broken systems through corruption that can hope to achieve any tangible improvement in their lives. Boo represents this idea through some of the residents of Annawadi who are driven by the idea of working hard to pull themselves into the middle class. Manju does through education and the Husains do through their trash sorting business. However, the prejudice and corruption of institutions, such as the police and the government act as impenetrable obstacles and stifle any sense of hope for dramatic transformation.

Students could address Boo's work as creative non-fiction and discuss her use of a range of techniques that allow her to both create a factual portrait of life in Annawadi but also allows for readers to engage with the text on a more personal level. Boo's use of figurative language – personification and similes/metaphors - allows for a more emotional connection with the text. The people are depicted as real and dynamic allowing them to rise above being a

statistic but not over sentimentalizing them either. Boo allows the reader to experience the sometimes-harsh realities of slum life.

Extinction by Hannie Rayson

- i. 'In *Extinction* the characters are too consumed by their personal problems to really care about conservation.'
Do you agree?

Hannie Rayson's play explores the idea that upholding lofty ideals can be very difficult in the face of self-interest and functionality.

Rayson's work aims to depict complex and fluid human characters whose passion for a cause becomes entwined with romantic attraction, ethical dilemmas and personal/professional pragmatism. Rayson's play could be seen as a cautionary tale of how self-interest and misconceptions may distort rationality and override moral conviction.

While a concern for conversation is in some way responsible for connecting characters, each one reveals a fundamental flaw that leads them to act based on emotional reasons rather than environmental concerns. For example, Professor Heather Dixon-Brown, successful in her professional life is driven by her need for love and to be seen as desirable. Similarly, Harry Jewell a rich businessman, is motivated by the emotional need to seduce women to gain back some of his lost masculine pride after being cheated on by his wife. Piper needs to love and save at any cost. Andy, the apparent outlier, in the end is guided by his need to save Piper from the fate of taking care of him until his death by refusing to reveal his disease.

Rayson's views of vanity infiltrates the sub-consciousness of both male and female protagonists. While environmental conservation concerns are the primary focus of much of the play, Rayson chooses to interweave a secondary story that captures the insecurities saturating the modern female experience. Rayson reveals that Professor Heather Dixon-Brown spends \$267 on hair removal every five weeks. Her brother Andy likens the hair removal process to 'getting a tree lopped'. The destructive imagery of chopping down a tree echoes the crippling pressure for Heather to 'sculpt' herself into a particular feminine ideal.

Students could discuss how Andy's actions act as a mirror of our own perceptions of ourselves and the superficially formed view we have of others. In Andy's case his antagonistic approach towards Harry, committed to saving the tiger quoll and the forest, undermines his own integrity. He refuses to engage with him as his judgement of Harry is fixed and based on preconceived ideas of him as a miner. Andy sees any possible yielding to Harry as an attack on how he and others see him. His prejudices overshadow the opportunity for any form of beneficial collaboration.

Furthermore, in her professional domain Professor Dixon-Brown is forced to make an ethical compromise by deleting a career tarnishing mass-email intimating an illicit romance between her and her newest collaborator, Harry Jewell. Concerned that revelations of an intimate fling could be seen to cast Dixon-Brown as a seducer and woman who is easily compromised,

she rushes desperately to the IT servers at Lam to ensure that her image remains intact.

- ii. In the play, *Extinction*, Hannie Rayson suggests that finding a resolution can only occur through compromise.
Discuss.

Rayson captures the universal struggle between emotions and the effect of yielding to it may have on your ability to make reasoned decisions. This is evident in Rayson's depiction of Dixon-Brown's gradual inclination towards the Tiger Quoll project funded by a coal company. Dixon-Brown claims that she is a pragmatist who uses her "head and not her heart", yet, ironically is seduced by Harry Jewell and agrees to accept "dirty money" from Harry to fund the quoll saving endeavour.

High responses should be able to demonstrate an understanding that it is part of the human condition to be guided by our emotions despite our abilities to confront conflict with reason. Rayson could be seen to be suggesting that while our emotions are central to who we are and in fact can be an element of strength it is also one of our greatest flaws that can lead us down the path of duplicity and the betrayal of judgment and sense of reason leading to a failure in resolving disputes constructively and amicably.

Students could explore Harry's character and how he seems to be able to combine both pragmatism and ideological purity and still get things done. He has the resources and acumen to manoeuvre a board of directors determined on exploring coal "right on the edge of the national park." However, 'Mr Evil,' as he is seen by some of the other characters, finds them unwilling to consider his proposals as legitimate. In the end even Harry is unable to avoid being sacked by the board of his company as Rayson showcases how difficult it can be to find consensus.

Furthermore, students should be able to understand that Rayson explores the idea of a lack of moral integrity in her play despite the characters' ideological convictions. Students should be able to see that Rayson is surmising that what makes us human is the way we allow our emotions to take over rendering us unwilling to bend and find a solution to some of the issues that confront us personally and professionally. Rayson explores this particularly with the character of Piper. She is, initially, unwavering in her conviction that all animals have the right to be saved. We see this through her anger at Andy when he euthanizes the quoll and her reticence to help Professor Dixon Brown with her index which will favour the survival of some species over others. Her desperate need to save her dog from cancer and raise \$15000 to save him draws pragmatic ire from Andy who believes that she is too emotional.

High scoring responses may refer to the wet and wild weather at the beginning of the play and how it creates a feeling of chaos and unpredictability – similar to the ways in which the characters act on their emotions and behave in unpredictable ways. In terms of the 'how' elements, students should be able to find symbolism that supports the above notions. On page 73, during a heated exchange between Piper and Andy, the sound of thunder re-iterates their fractious relationship and their inability to see others point of view.

***In Cold Blood* by Truman Capote**

- i. Despite the horrific crimes Capote depicts, *In Cold Blood* strongly opposes the death penalty.
Discuss.

A top scoring response would consider the whole text when responding to this prompt. It could be argued that Capote’s vivid account of the life and death of the Clutters persuades the reader that Perry and Dick’s execution is a fair outcome. The text’s final image of a young woman “as Nancy might have been”, reinforces the tragedy of that ‘wonderful’ girl’s cruel murder. Conversely a strong response could hold the position that the balance achieved by the exhaustive range of perspectives depicted within the text provides a neutral position on the death penalty. However, careful attention to the text’s narrative structure provides a strong case that Capote’s aim was to oppose the death penalty.

Capote collated an enormous amount of material in his research and so the ordering of that material in the telling of the story provides insight into where he is directing his readers’ sympathies. The beginning of the narrative introduces us to the exemplary Methodist Clutter family, who Capote represents with simply expressed regard. For the reader, however, their inevitable and violent fate looms, foreshadowed in the opening paragraph by the “white cluster of grain elevators rising as gracefully as Greek temples.” The depiction of cold-blooded murder of the Clutters is unflinching, but it is only fully disclosed when Perry’s character has fully permeated the narrative. It is Perry, not Dick, who commits the murders, but by delaying the full account until the end of the third section, ‘Answer’, the rich and sympathetic account of Perry’s life and disposition goes some way to mitigating the horror of the murder.

*A strong response would draw upon the use of court records such as psychological reports and Perry’s own heart-rending account of his life history in the fourth and final section in discussing the text’s position on the death penalty. The sympathy created by the inclusion of these verbatim reports could be reinforced by reference to Capote’s powerful imagery. Perry’s vulnerability is continually evoked through his damaged shortened legs and the text’s last glimpse of the figure, who has by this stage taken on the central focus of the narrative, is the hanged man’s ‘same childish feet, tilted, dangling’ that have frequently been described as “not quite brushing the floor.” The combination of the sense of fate swirling around the Clutters and Perry’s status as a damaged “boy-man” contributes to the sense that Capote saw this tragedy as an inevitable collision course and that the title *In Cold Blood* could refer to both, the State’s act in executing this “poor and friendless” man and Perry’s murder of the Clutters.*

- ii. “This hitherto peaceful congregation of neighbours and old friends had suddenly to endure the unique experience of distrusting each other.”

The murder of the Clutters symbolises what can occur when two sides of America crash into each other.
Do you agree?

The Clutter killings are seminal for the citizens of Holcomb and Garden City. The outside world and all its dangers threatens their peaceful existence, and their former naive innocence gives way to feelings of doubt, fear and suspicion. The safety, security, and self-determination of their American dream has been undermined by the infiltration of poor and bitter individuals who never had a hope of achieving this dream.

The Clutter murders can be viewed through the lens of class, specifically as a symbol of class conflict that highlights the disparity between the relatively prosperous, mainly white middle-class citizens of Holcomb and the working-class underprivileged, mixed-race (Perry) perpetrators. Theft is Perry and Dick's only means of economic independence and mobility. Neither of them has had a chance at a proper education or a stable career. Capote portrays economic insecurity as the root of the murders. It is what motivates the break-in and later on results in Perry's shame and subsequent tragic turn the robbery takes. Thus, it could be said that Capote places Perry Smith's and Dick Hickock's failure to achieve the American Dream as the central cause of the murders. For example, Perry, crippled by a motorcycle accident and plagued by memories of a childhood ruined by poverty and abuse finds the American Dream elusive despite his hard work and intelligence. Capote could be seen to be suggesting his and many others' hope of achieving the dream is far beyond reach. On the other hand, Dick, a product of a stable lower-middle-class childhood, is frustrated by the conventional methods by which he might achieve the American Dream. He turns to a life of crime, in an effort to take a short-cut to the life he dreams of.

High responses could discuss how leading up to the murders of the Clutter family, Capote portrays Holcomb, Kansas as a type of Eden before the fall. In fact, Capote uses biblical references to make it known that something terrible is about to happen when early in the novel Herb Clutter says, "An inch more of rain and this country would be paradise, Eden on Earth." Another connection to this biblical reference is the idea that Herb could be seen to be creating his own version of Eden. Students could connect the orchard to Eve eating the apple in the bible, destroying Eden and suggesting that what is about to occur to the town and specifically the six individuals, is somehow fated.

***Like a House on Fire* by Cate Kennedy**

- i. “Peeled. That’s how you feel, when it happens. Flayed.”
Like a House on Fire offers the reader a critical view of males and their ability to communicate.
Discuss.

This is a seemingly simple question but one which offers opportunity for a complex and nuanced response. Many students would address this topic by simply agreeing that many of the male characters in the text are ‘flawed’, identifying individuals who appear pathetic, violent, childlike and even hen pecked. A key word in this question is that of ‘critical’ and requires students to consider Kennedy’s male characters within the context of the revelations that the reader can gain from them in terms of an analysis of strengths as well as flaws.

Students also need to consider that notion of communication and its implications. Answers should delve more deeply into Kennedy’s authorial concerns, the role played by the characterisations within her stories and indeed, undertake an exploration of the characters within the context of their relationships and the lens through which they view their world. A stronger answer could explore whether an ability to communicate is the only issue here, as well as contributing factors which assist and hinder communication. In ‘Ashes’ it is easy to be critical of Chris and his apparent lack of empathy for his mother, but students could consider the lens through which Chris views his mother seeing his perceptions based on years of perceived injustice.

In counter argument students could address the idea that Kennedy provides plenty of scope to explore male characters who are able to communicate or whose communication skills appear to differ within relationships. Often characters are nuanced with Kennedy shaping individuals who may appear highly flawed as is the case of Frank’s relationship with his wife in ‘Flexion’ and yet, is represented by the observations of his rural community as “Good old Frank,” and one for whom they would do anything, as evidenced by their willingness to come to Frank’s aid after his accident. Kennedy’s portrayal here leads the reader to ponder about the Slovak’s marriage and how it is that he is perceived so differently by wife and community. ‘Flexion’ ends with a moment of shared understanding between the Slovaks resulting from his tractor accident and Frank’s resulting dependence on his wife; communication is re-established through physical “flexion” exercises and Mrs Slovak’s ability to not just empathise with her husband’s pain, but also her realisation that the power shift in the relationship does not have to be one where she now dominates in the way Frank used to.

Students could also argue that Kennedy also provides the reader with an array of female characters who also struggle with communication. Likewise, they could argue that male characters and their ability to communicate can be significantly influenced by significant females in their lives. Students might identify women who are victims, trapped by circumstance or even somewhat neurotic such as the protagonist in ‘Static’ and the implications of this. Ray in ‘Sleepers’ for instance can be identified as a man who has ‘fallen asleep’ following the breakup of his marriage – he appears apathetic and waiting to ‘take

what is coming to him' rather than moving forward but it can be argued that this is because he has been rejected by Sharon as well as lacking the ability to recognise and express his feelings.

ii. How does Kennedy use setting to convey messages to her reader?

Kennedy's stories are all unrelated but focus on being human, the complexity of relationships and how they change over time. A common feature of Kennedy's stories is that they are set in the familiar and peopled by ordinary working and middle-class people and this can allow the reader to associate and/or relate with the people and places she writes about. Students could argue that these stories resonate with the 'ordinary' things which make up life and as such, the often, domestic setting of hot summer days, family events and Christmas, serves to provide a familiar yet complex backdrop to the 'dirty realism' of Kennedy's writing. Likewise, students could explore the notion of the anthology inviting the reader to reflect upon notions such as the benefits of recognition of the tension of relationships, that family events can be fraught with conflict and our ways of thinking impact our behaviour.

This question requires students to identify those messages which they believe Kennedy seeks to convey and the command words, "How does" are of great significance here, requiring students to analyse those elements within her writing which are used by Kennedy specifically in relation to the setting of her stories to convey meaning.

To answer this question successfully, students need to identify examples of setting within the text and analyse how these are used by Kennedy. Kennedy's anthology offers the readers entry into a vast array of setting in terms of time and place. At the basis of this topic is the student's capacity to define how they perceive 'setting' with a more complex response moving from mere place such as suburbia, rural life, a neighbourhood, waiting rooms and life at the office. More able students should be able to communicate that setting is not just the physical but can also relate to psychological and emotional landscapes such as the train journey in 'Tender' which conveys the idea of both literal and figurative journeys of discovery. Likewise, the sterile waiting room in 'Waiting', mirrors the protagonist's difficulty in conceiving a child.

Students must respond to this question by identifying examples of setting, explaining the significance of events which occur and analysing the messages conveyed. They could explore the complexity offered in 'Flexion', noting the different perceptions of Frank within the confines of his home and the community beyond. Likewise, they could offer discussion on the fact that the home is often seen as a place for action or even a focus on characters who are away from the home and what it represents, for example, Chris and mother who have left to scatter ashes, Liz who has left the family home to return to work.

In the title story, ‘Like a House on Fire’, the family home and familiar setting of Christmas are changed when the protagonist suffers from a herniated disc and Kennedy’s use of the hurdle of the staircase...”teeth gritted way up the stairs” to reflect his struggle with his illness and perceived loss of role as man of the house. Further, his guilt about the impact on his family is conveyed outside the home as father watches his wife and son struggle to load a Christmas tree into their car. Yet Kennedy also uses humour in this story as husband and wife laugh together over the broken ornaments, offering a message about how real-life relationships can overcome difficulty.

Students could also discuss how Kennedy uses her stories to demonstrate that not all houses are safe, conform to societal mores or represent security with events or interactions bringing tensions to the surface. For example, Shane’s predatory behaviour in ‘Seventy-Two Derwents’, is an even more shocking threat inside what should represent safety (the family home) and the fact that Tyler’s mother appears unable to provide her daughters with the protection they need. Likewise, within the perfectly designed walls of the home in ‘Static’ Anthony realises he cannot have a child with Marie because he needs to live his life free from the constraints of perfectionism. Whilst in ‘Cake’ the use of a second cake which Liz’s husband produces to celebrate her return to work demonstrates the irony of the situation and the safe haven of home is somewhat lost by Kennedy’s alignment of it with the office cake.

Much Ado About Nothing by William Shakespeare

- i. At the end of the play Benedick reflects that "...man is a giddy thing." To what extent do the events of the play support this conclusion?

Students might commence by acknowledging that to a certain extent the events of the play endorse the view that men can be fickle or changeable. We see this in the actions of Benedick who reflects that “man is a giddy thing” in reference to his changed status with Beatrice. Students may juxtapose Benedick’s early mocking claims that if ever there be “Benedick the married man,” he may have adorn the plucked horns of a bull, be “painted vilely” and advertised as a “good horse to hire” with his later admission to Beatrice that “I do love nothing in the world so well as you.” ‘Giddiness’ is however, largely related to sexual politics rather than gender, and students should examine Beatrice and Benedick’s relationship. Shakespeare foreshadows their union early in the play but utilises their war of words to explore love and marriage. Arguably, the audience are invited to consider whether Beatrice and Benedick are indeed ‘giddy’ or if their protestations against marriage and one another are a form of self-protection.

So too, Claudio might be considered giddy in the more classic sense of the word when he quickly falls in love with Hero. This form of giddiness could be a result of the post-war context in which matters of romance could be considered. Claudio’s later changeability - his decision to reject Hero as “wanton” is perhaps less giddy and more a representation of gender norms at the time when it was common to reject a woman based on supposed

promiscuity. At the same time, students might consider the characterisation of Hero as also reflecting expected gender norms. She rarely speaks to Claudio, is dominated by her father's opinion and ultimately she is steadfast in her commitment to Claudio and accepts him in marriage in spite of his slander.

This juxtaposition between giddiness and steadfastness could be further extended. For example, students might consider the different ways in which Shakespeare explores the idea of being steadfast. Don John for example is steadfast in his unwavering commitment to revenge but he is a static character who does not evolve beyond this. He is the archetypal and unredeemable villain. Beatrice and Benedick on the other hand are the heroes of the play who eventually find happiness when they change from being flippant and ironic to being more straightforward and honest.

- ii. 'Deception is largely a comedic device in Shakespeare's *Much Ado about Nothing*.'
Discuss.

Deception and self-deception, and visual and verbal confusion are rife in Messina. Certainly, deception is a comedic device and students should specifically consider the role of trickery as comedy. From the outset, the audience is entertained by the theatrical display of the masked ball. The audience, along with the characters, are 'noting' (paying attention or taking notice) the actions of others without knowing their identity. Here, students might directly refer to the homophonic meaning of the play's title. There is also an element of theatre in early scenes as Beatrice pretends not to recognise Benedick as an opportunity to verbally insult him.

Whilst Shakespeare's use of dramatic irony allows the audience to know more than the characters, there is a sense of repeated and overlapping deceptions that position us to "know and not know" the truth. In considering the comedic elements of the theme of deception students might also examine the parallel garden scenes in which Beatrice and Benedick are presumably tricked into revealing their feelings for one another. So too, Dogberry's use of malapropisms to confuse is comedic and further emphasises the role of words/language in deception.

There is however, a darker side to deception in the play. The playful use of disguise evident early in the play becomes sinister as the play's antagonist - Don John - orchestrates a visual illusion of Borachio seducing Hero. Claudio readily accepts Don John's claim that "she is every man's Hero," thus revealing himself to be suspicious in nature and unable to trust his early judgement of Hero's good character. There are therefore negative consequences of deception.

These are, however, balanced by the positive outcomes of deception - that being the reconciliation of Hero and Claudio and the betrothal of Beatrice and Benedick. This only occurs as a result of Hero's feigned death. (a further deception). Ultimately, the theme of deception drives the narrative forward revealing the character's true qualities to the audience

and to the characters themselves. As such, deception is far more than a comedic device in Shakespeare's Much Ado about Nothing.

Nine Days by Toni Jordan

- i. 'Toni Jordan's *Nine Days* is primarily a love story.'
To what extent do you agree?

*Central to Piper's narrative is the romance between Jack Hustings and Connie Westaway (as reflected in recurrent reference to their photograph). Given the non-linear order of chapters, their relationship propels the plot forward (Jack is the focus of Chapter 3 whilst the reader hears from Connie in the final chapter) and students should, therefore, acknowledge the centrality of this love story in *Nine Days*.*

Students might examine the concept of romantic love (in all its guises) and how it is differentially explored in the novel. Connie and Jack face a range of barriers to their pairing - social class, religion, and war - and as a result theirs is a brief and passionate encounter that is hauntingly sad given it is their only opportunity to be together. Here, Jordan explores the impact of war on people, and the ways in which social expectations about women and morality have devastating effects. She contrasts this representation with that of Charlotte whose surprise pregnancy is not the result of a love match but nonetheless one where Charlotte has choices. Whilst Connie's love story ends in a forced abortion and her untimely death, Charlotte can have her child and become a single mother. Thus, Jordan utilises the concept of romantic and sexual love to examine issues of gender and morality across successive generations over time.

Kip and Annabelle are themselves, a love story. Whilst Kip and Annabelle overcome significant personal hurdles to establish their relationship - Kip had fought in WWII and Annabelle had nursed her alcoholic father - their love is centrally focused on their family. Familial love is therefore a significant theme in the novel and Jordan highlights the ways in which families can, despite their differences, find ways of functioning. This is evident in Kip, Frank and Annabelle's continuing relationship and in Charlotte and Stanzi's unconventional co-parenting of Alec and Libby. Kip's love is deeply sentimental as shown in his choice of names for his daughters and the heirlooms he gifts them (the amethyst necklace and the coin) which symbolise the connection between the past and the present. Indeed, the coin symbolises love for Stanzi who did not experience romantic "lightning" love but instead experiences love primarily at a familial level. The coin for Stanzi represents love "moving between people all around us, all the time, and linking people within families."

*Students should introduce a qualifying or extending argument to deepen their analysis. A possible qualifying argument might be that love is used as a vehicle to explore other themes. The love stories we see in *Nine Days* all endure some form of adversity. Some characters can overcome adversity whilst others are not. Comparisons could be drawn between Jean (driven*

by bitterness) and Frank (driven by ambition), and Kip who is driven by gratitude - “you must know this, people disappear... drink them in.” Annabelle is similarly grateful for her father who committed to raising her after her mother’s death (“not every man would have kept a child, especially a girl”).

A further consideration might be that Jordan’s *Nine Days* is a deeply nostalgic homage (an extended love story) to a specific historical time and place. Her frequent use of specific locations in Melbourne and historical terminology and practices reflects this.

- ii. “There are people missing who should be dancing and talking and living and breathing.”
 ‘How one deals with loss is a defining characteristic in *Nine Days*.’
 Discuss.

Students should directly engage with the quote at some point in their response and acknowledge that whilst the quote explicitly refers to the loss of young men at war and their resultant absence; the quote (in association with the propositional statement in the prompt) encourages a broader examination of loss.

Clearly, students should engage with the historical context and Australia’s involvement in WWII. The quote references the loss of peers and Piper’s evocative image of a community dance whose numbers have been decimated by war. The scale of loss is evident in Annabelle’s comment that “each of us is thinking of someone we’ll never see again. That’s what war means” and in this sense Jordan explores the concept of communal loss. The personal impact of this is further explored via responses to Jack Hustings’ death. Mr and Mrs Hustings’ drawn curtains and withdrawal from daily life to mourn their son’s death coupled with Jean Westway’s commentary on “the natural order of things... you first and then them” and Connie’s “red rimmed eyes” as she “saw the Telegram boy” on her way home, provide evocative images of loss and the rippling effect it has on a community. The enduring image of the telegram (“they’ll be holding that telegram until it crinkles in their hands) symbolises the impersonal nature in which families learn of the death of loved ones and juxtaposes the physical distance between Australia and the battlefields of WWII with the direct emotional impact on loss.

The Westaways and their different responses to the loss of Tom Westaway allow students an opportunity to compare and contrast how characters individually respond to loss. Whilst Kip’s response to his father’s death is pragmatic and future-focused (he wants to provide for his family), Jean bitterly resents Tom’s death (“how I hate that man for dying and leaving me all alone to look after everyone”) but even more so, she resents the loss of status it represents - as a result of his death she was forced to work as a maid for others and the very nature of his death (he fell from a Tram whilst drunk) offends her. Much like Jean, Frank is centrally concerned with other’s perceptions of him and this results in further loss - he loses Annabelle rather than admit an embarrassing truth to his friends.

As with the previous essay prompt, this one invites students to consider the ways in which people respond to adversity (loss) and suggests that it is not what you endure, but how you respond to it, that ultimately shapes one's future. Students may also consider the link between loss and remembrance as Kip demonstrates the powerful role of honouring those you lose as a means of being able to move on from loss.

Old/New World: New & Selected Poems by Peter Skrzynecki

- i. How does Skrzynecki explore the impacts of migration on identity through his poetry?

This topic invites students to focus on migration and its impacts on identity by analysing the literary features of the poetry. A high-level response should include a close analysis of diction choice, poetic devices and main concerns expressed through the poetry. Students could introduce their essay by exploring the contextual elements of Skrzynecki's work and how they have influenced his poetry. Skrzynecki's parents are of Polish/ Ukrainian background, and his parents migrated with him to Australia. A high-level response would need to tease out the elements of identity within Skrzynecki's poetry. As we know, his poetry is essentially an autobiography; therefore, a narrative understanding of Skrzynecki's life can be charted through his poetry. There is a strong sense of a 'coming of age' experience throughout his poems where he delves into memories of school and the formative influences of his parent's and memories of migration. A high-level student would need to focus on Skrzynecki's feelings of existing in between two worlds. His understanding of Poland is through stories from his parents, and his understanding of Australia and Australian culture is framed within the migrant narrative. Thus, we get a sense the Skrzynecki never feels that he belongs in either place, yet both places powerfully shape his identity. In addition, high-level students would need to explore the differing impacts of migration on identity on his parents and how this shapes his own identity.

Students could focus on how Skrzynecki recalls significant memories in his poetry that form a kind of pastiche of formative experiences that impact his identity. We can understand that the journey of his family has taught him incredible strength and resilience. For example, in 'Immigrants at Central Station', Skrzynecki writes that "it was sad to hear / the train's whistle" when at the 'railway' whilst it 'rained.'" The use of the abstract noun "sad" evokes a childlike perspective, and the rain acts as a pathetic fallacy accentuating the loss his family experiences through migration. Furthermore, the notion that they are "like cattle bought for slaughter" expresses the sense of fear and danger and reflects on a deeply ingrained attitude of Australian's towards migrants of the time - which they are, 'alien', outsiders who don't belong.

Many of Skrzynecki's poems detail aspects of this experience and students could choose poems such as 'Felix Skrzynecki', '10 Mary Street', 'Seeing my Parents' as well as many others. Significantly, his anthology Old/ New World was initially an anthology of 82 pages

titled 'Immigrant Chronicles'. Thus, students could comment on the significance of the title and explore how the connotation of a 'new world' whilst promising an element of hope and renewal can also create longing and new challenges which impact identity. One of the most prominent challenges, perhaps, is that of being an 'outsider'. 'Migrant Hostel' exemplifies this notion of disconnection and the effect of migration on identity. Skrzynecki explores the significance of place and setting on migrants and how new migrants to Australia experienced a loss of self through their arrival. Students could point out the use of consonance in the poem, such as the alliteration of the c and k in the line: "No-one kept count of all the comings and goings." This device creates a cacophony that illuminates the constant movement of the migrants which ironically is seen as insignificant - this line conveys how little they are valued or seen as individuals upon arrival. This, coupled with the word "no-one", conveys a sense of dispossession; the migrants have arrived in a place where they are one of many, a mass of individuals without a true identity. Other significant literary devices such as the use of enjambment to exemplify the merging and non-delineation of the different races converging in one space and the use of simile, "Nationalities sought/ each other out instinctively—/ like a homing pigeon/ circling to get its bearings;" which illuminates that the need for connection and an affirmation of identity is something which is a human instinct and a way of feeling oriented in a new space that is so foreign. This use of bird imagery is repeated in the lines: "we loved like birds of passage—/ always sensing a change/ in the weather: /unaware of the season/ whose track we would follow." This simile conveys insight into the yearning at the core of migration to follow the right path and forge a better future and how collectively retaining a sense of cultural identity is at the core of survival in a new world. Skrzynecki as a young child experiencing this has clearly understood a sense of cultural identity that is a very significant part of who he is as an adult. Furthermore, Skrzynecki combines the imagery of nature with self-identity conveying a symbiotic relationship between who we are and the land we are from.

Students should draw on a varied number of migration poems. Some of the impacts of migration that Skrzynecki explores through his poetry that students could address are dispossession, becoming an outsider, finding connections, establishing a new home, family relationships, childhood experiences of being part of a 'migrant' family, cultural identity, and a feeling of belonging. Students could structure their essay by creating clear topic sentences about the main concerns that Skrzynecki explores through migration and then analysing these concerns through close language analysis of the poetry they choose to use as evidence, thus demonstrating they have a clear understanding of the 'how' element of the topic.

- ii. Throughout his poetry, Skrzynecki explores the notion that migration causes dispossession and an everlasting longing for home. Discuss.

The notion of 'home' needs to be explored in the introduction, and how this is a concept that, for a migrant, is ever-changing in terms of moving country, yet there is always a nostalgic yearning for their 'home country of origin. Skrzynecki weaves a mix of emotions throughout his poetry and illuminates the emotionally fraught journeys that many migrants faced escaping from post-war European countries, yearning for a better life for themselves and their children.

High-level students could structure their essay to consider the idea of loss and dispossession and then move into subsequent paragraphs about hope and a feeling of being somewhat at peace in a new world. Students could talk about the title of the anthology and how it relates to the topic of the essay and Skrzynecki's poetry. The adjective 'new' offers so much; however, it is evident throughout Skrzynecki's poetry that moving to a 'new world' comes at a tremendous personal cost. Some of the essential poems to explore for this topic are Immigrants at Central Station and Migrant Hostel. Students could focus on the swathe of emotions present in these poems that detail a sense of grief, hope and need. Most significantly in Immigrants at Central Station, the simile used to describe 'the signal at the platform's end' which, "turned red and dropped like a guillotine" expresses a macabre finality to the process of migration and hints at the notion that, once a migrant has left their mother country, they are unlikely to experience it as the home that they know ever again. Similarly, in Migrant Hostel, there is a 'barrier' at the main gate that 'rose and fell like a finger which, like the signal in Immigrants at Central Station, signifies the notion that migration causes a sudden duality of being, a person who is no longer part of their homeland and yet, doesn't belong at their destination. Thus, at the end of Migrant Hostel, when Skrzynecki writes: to pass in and out of lives/ that had only begun/ or were dying. The tension between the liminal spaces of existing precariously between two worlds conjures up ideas of death and re-birth. Paradoxically, however, there is a sense that this new beginning that does not seem to offer any hope of complete renewal. Yet, later in Old/ New World, this yearning for hope and renewal is touched on in his poem Leukaemia when he writes: "[waiting] for a new world/ to take over your body/ so the old can be defeated,/ left behind", could be interpreted as somewhat antithetical to the previous and earlier poems as there is a keen sense that the dispossession that migration has caused is something to fight against and win; a battle within oneself to free up space for a new world to take over.

Other important poems that could be included are Ancestor and Feliks Skrzynecki. Ancestor's structure is different from his other poetry. There is a yearning for understanding expressed through the repeated questions and an expression of confusion. In conjunction with the use of dashes that create pauses of thought and feeling, the questions he asks create a sense of frustration that culminates in the line 'why do they never speak?' Students might also want to touch on Skrzynecki's use of bird imagery throughout many of his poems to portray migration, freedom and flight. His use of bird imagery conveys a sense of spirituality

and a deep affinity between man and nature. Often, his poetry focuses on birds within the Australian landscape to detail how people, like birds, are migrators at heart. Moving, and changing and experiencing death and renewal through the act of migration is synonymous with all of nature's life cycles.

Persepolis: The Story of a Childhood by Marjane Satrapi

- i. In her graphic novel, *Persepolis: The Story of a Childhood*, Marjane Satrapi explores how women are victimised as a means to create political control. Discuss.

Students could explore how the Islamic Republic oppresses women and how those in power weaponise religion to create control. This topic also presents an opportunity to unpack the tensions between Western and Middle Eastern culture and religion and how the fear of outside influence and the protest against a Shah supported by America has created an extremist culture where freedoms taken for granted are taken away.

A high-level response could focus on the importance of gender and femininity in the novel by pointing out that the first chapter, 'Veil' sets up a key concern in the text and introduces the idea of using the female gender as a weaponised force of political control. In this chapter, Marjane finds herself 'veiled and separated from [her] friends'. Students could point out here that the veil symbolises a barrier between women and men that creates an immediate sense of a 'caste' system where women are silenced and hidden. Moreover, students could draw on the panel on page 4 that accompanies the above quote to point out some of the features of the graphic, such as the male teacher positioned in the centre of the frame looming large and menacing, his furrowed brow and dark black beard in conjunction with his pointed finger represents not only patriarchal dictatorship and control over the females in the text but also conveys a sense of accusation, the pointed finger connoting a sense of fault in the girls simply due to their gender. Furthermore, the girls' black veils are juxtaposed with their white dresses, a symbol of purity and innocence, yet the boys, dressed in black, create a dichotomy between light and dark, male and female. Students could also include the example of Marjane's mother, who protests against the veil and is photographed by a Western photographer. This photograph is published in many European magazines and emblematic of Western culture clashing with Middle Eastern fundamentalist religion. Her mother's image ironically used to weaponise political relations between the two cultures. While it functions to shed light on Iran's political forces, it also inspires further rage and inequality.

Another pertinent example, on page 6, explores the men's reactions to Marjane's declaration that she wants to become a prophet. Marjane's childhood naivety is exemplified here as it is clear that she has not yet understood the magnitude of the gender inequality in her culture. Her deep religious beliefs have instilled in her a feeling of power and self-fulfilment, and she sees herself as a profoundly religious human rather than a religious female. This example signifies how autonomy in Iran is denied to women, and this is a distinct turning point in

Marjane's life where the realisation that her gender is an affliction becomes apparent. In addition, students could point out the level of patriarchal power that existed even before the Revolution by highlighting the female teachers' reaction to her declaration of wanting to become a prophet on page 8; even 'modern' women seem to profligate the notion that any departing from strict feminine gender roles is seen as 'crazy'.

A high-level response could point out how ideological and political beliefs are enforced through gender and the oppression of women. A particularly poignant example of this is on page 74, where Marjane's mother is abused by men because she is not wearing a veil and told that, "Women like [her] should be pushed up against a wall and fucked and then thrown in the garbage." The last panel on page 74 demonstrates the use of propaganda and fear used to oppress women; the man on the television with a pointed finger, similar to the teacher on page 4, declares that the veil is to protect women from rape as all men are 'perverts'. Satrapi's observation that "the way people were dressed became an ideological sign there were two types of women" focuses on this notion of clothing as a means of political propaganda to create a divide between the 'progressive' portrayed as wrong and evil, and 'fundamentalists' associated with obedience and the correct way to live. Thus, again creating a class divide through pushing binaries within which women are the ultimate scapegoats and victims.

And yet, despite the oppression of women throughout the text, there is an opportunity for students to explore how the suppressive environment creates an opportunity for empowerment. Marjane's mother and grandmother represent women who, despite their cultural subjugation, are empowered by their human rights to exist as individuals who deserve to exist as more than objects to serve and be controlled by men. Her family places importance on education as a means to self-empowerment and that through understanding the world, women will find ways to protest the regime. For example, Marjane protests by improperly wearing her veil. Her grandmother is a matriarch in the family whose progressive views demonstrate an influence of empowerment in Marjane's life. A high-level student could point out how this Satrapi draws the female figure in the text. Marjane is somewhat androgynous in the text and not overtly feminine, other female characters also lack curves and are purposely not drawn to be sexualised. This suggests that perhaps Satrapi is purposely subverting how women are usually portrayed in graphic novels, which often portray women as sexual objects and emit stereotypical notions of female beauty regardless of the power that they exhibit. High-level students would be able to focus on the nuances of representation through Satrapi's illustrations and offer an alternative reading of the topic by exemplifying how the novel, whilst pointing out the victimisation of women through the political regime, offers an empowering message that women are strong and exist as people who can find ways to exert their power even if it must be done covertly.

- ii. How does Satrapi explore the conflict between Eastern and Western culture in her graphic novel, *Persepolis: The Story of a Childhood*?

Students need to be aware that a 'how' question on an exam asks students to focus on the elements of construction in the text. A high-level response will focus on narrative structure, the genre of memoir, speech, and the construction of the panels and the graphics used. A high-level response will unpack how Satrapi explores Western ideals and how it is seen as a force to overthrow her text. Satrapi comes from a very 'Avante Garde' progressive family, as exemplified through the myriad ways she utilises diction and graphics. On page 5, Satrapi represents her mother as a powerful symbol of progressive Western ideals. Her mother, framed from the shoulders up, has her arm raised in a fist as she protests against the veil. Her bobbed hair cut frames her face and accentuates her eyebrows, revealing her anger and dissidence in adopting modern western fashion. Significantly, her mother's white shirt reveals the binaries that exist in society between religious fundamentalism and freedom. Yet, her dark sunglasses, shielding her eyes, portray a sense that there is still a need for protection. The accompanying text, "At one of the demonstrations, a German journalist took a photo of my mother", demonstrates the West's fascination with fundamentalist religious oppression in the Middle East, and there is a sense of irony here. The photo will be used to sell publications in the West, which is ideologically capitalist and, in essence, Marjane's mother, in protesting one ideology, has become a victim of capitalist greed, which is what the Revolution claims to be fighting against. Thus, she exemplifies to the dominant ideological leaders all that is wrong with Western culture and unwittingly re-enforces their demonising of capitalism. Students could also refer to the panel above this, which uses the binary of black and white shading to represent the two sides of the political spectrums, East on the left with the veiled women in black and West on the right symbolised by the women dressed in white. Significantly, the women on the right have their eyes wide open, and here Satrapi seems to be demonstrating that Western ideology comes from a stance of awareness and understanding. In contrast, the hijab-wearing women on the left, with their eyes closed and faces pointed towards God, demonstrate a blind allegiance which Satrapi questions throughout her text.

Yet this binary even exists within Marjane's own progressive family. A significant example of this is Satrapi's maid, Mehri, like a sister to Marjane. Mehri's love for Hossain, a boy from a higher class, is not allowed. Here Satrapi reveals how, despite their progressiveness, there is still an ingrained culture of class that her father refuses to transgress. Three of the panels on page 37 exemplify this. The panel where Marjane and her father discuss the class divide takes place on Marjane's bed. In the panel, the crossed-legged Marjane looks up to her father, who has his back to her; Marjane's striped t-shirt and white pants juxtapose her father's attire again, utilising black and white binaries to symbolise progressive and traditional views. This use of shading brings the reader's eye line to the diminutive figure of Marjane, and Satrapi exemplifies Marjane's innocence through her furrowed brow and downturned lips. The black night through the window and the highlighted white letters further conveys the notion of oppression. Marjane's letters to Hossain Mehri demonstrate the freedom of education denied to Iran. Furthermore, the following two panels 'zoom' into a mid-framed representation of Marjane and her father's discussion; in the speech bubble, her

father states didactically: “in this country you must stay within your own social class”, and this, coupled with the angry expression on Marjane’s face demonstrates that even her father is not beyond obeying antiquated cultural ideals. This is further emphasised in the next panel as Marjane is framed in blackness and her face is despairing. Her confusion about whether her father is “for or against social classes” exemplifies the problematic political issues within the text. Even her family, who sees themselves as progressive, cannot transgress societal ideologies prolific in the East. This section of the text demonstrates how despite the notion that progressiveness and Western ideals are somewhat freeing and empowering, one cannot always fight against deeply ingrained injustices present in society.

Satrapi explores how elements of political freedom are taken for granted in the West. In the text, propaganda is spread through television, a symbol of Western capitalism. By adopting a somewhat modern visual medium herself, Satrapi uses a popular Western form of narrative to convey the complexity and tension between the two dichotomous worlds. On page 62, Marjane tells her father that “99.99% of the population voted for the Islamic Republic” and her father chastises her ignorance. In the next panel, his position of status and power and pointed finger places him as an aggressor. Marjane’s small figure and face looking up to her father as she would to a God represents her innocence and how aspects of Western culture have been adopted to communicate propaganda and ideological beliefs. Similarly, on the next page, when Marjane’s learns that her friend will move to America, one of the boys is excited that he will “finally see Bruce Lee in person”. This is emblematic of not only the children’s fascination with the West but the belief that Bruce Lee, a man from the East who has transcended cultural boundaries and found fame in the West, symbolises the association the children have of the West as a place that is a panacea for all problems and that escaping to the West is the ultimate solution. Significantly, the next panel, which is narrow and frames Marjane with her eyes and head downcast and the accompanying text in the bubble: “Bruce Lee is dead”, exemplifies the inherent problems with the dichotomous ways of thinking in Iran at the time. The West is not necessarily a solution to all of their problems, and Marjane realises that the binary thinking that accompanies so much of her culture is complex and nuanced. Satrapi suggests throughout this section of the text that replacing the oppressive regime’s force through allegiance to God and religion with the idolisation of Western symbols of freedom is just another way of being beholden to another regime that doesn’t necessarily offer the correct solutions.

These are just a few examples of many that students could draw on. However, it is vital that the analysis of the main ideas in the topic is primarily framed through the structure and construction of the text. Furthermore, students could comment on the elements of memoir and how this form of writing through Satrapi’s own experience is subjective and deeply personal. This reveals to her readers in the West how there seems to be no single ultimate solution to Iran’s political issues. Students should explore how the West, particularly the US, uses the Shah (overthrown in the Revolution) to profit from oil and how they are complicit in the oppression of individuals. Furthermore, a high-level response could discuss how Satrapi communicates the notion that political regimes, whether seen as dictatorial or democratic, are guided by ideologies that cause widespread pain and victimisation.

***Pride and Prejudice* by Jane Austen**

- i. 'In her novel *Pride and Prejudice*, Jane Austen quietly agitates for social change.' Discuss.

This topic invites students to access the range of discussion possibilities via the central notion of social change – that is, whether her novel is a vehicle for Austen to present views and values which either work to quietly agitate for social change or that confirm Austen as a social pragmatist who examines and critiques only within the societal constructs of the Regency era.

Candidates might start by defining the restraints in the world of the text – that is, the social conservatism of patriarchy, classism and landed aristocracy perpetuated by the depiction of caricatures entrenched at elite levels, such as Lady Catherine de Bourgh and even Mrs Bennet – women who acquiesce and support the embedded levels of expected conformity enforced by the dictums of Georgian behavioural codes. Austen satirically critiques women such as these for their inability to see sense, and their submission to stifling standards, where a woman is expected to betray self for class security. Most keenly, Austen examines this sufferance and constraint in the character of Charlotte Lucas, who lacks both beauty and social power to resist expectations of marriage for social stability, whose own confessions to Elizabeth infer Austen's understanding that disempowered women must set aside their own 'chance of (personal) happiness' and must 'sacrifice every better feeling to worldly advantage' – a 'sacrifice' society endorses because it poses no social threat or agitation for change, and instead the multitude of women such as Charlotte will quietly suffer their unfulfilled lot.

Having established these societal constraints, students would then move to explore the subtle dimensions that the topic poses – that there are KINDS of SOCIAL CHANGE Austen investigates and critiques, such as playing by Georgian society's rules where there is pseudo social change, such as elevation through marriage – aspired to by Caroline Bingley for herself with Mr Darcy and for her brother with Georgiana. There is the endorsed incremental rise in rank, status, and wealth suitability, to which Mrs Bennet aspires for her daughters, and there is the incestuous social and economic uniting of Rosings Park and Pemberley in the calculated union 'from the cradle' between cousins Darcy and Anne de Bourgh. These kinds of social change are tolerated by society, so long as class equals class and money breeds money. Austen exposes these as empty gestures of social change, controlled and approved by aristocratic ranks and therefore non-threatening to the classist status quo of Georgian society.

Strong candidates will engage with the opportunities to discern deeper kinds of social change, such as Austen's inferred (albeit unlikely) desire for women to have both agency and intellectual worth, so clearly denied to Charlotte, yet realised to an extent in the union of Elizabeth and Darcy. In Darcy's realisation that he must alter himself to be worthy of Elizabeth, Austen also quietly agitates for women to be recognised and valued equally in their principles and strength of character – something entirely negated across the rest of

female characters depicted in the text. In these examples, students could also discuss how Austen agitates for women to choose for themselves, and not be pressured into sacrificing compatibility or integrity for social security. Furthermore, able thinkers could also discuss Austen's endorsement of social change for integrity, through the expose` of hypocrisies in rank and righteousness, satirised through Lady Catherine's insufferable rudeness and Collins' snivelling sycophancy. Most strongly, Austen critiques the hypocrisy of maintaining social facades even when the culprit deserves social censure and ostracism, examined in the fraud marriage between Wickham and Lydia – a union approved by Georgian society for the sake of social appearance, but one which Austen argues should change and not be tolerated.

Finally, the highest responses would engage with the wider landscape of social change as a quiet, individual movement – seen in the resistance of Darcy and Lizzy against the tyranny of social exclusion weaponised by Lady Catherine. Where initially Darcy acquiesced to blind conformity in maintaining rank and class, seen in his machinations to separate Bingley and Jane, he finally arrives at the realisation that in order to secure enduring fulfilment and individual happiness, one must throw over societal dictums and constraints, even in the face of Lady Catherine's disowning. Instead, Austen suggests that where there is genuine attachment and alignment of values and integrity, individuals can draw strength from this united front and move towards tolerated and approved social shifts, albeit it at a micro level.

- ii. 'Until that moment I never knew myself.'
How does *Pride and Prejudice* explore the notion of self-knowledge?

This topic invites students to engage with possibly the most multi-faceted and pivotal quote in Austen's text, at what point do we come to recognise and know ourselves; our failures and flaws as well as qualities and strengths? Whilst some students might come to the topic via a character-by-character paragraph discussion, it would be better for students to consider the broader implications of the topic – how is self-knowledge examined and measured across the range of male and female characters, and by implication the penetration of self-knowledge in Georgian society at large?

Students could examine the degrees of self-knowledge examined in the range of men via their class and subservience to class dictums. Wickham knows the corrupt, licentious dimensions of himself, but seeks to avoid being exposed in society; he is a creature shaped by a working knowledge of society's hypocrisies and vulnerabilities in preserving reputation, and he knows how to exploit the vanities and flattery of others. Charles Bingley knows limited aspects of himself – he knows the deep attachment he has formed for Jane, but he is equally as weak in acquiescing to those of superior standing such as Darcy; he is prepared to sacrifice his own fulfilment in order to maintain approval by those old money influences above him, and only when Darcy permits him to renew his addresses, does Bingley re-assert his own self-knowledge in securing the woman who will make him happy. In contrast, Mr Collins does not nor will ever know himself – his sycophancy blinds him to any reflection or realisation of

his clear flaws in character, which sets him up for ridicule, mockery and censure by others. In more complex ways, Darcy does not initially know himself – he perpetuates snobbery, social judgement and presumptive pride, until he is confronted by Elizabeth’s refusal of his first offer; wherein he is critiqued for his righteousness and presumed power in assuming she would be ever grateful and sycophantic to his superiority. As the male epitome of class and social example, it is Darcy’s journey to address and rectify those identified flaws in his character which makes Darcy equally the most dynamic and complex student of self-knowledge, against a backdrop of male characters, such as Mr Bennet, who plod along in comfortable complacency.

More keenly argued is Austen’s desire for self-knowledge in women where, according to her own acutely observed position, Austen examines the range of female characters as reflections of ambition, conformity and subservience to Georgian constructs; women who might know their own thinking and truths, but who fail to assert this knowledge against the heavy censure and prejudice of Regency expectations. Most poignantly, Austen shapes the character of Charlotte Lucas, who astutely knows herself, yet understands all that she must sacrifice in order to maintain her middle-class status in society. It is this betrayal of self that Austen obliquely critiques both in those women for knowing what they are sacrificing, and Austen’s own oppressive society for endorsing women’s submission and silent discontent. As contrasts of maturity, neither Jane nor Lydia know themselves. Like the immature mother who shaped her, Lydia perpetuates a state of vacuous ignorance by plunging into a union already rotten with mercenary interest, yet neither Lydia nor her mother will ever achieve mature reflection enough to examine the shame and censure their weakness has brought upon their family. Similarly, Jane is prepared to be slighted and demeaned by the Bingley sisters, who gloat how they have separated their brother away to London, hoping for a more ambitious match. Although she is formed as a character of balance and caution against Lizzy’s passion and vivacity, Austen critiques women such as Jane who are too self-effacing and ‘good’, and who will therefore be slighted in their submission to the dictums of society. Despite being the elitist pinnacle of the text, Austen caricatures Lady Catherine as having little penetrating knowledge of herself. Secure in a status, ironically supplied by marriage, not breeding, Lady Catherine’s social dominance blinds her to her own unpalatable rudeness, evidenced most astutely in her spat with Lizzy in the symbolic ‘little wilderness’ of Longbourne’s park. Austen’s exquisitely crafted dialogue reveals the selfish manipulation and hypocrisy of Lady Catherine’s own machinations in engineering the union between Darcy and her daughter while exposing her vicious, insulting manners, where she would cast Elizabeth down as ‘polluting’ the foundations of Pemberley. Austen keenly critiques characters of such influence and standing for their lack of accountability and insight, where her class power and rank insulate and blind her, safely fed by the sycophancy and gratitude of Collins.

As a direct correlation to Darcy, it is the complex journey of Elizabeth who grows to know herself. In equal measure, when confronted with her own flawed apprehension and aspersions of Wickham and Darcy’s characters, revealed via Darcy’s letter, Elizabeth acknowledges both the humiliation and the painful error of her vain ‘discernment’ where Austen has Elizabeth eloquently elucidate her very fall and self-realisation. As the parallel

protagonist, Lizzy too works to confront and correct her own ignorance and flaws, through the humiliation of countering her father's prejudice against Darcy, initially seeded by her own ridicule, and the deep humility of recognising that his offer of marriage was now deeply wished for, where no other man could speak to her principles, loyalty and devotion. Linked to this is Austen's broader examination of self-knowledge in Georgian society, which Austen raises as also hypocritical. To recognise one's faults, to expose righteousness and hypocrisy; to recognise pride or prejudice and shed such layers away to correct and make oneself anew in order to win regard and sincere merit and esteem; these are the notions of self-knowledge Austen endorses. Yet she also infers that her Georgian society does not desire insight and self-knowledge, which might shake the very patriarchal foundations upon which the societal structure is based.

Rear Window by Alfred Hitchcock (Director)

- i. 'A man is assaulting a woman at 125 West 9th Street.'
'In *Rear Window*, Hitchcock presents a critical view of male behaviour.'
Discuss.

When approaching this topic students should not limit their discussion to one or two characters but take the opportunity to discuss the spectrum of male characters featured in the film. Hitchcock's film presents an array of male characters and a variety of behaviours, many of which might be considered negative. The quote involves the two most significant male characters in the film, Jeff, the protagonist, who reports the assault to police over the telephone and Thorwald, the antagonist, who commits the attack in question. The two characters are very different, but it might be argued that Hitchcock is critical of both men.

Thorwald is the clear villain of the film and represents the worst kind of male behaviour. The murder of his wife and dissection of her corpse is the most shocking of his violent acts, but students should also consider Thorwald's killing of the 'little dog', his attack on Lisa and his final confrontation with Jeff. Notably, Thorwald holds a significant physical advantage in each case. Students could also discuss Thorwald's apparent infidelity and his elaborate scheming designed to cover his crime. Thorwald's importance in the film extends beyond his role as the traditional villain. Hitchcock presents a number of minor and even fleeting characters who have the potential, at some point, to commit criminal acts on a scale with Thorwald's. These include the young man who attempts to force himself on Miss Lonelyhearts, the wolf trying to force his way into Miss Torso's apartment in the middle of the night, and even the newlywed husband, who Hitchcock intimates could become a frustrated and disillusioned Thorwald-like figure in future years.

Hitchcock presents both Jeff and his former 'army pal' Doyle as generally likeable but flawed middle-aged men. The director raises several questions about the protagonist. Firstly he is depicted as someone with very little self-awareness, openly critical of his neighbours but ignorant of his own flaws; secondly, the film questions the ethics of Jeff's obsessive voyeurism; and thirdly, Hitchcock raises deliberate questions about Jeff's judgement in

relation to matters of romance. Doyle, the so called real or professional 'detective' is ridiculed for his dismissal of 'feminine intuition' and misreading Thorwald's guilt. Furthermore, the jocular relationship between the two men is also questioned, with their petty need to humiliate each other taking precedence over the need to determine whether Mrs Thorwald is safe or has been killed by her husband. Finally, Hitchcock draws on these two men to critique the male gaze, with both at various times being transfixed by a scantily clad Miss Torso. The segmenting of Miss Torso's body by her window frame is suggestive of Thorwald's dissection of his wife's corpse and invites a link between the common action of men eroticising of the female form and the more extreme action of men, like Thorwald, committing terrible violence against women.

More sophisticated responses might explore the idea that not all of the male behaviour in the film is presented in a critical fashion. There are glimpses of caring and nurturing behaviours from unnamed characters like the Siffleuse's husband and the father in the nuclear family, seen at times gently brushing his daughter's hair on the balcony. The more powerful example is the Songwriter. He is presented as an exemplar of male behaviour, a man of great emotional awareness who is able to create 'enchanted' music. Furthermore, in the party scene he is, at one point, the centre of attention, surrounded by young, beautiful women, but contrary to the norm presented in the film, the Songwriter does not focus his romantic interest on one of these eligible beauties, but rather, on the older and perhaps more compatible Miss Lonelyhearts. In doing so, the Songwriter shows a level of maturity and affection that is missing in many of the other male characters. Finally, students could also compare the film's mostly critical depiction of male behaviour with the far more favourable portrayal of female behaviour.

ii. How does Hitchcock use the set to create intrigue and suspense?

When considering this topic, students need to think about the various parts of the set. They can begin by focusing on Jeff's apartment, then the courtyard and garden areas, followed by the neighbours' apartments, and finally the peripheral areas like the roof, the lane, the street and the bar across the street. When discussing these areas students must centre their analysis on the key terms of 'intrigue' and 'suspense'.

The most significant thing about Jeff's apartment is the orientation, the large 'rear window' that provides both Jeff and the audience with sight lines into his neighbours' apartments. Students could identify the central position of Jeff's window which offers him a panoptic view of the apartment complex. The mix of balconies, windows and solid brick walls create intrigue in that Jeff (and the audience) can only witness fragments of the action. This also creates suspense, particularly concerning the disappearance of Mrs Thorwald and the murder of the dog. The distance between Jeff and his neighbours is also important, in that only some of the sound from the apartments carries through to Jeff and most of the dialogue is unclear. This creates further intrigue and is demonstrated by Jeff at times offering different interpretations of his neighbours' actions to his various companions – Lisa, Stella and Tom.

The sounds that can be heard from Jeff's apartment are also important. The songwriter's composition is both entrancing and intriguing and the various screams and the sound of breaking glass add to the suspense of the film. Further, the proximity of Jeff's apartment to those of his neighbours, particularly Thorwald's, adds great suspense in the third act of the film. Jeff understands that his neighbours can watch him in return, like 'a bug under glass', but what also becomes clear near the end of the film is that his neighbours can also access his apartment. This is integral to the climax of the film Thorwald's attempt to murder the protagonist.

The courtyard and garden areas allow Hitchcock to demonstrate how some of the neighbours interact with each other. This area is more open than the apartments and represents a space where characters might expect to be watched. Some of the intrigue here is Thorwald's interaction Miss Hearing Aids and Miss Lonelyhearts' reaction to the death of the dog. Also central to the investigation is evidence of the digging at the base of Thorwald's flowers, including Lisa and Stella's attempts to find Thorwald's buried evidence.

The many props that Hitchcock places in the various apartments are also part of the set and contribute to the intrigue and suspense of the film. In Jeff's apartment, these include the cameras, flash bulb, telephoto lens, photographs, negatives, magazine covers and collectibles. The telephone, knife, handsaw and trunk spark interest in the Thorwald's apartment. Other props of interest include the clock and the radio in the Songwriter's apartment, Miss Torso's refrigerator, Miss Lonelyhearts' dressing table and dinner table set for two, Miss Hearing Aid's sculpture and the Newlyweds' blind.

Runaway by Alice Munro

- i. 'The stories in this collection focus just as much on the people left behind as they do on the 'runaway'.'
Do you agree?

Many of the stories in the collection explore the concept of running away. Some stories create sympathy for the runaway, others focus on the hardships faced by the people left behind, and some do both. The key here is for students to approach this topic in a flexible way and look for patterns and connections across the collection.

The three connected stories, 'Chance', 'Soon' and 'Silence' feature several examples of runaway characters. 'Chance' begins with Juliet temporarily leaving behind her family and her life in eastern Canada for a teaching position in Vancouver, then moving further away for a more substantial time, reconnecting with Eric after a chance meeting on a train. The focus in 'Chance' is very much on Juliet and her quest to break away from the negative assessments of her from people, including her parents, who wondered 'what would become of her'. In 'Soon' Munro explores the world Juliet leaves behind, the small, familiar town and the difficulties experienced by her parents; particularly her sickly mother, Sara, who feels Juliet's absence most acutely. Juliet introduces her parents to her baby daughter, Penelope, however,

the protagonist becomes disappointed with how her parents have changed during her absence. She is surprised by her mother's newfound faith and her father's retirement from teaching and transition to a less intellectual life. The visit reinforces Juliet's view that her hometown is 'a disgusting place ... to live in'. However, the focus in this story is equally on the parents Juliet leaves behind: her father who has struggled to cope with the emotional demands of caring for his sick wife; and her mother, whose faith gives her 'something' for 'when it gets really bad' and she is desperate to 'see Juliet'. 'Silence' is filled with heavy irony when Juliet's now adult daughter, Penelope, visits a spiritual retreat and then breaks all contact with her mother. This is particularly difficult for Juliet who finds even 'one day without some contact with her daughter ... hard to bear'. Little is revealed about Penelope's subsequent life, other than the fact that she is living up north and has a handful of children. The focus here is very much on Juliet and her struggle to rebuild her life after the sudden death of Eric and abrupt loss of Penelope.

Students can also write about the title story, 'Runaway', and analyse Carla's decision to reject college and take up with Clark, a man her parents 'hated'. Having initially run away to be with Clark, students also need to consider her unsuccessful attempt to run away from him – and his decision to chase her. Other stories students can draw on for this response include 'Passion' and 'Tricks'. In 'Passion' nineteen-year-old Grace runs away from her too safe boyfriend, Maury, for an unpredictable afternoon and evening with his thrilling but married older brother, Dr Neil Travers. The impromptu undertaking is soon followed a fatal car accident (probable suicide) for Neil and separation for Grace and Maury. In this case what is left behind is a devastated family, a disappointed boyfriend, and a protagonist still searching, many years later, for a way to re-ignite the passion of that wild day. In 'Tricks', Robin runs away in shame from the hostile deaf-mute twin of her love interest, Danilo, after a tragic case of mistaken identity. This incident prompts another case of lifelong separation. In this case the relationship is 'spoiled' by circumstance or a 'trick', rather than the wilful actions of one of the individuals involved.

- ii. “If she got married ... she would waste all her hard work ... and if she didn't get married she would probably become bleak and isolated ...”
 ‘Munro's stories explore the complexities that women are forced to navigate in the latter half of the twentieth century.’
 Discuss.

Runaway includes a diverse cast of female characters in stories spanning most of the second half of the twentieth century. Some of these women choose marriage, some desire love, some reject marriage but not love, some choose motherhood, some choose a professional life, and some choose a combination. Munro's stories do not suggest that any one path is superior, but rather, explores the complexities and challenges experienced by women, regardless of their choices.

Students can draw on the three stories – ‘Chance’, ‘Soon’ and ‘Silence’ – that explore Juliet’s life from early 20s to old age. The quote refers to Juliet in the late 1960s. She is ‘twenty-one years old’ and ‘working on her Ph.D. thesis’. It suggests that marriage would deny her an opportunity to put her impressive education into practice but also that if she does choose a professional life she would face discrimination and lose ‘out on promotions to men’. Eventually Juliet does experience romantic love and motherhood and also achieves a successful and high-profile career, but the different phases present difficult challenges for Juliet to negotiate. Juliet does quit her Ph.D. and chooses to live with (but not marry) Eric and have a child. Her first challenge is to reconcile the lack of nuptials with her embarrassed parents back east, whose ‘broad-mindedness’ is not as ‘reliable as she had thought’. A decade later she is challenged by the belated information of Eric having had a brief affair with her friend, Christa. The matter remains unresolved when fisherman Eric dies prematurely in a storm, leaving Juliet still angry, grieving and having to take care of her daughter, Penelope, on her own. Motherhood presents unforeseen difficulties in ‘Silence’ when Penelope absconds after a spiritual retreat and breaks all contact with her shattered mother. Here Juliet is forced to confront a very different kind of grief. However, Munro shows that loss also brings opportunity for women. After Eric’s death, Juliet is able to move to Vancouver and finally establish a career as a highly respected television interviewer. In later life, free of responsibility, Juliet is perhaps most content. She returns to her real passion, Classical Studies, lives in a modest flat with a ‘little ... patio’ garden, ‘works some hours’ at a ‘coffee place’ and ‘continues’ her platonic friendship with Larry. The absence of lover, child and career seem to have made her life easier to navigate.

Students can examine the theme of marriage for women, which is explored in several stories with a mix of outcomes. While Juliet views the institution as irrelevant and possibly out-dated, the security of marriage works in the favour of her sickly mother, Sara, who relies on the vital support of her husband, Sam, for much of her life. The same applies to Mrs. Travers in ‘Passion’ who suffers ‘now and then, with her nerves’, which ‘could be’ a response to her first husband’s suicide. However, Mrs. Travers can take comfort from the stability of her second husband, Mr. Travers, who is ‘a man who could take charge, who could tidy things up’. Another older woman, Sylvia Jamieson in ‘Runaway’ seems to have had a happy marriage with her much older, but ‘rugged and active’ poet husband, Leon. ‘Runaway’ also includes the most dysfunctional union in the collection. This involves Carla who tries and fails to escape her toxic husband, Clark. Another young woman, Grace, in ‘Passion’, chooses to reject the pleasant but unremarkable Maury Travers for a different life – possibly further education and a career. The return, decades later, to the Travers lake house and the memory of Maury’s exciting but unstable older brother, Neil, hints at a continuing void in Grace’s life.

There are several other themes that students can examine for this topic. These include: an extension of the discussion of motherhood; an analysis of the burden of caring for ill or disabled loved ones; and the barriers for women wanting to pursue education.

Station Eleven by Emily St John Mandel

- i. How does Mandel explore the best as well as the worst of the pre and post pandemic world?

Emily St John Mandel's novel explores the fragile beauty of the world we inhabit and it is hoped that students see the text as an opportunity to discuss how the author uses a world without internet, countries or social media to highlight what it is we value and what would remain despite the ravages of the flu. St John Mandel follows various protagonists as they navigate their way through what becomes known as the old and the new world doing so through the novel's non-linear structure.

The phrasing of this question not does invite students to challenge the premise of Mandel's exploration of life before and after the pandemic, but rather, they must focus on the command words, "How does" which require students to not only identify positive and negative elements of the text, identifying and analysing the explicit and implied ideas and values but also the techniques used by the author to create meaning and build the world of the text, analysing textual evidence, structure, literary conventions and language.

Students could use the characters of Kirsten as protagonist and The Prophet as antagonist to carry analysis of the best and worst of the worlds of the text in terms of relationships and community. Kirsten's early experiences of post pandemic life have been erased from her memory yet she holds close those elements such as her brother and the theatre to sustain her. Further, upon the loss of her brother, Kirsten gravitates to the community and support offered by the Travelling Symphony and despite having to commit acts of violence to survive, wears her tattoos in order to remind herself of the value of life. In comparison, students could identify the creation of The Light, the cult, founded by Tyler Leander. Members of this group believe that they are more "sound because we are the light. We are the pure", and conform to the expectations of the Prophet, knowing that to join this cult will mean risking one's life and their families lives, assuring that there is "nothing that you will not do", for the Prophet.

Students might identify the use of intertextuality as a tool used by the author to convey ideas about elements of success in both worlds and offering the premise that in order to do more than survive, people must form relationships and become acquainted. Mandel makes a point of highlighting the importance of relationships and interconnectivity using a raft of characters. In paralleling the characters of Kirsten and Sayid with Titania and Oberon in "A Midsummer Night's Dream", which the Travelling Symphony perform while in St Deborah by the Water. Kirsten and Sayid's dysfunctional relationship mimics that of fairy King and Queen in Shakespeare's play, making a statement that these types of relationships occurring in the new world have always been in evidence and emphasising the fact for Kirsten and Sayid, their relationship is necessary.

Many students will make use of Mandel's characterisation of Jeevan Chaudhery and Arthur Leander to support discussion of what is best and worst. Whilst both recognise that their lives lack meaning Jeevan is more altruistic as he re-evaluates his purpose in life and prior to the

pandemic, seeks to have a more meaningful life leaving behind his job as a “paparazzo”. Jeevan is first presented by the writer as a man of action who defies the rituals of the theatre and rushes to the stage to help Arthur Leander. Students should make use of the text’s non-linear structure in order to convey how Jeevan grows despite the challenges of the post pandemic world, and becomes a man who “liked being the person who people turned to for help, as it brought him joy”. Conversely, Leander’s life can be “summed up in a series of failed marriages”, which represents his inability to look beyond a life of materialism. Mandel’s use of dramatic irony as when the stage director calls “ten minutes”, marking what essentially becomes the countdown to his death and the snow in which drifts upon the stage symbolises the superficiality of his life.

- ii. “What choice do I have? this time we live in, you know how it forces a person to do things.”
At the core of *Station Eleven* is the struggle to remain civilised in an uncivilised world.
Discuss.

As a form of speculative fiction Station Eleven comments on the views and values of our time as Mandel explores how our world would change in the face of a major collapse. Mandel puts characters in a position where they need to fight for survival but also makes the statement that in order to prosper in life, one must find something more important.

In answering this question students must address key language including ‘struggle’ as well as ‘civilised’ and ‘uncivilised’ by providing their interpretation of each. Students might explore the idea of a struggle as being the challenges faced in a world without electricity, modern medicine and the internet, yet a more complex discussion could explore the idea of an internal struggle with elements such as memory, self-reflection and a capacity to embrace change being useful factors. Likewise student interpretation of what it means to be civilised will be broad. Many students will identify the quest to find new ways to exist such as an alternative form of power and the endless trawling for useful goods to support life. A more complex interpretation of civilised could be an exploration of the importance of relationships, resilience, the role of culture and the preservation of memory as seen in the creation of a ‘newspaper’ and the Museum of Civilisation.

It can be argued that to answer this question well, students should offer discussion on the world prior to the pandemic with the non-linear structure of the text providing ample opportunities to explore characters and their behaviour. Many students would provide discussion of Arthur’s quest for fame and fortune, questioning his treatment of Miranda, particularly his dismissal of her passion project and his obvious desire for Elizabeth at their anniversary dinner party. Further, Clark’s reflection on his relationship with Arthur which he sees as superficial, “all a show” and the fact that as Arthur died alone with no friends or family by his side, having lived the majority of his life without any meaningful relationships and human connection demonstrates that money and prestige were ultimately of little value.

Students could argue that whilst survival is crucial in existing in the post – Georgia Flu world, there comes a point where individuals must come to the realisation that survival is not everything. Her characters thus demonstrate that they must too learn to live, and that what makes life bearable are “the friendships, of course.... The camaraderie.... The Shakespeare.... The beauty....” Many students will identify the Travelling Symphony, a Shakespearean Theatre group of actors and musicians who enrich the dull lives of survivors and their mission statement of “survival is insufficient” which reflects the core message of the novel. Furthermore, Mandel emphasises that even during the time of a crisis, music and theatre can prevail above all. In the town of St Deborah by the Water, which is controlled by the tyrannical leader and antagonist, the Prophet, the residents are given a moment of euphoria by watching the performance of A Midsummer Night’s Dream. Similarly, the Museum of Civilization, run by Clarke at the Severn City Airport gives meaning and purpose to the citizens of the airport through art and science allowing citizens to view and donate mementos of the old world, thus finding meaning in their own items like phones, high heels and snow globes as they think beyond the materialistic and “consider the snow globe. Consider the minds that invented these miniature storms.” Students could make further use of the new world which forms at the airport and which demonstrates those elements which clearly aid the survival of its inhabitants. Those at the airport evolve from merely waiting to be rescued to a busy, vibrant community in which individuals take on key roles such as providing food, keeping the runway clear and teaching. Finally, it is at the airport that Clarke points out to Kirsten, “the lights in the distance,” a sign of civilisation rebuilding itself.

Some students might a further argument of the post pandemic world providing opportunities to find solace and self-worth, to be ‘civilised,’ using characters such as Jeevan, who learns he is able to “do something that matters” and becomes a local “doctor” for his newly formed community. He also starts a family, and in naming his son Frank, after his late brother, expresses that it is important to hold onto “these memories, barely submerged” of the old world without letting them dictate your life. Likewise Clark could be said to flourish, changing from the man who felt as though he was.... “Sleep-walking”, not truly living. Following the pandemic, however, Clark is able to find purpose, opening the Museum of Civilization, and allowing himself to immerse himself in his new life; “Clark had always been fond of beautiful objects, and in his present state of mind, all object were beautiful”.

Stories We Tell by Sarah Polley (Director)

- i. ‘In *Stories We Tell*, Sarah Polley attempts to document the search for her biological father, but what she is really doing is searching for her mother.’ Discuss.

Students need to recognise that there are multiple parts to this topic. The first idea deals with the primary narrative of the film, the search for her biological father and the consequent fall-out from the discovery that that person is Harry Gulkin and not Michael Polley. Firstly,

she discusses how the family used to “joke” about Michael not being her father, then documents her unsuccessful meeting with Geoff Bowes and her surprisingly successful meeting with Harry Gulkin. Polley notes the “honeymoon” period and explores more difficult moments in her relationship with Harry, particularly relating to the protocols of telling or not telling this story. Moreover, Stories We Tell, follows many of the conventions of documentary film making. There is a central narrative; interviews with a great number of interested parties; any many points of view, some slightly variant and others significantly conflicting. There are many examples of primary sources - photographs, film, letters etc. – and even recreations of key moments. Sophisticated responses will note Polley’s use of authentic looking Super-8 film to present these moments and actors who look a lot like the real-life characters, thus, deliberately blurring the lines between what is real and what is not real. The purposeful confusion here mimics Polley’s own confusion at various points of the narrative.

However, the film is more than this, it is also the search for a mother lost to cancer when the protagonist is 11-years-of-age. Polley tries to piece together a positive portrait of a glamorous and complex woman whose life involves divorce, extra-marital affairs and a child fathered by her lover rather than her husband. Diane’s behaviour clearly falls outside the conventions of mainstream society in the 1960s and 70s and is potentially damaging. Yet all of the characters in the film talk about Diane with great passion and love. Michael “blames himself”. Harry says he “was completely crazy” for her, “utterly besotted”. Johnny and Susan, from Diane’s first marriage, do not blame their mother for what happened. Johnny sympathises with Diane wanting to escape his “controlling” father while Susy regrets that nobody ever asked the children what they wanted because they “would have said, ‘We want to live with our mom’”. Joanna, from Diane’s second marriage is the most supportive of Diane’s affair, saying that she felt “really happy that” her mother “had found love”. Only Mark, Michael’s other child, expresses a negative thought regarding Diane when he says she was “reckless” to fall pregnant.

High level responses will recognise that all of this material is collected, constructed and edited by Polley and might question whether the exercise is not so much a search for a mother, but rather a construction of an idealised version of Diane. This is supported by Polley’s inclusion of interviews with some of Diane’s most loyal friends; people who knew about the affair at the time but “promised” not to “talk about it”. The scenes of Polley coaching Michael when he reads his version of events reinforces the idea that Polley is creating a particular version of the family history. Her inclusion of these scenes also reveal that she is very much aware of, and happy to broadcast this idea. Finally, some students might pursue the idea that Stories We Tell also represents Polley’s search for her own identity. The discovery of her paternity requires her to re-assess and rebuild her relationship with Michael; re-consider her memory of her mother; and understand and try to build something new with Harry.

- ii. “I was transfixed by this glorious lady who was on stage.”
‘Despite all of the drama and uncertainty, love is the most powerful emotion expressed in *Stories We Tell*.’
Do you agree?

*The quote in the topic is from Harry Gulkin, Diane’s lover and Polley’s biological father. The quote captures the essence of the topic because it focuses on Harry’s passion for Diane, a passion that develops into love, however, it also signals the drama and uncertainty explored in the film. Some of the drama and uncertainty precedes Diane’s affair with Harry, and some of it stems from said affair. Students could begin with an exploration of Diane’s life. There is the troubled marriage to her ‘controlling’ first husband, George, and the heart-wrenching loss of custody of her first two children, Johnny and Susan. Then the second marriage to Michael which produces two more children, Joanna and Mark. Students could explore the stress in the marriage, Diane’s restlessness and need to express herself as a performer. The drama and uncertainty continues and perhaps intensifies when Diane goes to Montreal to perform in a play and at the same time attempt ‘to get out of her life’. The archival footage of Diane singing ‘I’m misbehaving’ captures the tone of this period of Diane’s life. The affair with Harry and the pregnancy at 42 creates more drama for Diane and the family. These events prompt a number of questions. Will Diane leave Michael for Harry? Who is the biological father? Will she keep the child? The next period of great drama involves Diane’s illness and consequent death a decade or so later. Finally students can address Polley’s search for her biological father and her making of *Stories We Tell*. These actions cause the drama and confusion of the past to resurface which in turn provokes entirely new tensions: Polley’s relationship with Michael; Polley’s relationship with Harry; and the siblings’ re-assessment of their mother.*

Students must explore the notion of love in the film and remember to explicitly address the notion of whether this is more powerful than the drama and uncertainty. There is a lot of material students could draw on for this. A lot of the love in the film is expressed for Diane. Michael voices his understanding of Diane’s affair and his continuing affection for her. Harry talks about how ‘besotted’ he was with Diane. This feeling does not appear to have weakened at all despite the disappointment of Diane choosing to return to Michael and Toronto. Polley’s four siblings speak about their overwhelming love for their mother and express sympathy and understanding for her various predicaments. Moreover, they speak with fondness about each other and about Michael. The only negativity here is when Johnny and Susan talk about their father and an ‘abusive’ stepmother, and Mark says that Diane was ‘reckless’ to fall pregnant to Harry. The cast of friends assembled by Polley also declare their continuing loyalty and love for Diane.

Another central focus for love is Polley. Firstly, the fact that she is able to get all of the family members and key players in the drama to talk to her on camera speaks of their high regard for her. Beyond that, it is clear that Michael, Harry, Cathy (Harry’s daughter), Marie (Harry’s sister) and all the siblings have great affection for Polley, despite how challenged they might feel about the making of the film or the story it tells. Finally, students can discuss

Polley's love for her family. The most potent example is Polley's enduring love for her mother, represented by the film's overwhelmingly positive portrayal of her. Polley's love for Michael and Harry represent more difficult examples of love; the challenges and complexities of these relationships are painstakingly documented in the film. The third set of loving relationships involves the film maker and her siblings. The good-natured interviews and effortless rapport illustrate this.

The Golden Age by Joan London

- i. What role does symbolism play in depicting the growth and recovery of Frank Gold?

Students should note that this essay prompt requires them to explicitly examine symbolism as a literary device in the context of Frank's character arc. London uses a range of highly significant motifs and symbols to convey meaning and students might like to consider:

Names: Upon first meeting Frank, Sullivan remarks that his first and last names are "apposite," or fitting. He's likely referring to the fact that "frank," as an adjective, denotes truth and directness, while the substance gold is often used as a pure standard by which to measure other metals or to value currency. Frank's surname possibly foreshadows his growth.

Places: Students might consider the role of place as reflectant of Frank's emerging sense of acceptance and belonging. The Isolation Ward is initially austere and unwelcoming but his friendship with Sullivan who is trapped in an iron lung, inspires Frank to consider his vocation. The Golden Age is symbolic on a range of levels and students should engage with the complex and nuanced nature of symbolism in the text. The convalescent home was an "island", and this was a refuge for Frank. Connections can be drawn also to the name of the convalescent home - The Golden Age - on the surface the name is a fluke, inherited from the pub once housed in the same building. The phrase "golden age" is also used to describe various stages in human life, including the period of late childhood just before adolescence—exactly the age of Frank.

Animals: London's use of metaphors to describe the children as "little maimed animals" evokes both sympathy and pity and highlights perceptions of them as they enter the rehabilitation phase. Later, when describing the outing to the beach, London refers to the children (and Frank) as "birds gathered at a watering hole at sunset... revitalised". Students should extend this to consider the connection between birds and freedom.

Poetry: References to poetry and poems reflect Frank's sense of purpose and his clever and reflective mind. He is empathic and poetry provides him with both a voice for his ideas and a future.

As Frank navigates the challenges of adolescence and his relationship with Elsa, his sense of hope and indeed moments of despair are represented through London's allusions to darkness and light and to inside (confinement) and outside (freedom). Similar illusions are used to convey the challenges he and Ida face whilst in hiding during the Holocaust. In summary, students should explore the range and complexity of symbols and their role in supporting readers' perceptions and understandings of Frank over the course of the novel.

- ii. 'Being alone does not always lead to loneliness.' How is this concept in the *Golden Age*?

By virtue of their diagnosis and infectivity, polio sufferers are almost immediately forced into isolation to stem the spread of the disease. Quarantined in Isolation Wards, the initial stage of the disease often totally incapacitates the victims who are likely to be initially unaware of their separation from family. Students might consider the ways in which the families of polio sufferers find themselves socially isolated, shunned from the broader community who stigmatise sufferers and their family; "this was the effect polio had on people. It silenced them".

*As sufferers enter a period of rehabilitation, they "had to learn to be alone" and this is reflected in London's depiction of *The Golden Age* "it stood alone... like an Island [that]... seemed to symbolise its apartness, like a natural quarantine". Some characters - particularly the younger ones (Albert and Ann-Lee) - are unable to endure the separation from family which they experienced as acute loneliness and ultimately they (or their families) seek their return home even though this stymies their progress. For others - typically those who were older - the physical separation from family led to an early maturity and a sense of fearlessness "Without your mother you had to think. It was like letting go of a hand, jumping off the high board ... Once you'd done it, you were never afraid of it again". This is reflected in Sullivan's suggestion that the last line of Frank's poem should be "In the end we are all orphans". Far from referencing loneliness, this highlights the need for independence and Frank's friendship with Sullivan, and his resultant introduction to poetry, provide him with a sense of purpose and hope. Indeed, it is at *The Golden Age* which functioned as a "shelter and homely comfort, a watering hole" that Frank comes to appreciate both the solitude it afforded him and the sense of belonging it provided: "The children...they felt different – exclusive, like a family"; "they shared the lonely task of rehabilitation".*

*London also explores the impact of losing this sense of togetherness and belonging. Students might examine this through the lens of Frank and Elsa whose swift departure from *The Golden Age* (as a result of their fraternisation) and return to 'normal life' leave Frank with a sense "he would always be alone". This is however, tempered with references to 'opening eyes' and "the luminous sky" and arguably evokes a sense of closure and hope. For Frank, it is not loneliness but rather a sense of acceptance and solitude.*

The essay prompt also invites students to consider the experiences of migrants. As survivors of the Holocaust, Frank and Ida had to endure separation and “the loneliness of being apart from Meyer never left her”.

Whilst Ida is not alone in Australia - she has Meyer and Frank - she is characterised as aloof (“remote”, “distanced”) and this is a form of self-protection. Her recital at The Golden Age proves pivotal in her acceptance that “this is the land in which her life would take place. In which her music would grow”. For Ida, acceptance begets a sense of belonging. So too, we see other characters who are alone but are not lonely. This is epitomised by Sister Olive Penny who thought of herself “as a sort of nomad” but found connection with others in her work and in her fleeting encounters with men.

The Lieutenant by Kate Grenville

- i. “No is not an answer... it is an order”.
In what way do ‘orders’ shape the experiences and decisions of Rooke in Grenville’s *The Lieutenant*?

This prompt invites students to engage with the ways in which power both permits and limits behaviour.

Students could lead with an examination of the “Imperial Machine” and the rigid hierarchical system based on fear, which Rooke wryly suggests is “justice: impartial, blind, noble”. The enculturation of soldiers and a requirement for unquestioning loyalty results in many soldiers viewing their actions as justified - as permissible. Grenville questions this through the character of Silk who transforms the truth “into well-shaped smooth phrases” to make them more palatable to himself and to others. This suggests that following orders is psychologically problematic even for those who appear to readily comply. Interestingly, Rooke often refers to the ‘choices’ that people make and as such appears cognisant of the role of the individual in responding to orders. He is also aware of the consequences of these choices, and it is this fear that drives his compliance and silence through much of the novel.

The ways in which ‘orders’ limit behaviour could be explored principally through the relationship between Rooke and Gardiner as it is Rooke who, recalling the disobedient Lieutenant twirling at the end of a rope in an English Harbour, warns Gardiner against sedition and suggests he remain silent on the matter of “the dirty work” of the British. Synonymous with ‘orders’ is the language of violence and Grenville’s repetitious use of loaded language (“force”; “brutality”, “cruelty”) in conjunction with motifs (guns and machines) are central to Rooke’s epiphany - that to follow orders - “to bend the king’s will” - “required the suspension of human response” and “If you were part of the machine, you were part of its evil”.

Ultimately, is it the order to participate in the hunting party (and to engage in retaliatory murder) that crystallises Rooke’s decision to defy orders and in doing so, risk court marshal and execution. This order is the climax of the novel and reflects both the British hubris and

their ability to justify their actions. Rooke's response to this order is galvanised by his experience of the Cadigal people and his desire to protect Tagaran. He is no longer willing to be a "replica of a man"; instead, Rooke chooses to follow his internal moral compass, to "not turn his back on the man he had become" and to actively pursue the life of an abolitionist. In this sense, it is 'orders' that ultimately, and ironically, liberate Rooke.

- ii. "It is in the interplay of characters that Grenville conveys the human experience of colonisation."

Discuss.

Students should note reference to characters and view this through the lens of characterisation rather than merely focusing on the actions of characters. So too, students might consider the other related literary devices that Grenville uses to convey the human experience of colonisation as highlighted below.

Central to this essay prompt is the concept of relationships. Rather than merely recounting these, students are advised to consider the purpose and impact of these relationships and how they shape the experiences of a range of individuals and groups at the time. Rooke's relationship with Tagaran is critical to his emerging understanding of the Indigenous experience and to Grenville's commentary on the central role of communication (written, spoken and gestural) in forging meaningful relationships.

Both Rooke and Tagaran are dynamic characters who evolve over the course of the novel. Importantly, Tagaran challenges the view of who is human and what it means to be human through an act of "Kamera" (friendship). For a man who "felt out of step with the world" yet hoped "there was a place in the world for the man he was"; Tagaran transforms Rooke into a man who "knew how to sit as well as act, how to listen as well as speak, and how to feel as well as speak". Students could consider the ways in which Grenville characterises Tagaran as child-like, inquisitive and free of self-consciousness and contrast this with the characterisation of the British as automatons ("machines") who see communication through the lens of hierarchical orders. Additionally, students may wish to explore Rooke's relationship with Gardiner as it provides a problematic view of Rooke as a man who is willing to allow the dehumanisation of others for fear of retribution. Ultimately, this experience challenges Rooke to acknowledge the human experience of the Cadigal and acts as a formative event in his emergence as an abolitionist.

Students should consider Grenville's use of static characters to juxtapose the dynamic characters. She initially characterises Silk as amiable and affable, but the reader soon learns of his propensity to be slippery with the truth (as reflected in his name). Whilst on the surface he appears to be valuable (silk is after all, a valued textile), he is glib and self-motivated, and this provides a strong contrast with the morally driven Rooke. In doing this, students are demonstrating that the "interplay" between characters is also centrally related to characterisation.

The ways in which Grenville uses other literary techniques, most notably setting (compare imagery of various settings and what they reflect about characters and their experiences) is also worth exploration. References to irony, juxtaposition, and symbolism (names) are also mentioned above.

The Women of Troy by Euripides

- i. *'The Women of Troy depicts a world where individuals have little power over their fate.'*
Discuss.

There is a lot of material in the play that students can draw on for this response. They can begin by exploring the relationship between the gods and the humans. The discussion between Poseidon and Athene at the beginning of the play indicates the great power that the gods possess. Athene favours the Greeks during the Trojan War, but turns against them when Ajax is not punished for desecrating her temple. She plans to make a 'pact' with Poseidon and turn 'their voyage home' into a 'complete disaster'. Students can also examine Helen's defence later in the play, where she claims that her 'exceptional beauty' was sold to Paris by the goddess Aphrodite who is 'not exactly a weakling'. She wonders what she was 'thinking' when she 'tamely followed this foreigner, whom [she] hardly knew' but conveniently absolves herself of responsibility saying, 'ask the goddess, not me'. High level response should recognise that the humans have some agency in these matters. Athene responds to a legitimate gripe; there are many comments in the play supporting the idea that the Greeks employ 'unheard of savagery' at the end of the war and deserve some reckoning. In the case of Helen, she is trying to avoid 'execution' and therefore has a vested interest in portraying herself as powerless. Her ability to persuade, seduce and survive suggests that she is not as defenceless as she claims.

Next, Students can turn their attention to the Trojan War and discuss the power or otherwise of individuals to act in the face of such a significant event. The situation is clearly different for men and women. Men such as the surviving Menelaus, Ajax and Odysseus have the opportunity to take their chances on the battlefield, to match their strength or their wits against their opponents and prosper. Even the men who perish like Achilles and Hecuba's cherished sons, Hector and Paris, have the opportunity to act and become heroes. The main focus of the play, however, is on 'the women of troy'; former queens and princesses who become prisoners of war and are then forced to become slaves, wives and concubines of the hated Greeks. 'Mother' Hecuba, the most esteemed Trojan woman, is assigned to Odysseus and destined to become 'his wife's slave'. Moreover, she endures the killings of her daughter, Polyxena, and grandson, Astyanax; the former a sacrifice at the tomb of Achilles, the latter, Hector's child, considered a future threat by the 'black-hearted' Greeks. Finally, Hecuba must witness another daughter, Cassandra, and daughter-in-law, Andromache be transported to loathed enemies, Agamemnon and Neoptolemus. The 'consecrated virgin', Cassandra, specially chosen by Agamemnon to be his 'mistress' and Andromache forced to become the wife or 'whore' of the son of Achilles, and live 'in the very house of the man who murdered

[her] husband'. The helplessness of these women is echoed by the Chorus (of Trojan Women) who face the same fate, marched 'down to the Achaean fleet' to become slaves to the victors.

However, sophisticated response will recognise that there is more complexity to this debate, and that like Helen, these women are not completely helpless. They have some control over their approach to their new lives. Hecuba's 'legs are trembling' but she vows not to 'fall'. Andromache has no choice but to become the slave wife of Neoptolemus, but she can choose whether to allow 'this prince' to 'pleasure away her hatred' or 'refuse' him and face the consequences. Cassandra welcomes her fate, vowing to be 'a good wife' as she plans to win Agamemnon's confidence then 'kill him and destroy his whole family'.

ii. What does *The Women of Troy* reveal about love and marriage?

The Women of Troy features a range of relationships. Students will be able to identify two seemingly positive examples of marriage, three complex and even puzzling relationships, and two forced and disturbing arrangements.

The positive examples feature Priam and Hecuba and Hector and Andromache. These two marriages most resemble modern marriage with both women talking about their great love for their dead husbands and the trauma and grief associated with their deaths. Hecuba fondly recalls being 'married to a King' and bearing 'so many' sons. The triumph of her marriage and motherhood intensifies the pain she feels at having to witness her husband being 'hacked down on the altar steps' and 'every one' of her sons 'slaughtered by ... the Greeks'. Andromache also remembers making it her 'business to be the perfect wife' and being 'joyfully fulfilled'. These two examples show what was possible for Trojan women, and not just royal women, as the women of the Chorus also weep and proclaim their 'love' for their 'dead' husbands.

All of the complex relationships involve the enigmatic Helen. At first, she is also married to a king, Menelaus of Sparta, but does not speak of love in the manner of the Trojan women. Rather she calls him a 'spineless idiot' and blames him for taking a 'ship to Crete' and affording Paris the opportunity to claim her. Helen's marriage to Paris is the most famous love story in Greek literature and yet in this play, Helen speaks about the Trojan prince with contempt. She says that Priam should have strangled 'his brat at birth' and claims that she only followed 'this foreigner' because she was beguiled by Aphrodite. Helen shows no sign of grief for the dead Paris. The third relationship is her marriage to Paris's brother, Deiphobus, after the death of Paris. She claims to have been taken by force, 'raped, not married' and prevented from escaping by 'the sentries on the walls'. She claims that her life in 'Troy was ... abject slavery' and takes credit, in partnership with the gods, for destroying 'them'. However, students need to understand that Helen is campaigning for life and that her recollections of these events must be treated with some scepticism. Students can also examine Menelaus's responses to his wife's claims. He begins with a clear declaration that he has 'come for an execution, not an argument'. He then engages in an 'argument', delays the

'execution' and allows the 'wicked woman' to travel back to Sparta. Hecuba's observation that 'once a lover, always besotted' suggests that Helen will charm her way back in Menelaus's favour.

The final two examples are similar to Helen's story concerning Deiphobus. Cassandra and Andromache are assigned to Agamemnon and Neoptolemus respectively. One a 'mistress' the other a 'wife', both the spoils of war. These cases are more definite examples of the subjugated position of women, even royals, in a fiercely patriarchal society. They are considered property and their personal preferences do not even register in the minds of their masters. However, Cassandra's plans to win the trust of the Greek King and then 'kill' him reveals that remarkable women like 'Apollo's nun' and her devious sister-in-law, Helen, can find ways to reverse the power paradigm of their Ancient society.

Things Fall Apart by Chinua Achebe

- i. *'Things Fall Apart explores a traditional world confronted by change.'*
Discuss.

Part One of the novel details the rise of the protagonist, Okonkwo, simultaneously revealing the complex traditional culture of the Igbo people of Umuofia. Students can begin by analysing Achebe's presentation of this traditional world. The writer uses a matter of fact and detached style to illustrate Okonkwo's position in his society. It begins with Okonkwo's fame as a wrestler and his fierce need to prove that he is not an 'agbala' like his father. The wrestler wants the village to regard him as a 'strong man' and in striving for this, Okonkwo rejects the 'gentleness' and 'idleness' that typifies his father, Unoka. Okonkwo Achebe draws on this tension to explore traditional gender roles and status in Umuofia. The writer presents Okonkwo as successful man in the village; he has a 'large compound', three wives, eight children, plentiful crops and three titles. However, Okonkwo's 'fear of failure and weakness' causes him to rule his household with a 'heavy hand' thus instigating tension with his wives and children, particularly his eldest son, Nwoye.

Achebe uses the conflict between Umuofia and Mbaino to explore other traditions. Okonkwo plays a leading role in the peace settlement and the decision making of the village is shown to rely heavily on priests, priestesses and spirits. Achebe references several proverbs throughout the novel and describes several rituals like the 'Week of Peace' and the 'New Yam Festival' which includes the much-loved wrestling tournament. The author peppers the English text with Igbo terms, includes the lyrics to songs and regularly mentions the ritual tribal drumming. Students should also focus on the ritual killing of Ikemefuna, the Mbaino boy living in Okonkwo's compound. This action is ordered by the Oracle and Achebe uses this event to explore the consequences for the protagonist when he disobeys the advice of the sage, Ezeudu, and participates in the slaughter of boy. Okonkwo's defiance sets in train a series of events that lead to him being exiled to his 'motherland'. He has to remain there for seven years and it is during this time that Umuofia is confronted by great change.

*The next task for students is to examine how the changes, instigated by the arrival of the British, clash with the traditional world depicted by Achebe in Part One. The first sign of change is the appearance of a ‘white man’ riding an ‘iron horse’ in the village of Abame. The man is killed by suspicious locals, prompting retribution and the total destruction of the village. This is soon followed by the appearance of missionaries in Umuofia and the building of a ‘church there’. Students would need to explore how the conversion of a ‘handful’ Igbo begins to break down the traditional tribal structures. Evangelists are sent to ‘surrounding towns and villages’ and by the time Okonkwo returns from exile, he is confronted by a very different reality. He has already lost his eldest son, Nwoye, to Christianity and considers him an ‘abomination’. Moreover, the church has converted a significant proportion of the tribe, at first ‘low-born’ and ‘outcast[s]’ but then, even ‘worthy’ men. The British have ‘also brought a government and ‘built a court’ presided over by the District Commissioner on behalf of ‘a great queen’. Finally, students would need to analyse the powerful ending of the novel – the clashes between converts and villagers; the destruction of the church; Okonkwo and others being taken prisoner, then fined and humiliated; Okonkwo beheading a messenger; his realisation that his people are not going to fight to protect their culture and traditions; and his consequent suicide. The District Commissioner’s plan to write a ‘paragraph’ about Okonkwo in his future book, *The Pacification of the Primitive Tribes of the Lower Niger*, indicates that change is now dominant, and that Achebe’s story of the proud Umuofia man is one of many similar stories affecting the Igbo people, and more broadly, Indigenous peoples around the globe.*

- ii. “It’s an abomination for a man to take his own life.”
 ‘Okonkwo’s decision to take his own life is a sign of his personal failings.’
 Do you agree?

Okonkwo is a great man in his village. Okonkwo’s rejection of his lazy and effeminate father, Unoka, fuels his determination to become a success. He wins fame as a wrestler and displays an impressive capacity for hard work, which brings him wealth and status, three wives and ten children (in total). However, Achebe presents a classic tragic hero with significant flaws. Okonkwo’s ambition and pride become excessive at times, which causes friction with his wives and children and on occasions, his fellow villagers. Okonkwo’s fierce resolve to become the opposite of his cowardly father leads him to overcompensate and become stubborn, short-tempered and violent. The most telling example of this in Part One of the novel, is Okonkwo’s refusal to accept the advice of the sage, Ezeudu, to ‘not bear a hand’ in the ritual killing of Ikemefuna, the Mbaino boy living in Okonkwo’s compound. Okonkwo has become fond of the boy, but determined not to show weakness, he ignores the warning, suppresses his ‘unmanly’ emotions and brings ill fortune on himself and his household. This action also contributes to the breakdown of his already strained relationship with his oldest son, Nwoye. Other examples of Okonkwo’s temper include: his ‘very heavy’ beating of his third wife, Ojiugo, during the ‘Week of Peace’, an ‘evil’ which threatens to ‘ruin the whole clan’; and his failed attempt to shoot his second wife, Ekwefi.

When responding to this topic, students need to examine other factors - beyond Okonkwo's control - which also contribute to his suicide. The most significant of these is the arrival of the British and the consequent rapid pace of change to Igbo culture. The British demonstrate their military might when they obliterate the nearby village of Abame. The introduction of Christianity and British law represent further intrusions into the traditions and culture of Umuofia. Christianity divides the villagers with 'low-born and 'outcasts' readily joining the new church. When 'worthy' men begin converting, the authority of the elders and spiritual leaders is threatened; and these ideas converge when Nwoye becomes a Christian, completing his estrangement from Okonkwo. The power and authority of the District Commissioner, ruling in the name of a 'great queen', signals the death of the traditional culture of Umuofia. The village is divided between those, like Okonkwo, who want to fight against the new rulers and re-establish the traditional ways, and those who favour compromise rather than being 'wiped out' like Abame.

Students then need to analyse the events leading up to Okonkwo's suicide. Okonkwo's inflexible and violent temperament naturally leads him into conflict with the British. He refuses to be dominated by the Christians, and Okonkwo's involvement in violent clashes with the new authorities results in him and five others being taken prisoner, fined, beaten and humiliated by having 'all' of their hair 'shaved off'. Okonkwo beheads a uniformed messenger in attempt to rouse his people to rebel, but when they do not follow his example, he realises that their spirit has been broken and their culture and traditions consigned to history. By taking his own life, Okonkwo becomes an 'abomination'; ironically, a description the protagonist uses in an earlier chapter to describe his son's conversion to Christianity. It could therefore be argued that the hero's suicide is a product of both his personal failings - traits that in an earlier context, contribute to his successful rise - and the destructive colonising practices of the British. Discerning students might also point out that Okonkwo's death is symbolic of not just the Pacification but also the destruction of the Primitive Tribes of the Lower Niger. A process that might also be described as an 'abomination'.

William Wordsworth: Poems selected by Seamus Heaney

- i. In Wordsworth's poetry, the natural world becomes transcendental.

In a high-level response, the link between the natural world and a divinity conveyed in Wordsworth's poetry needs to be addressed in the introduction. Wordsworth, who wrote during the romantic period, utilised strong imagery of nature to explore spirituality and the divine. Thus the word, 'transcendental' in the topic needs to be defined as such. Furthermore, some historical context could be explored, such as the notion of nature symbolising renewal during the Industrial Revolution when burgeoning industry and factories refocused society away from the pastoral towards Capitalist production. Therefore, Wordsworth's poetry explored nature as a force for renewal and spiritual refinement that was being lost both literally and metaphorically during the time in which he wrote.

Students could choose from myriad poems throughout this anthology; one that would be particularly pertinent is “Lines Composed a Few Miles above Tintern Abbey.” Within this poem, Wordsworth celebrates nature as a renewing force and directly contrasts the ‘din of towns and cities’ with ‘... lofty cliffs’ amid the ‘wild, secluded scene’. Throughout this poem, the speaker marvels at this place that he is visiting after five years as it has remained remarkably beautiful and unchanged. His observations reveal the divinity of nature, and lines such as, “In which the heavy and the weary weight/ Of all this unintelligible world,/ Is lightened” convey the importance of nature in restoring and renewing his spirit. Nature, here, becomes a supernatural force for the speaker who experiences a spiritual awakening by transforming into a ‘living soul’. Nature in this poem becomes God-like, an ever-present memory which, unchanged, anoints the speaker with a sense of calm, and the speaker remarks: ‘How often has my spirit turned to thee!’ Wordsworth personifies nature as ‘she’ and states that:

*“Or she can so inform
The mind that is within us, so impress
With quietness and beauty, and so feed
With lofty thoughts, that neither evil tongues,
Rash judgments, nor the sneers of selfish men,
Nor greetings where no kindness is.”*

Throughout this poem, Wordsworth is demonstrating how nature can redeem and restore evil in the world. A high-level student could point out the repetition of words such as ‘secluded’ and ‘seclusion’, which allude to spiritual calm and transcendence. Furthermore, adjectives such as ‘lofty’, ‘quiet’ and ‘wild’ convey a place untouched by the perils of human-made interference. Here there are no buildings and only ‘Hermits’ deeply ensconced in the spiritual surroundings. In addition, poems such as ‘I Wandered, Lonely as a Cloud’ build on this notion of solitude, interconnectedness and the transcendental power of nature. A high-level student could relate the last lines of this poem: “They flash upon that inward eye/ Which is the bliss of solitude;/ And then my heart with pleasure fills,/ And dances with the daffodils” with “Lines composed a few miles above Tintern Abbey” noting how Wordsworth accentuates the same spiritual ‘pleasure’ through the imagery of solitude and nature. Furthermore, using the word ‘host’ within the poem is a biblical term referring to angels and celebrates the daffodils as being a personified form of divinity. These notions of nature linked with divinity are ever present throughout many of Wordsworth’s poems, and high-level students could choose any number from this anthology to explore. Some commentary on how Heaney was influenced through Wordsworth’s poetry would also be relevant to this topic as high-level students would understand that, as Heaney chose these poems that he too,

throughout his poetry, celebrated nature as a renewing and spiritual force within a world that seemed to be changing and moving away from nature and thus, both poets utilise the imagery of nature as a way to convey a need for a focus on the more simplistic and parochial aspects of life as a way to feel spiritually whole again.

ii. How does Wordsworth explore the nature of human existence?

Wordsworth's poetry explores the human condition throughout many of his poems, reflecting on what defines us, how humans see the world and how humans feel a sense of divinity and wholeness. A high-level student could mention in their introduction some important contextual details. Wordsworth, who was greatly affected by the events of the French Revolution, feared that Britain would follow suit. Wordsworth felt that the focus on urbanisation and industrialisation was moving man away from nature and spirituality, and his poetry explores how this affects humanity and self-understanding. In essence, human nature to Wordsworth is about living closely with nature and delving into its spiritual presence. One particular poem in this anthology that explores this concept is: 'Ode: Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood'. Throughout this poem, the notion of human existence is explored. The speaker focuses on his childhood memory and thus delves into childhood as a recollection of a time of more pure and simple humanity. Children see the world in ways that adults cannot as they look at their surroundings with eyes that haven't been marred by the reality of the darker aspects of human nature. This concept is particularly prominent in this poem as the speaker remembers the natural world as "...a time when meadow, grove, and stream, /The earth, and every common sight, / To me did seem/ Apparelled in celestial light." This line links the natural world with a kind of spiritual wholeness and divinity suggesting that children, through their innocence, are closer to the divine and spirituality is at the core of human happiness.

The adult speaker of this poem mourns his childlike perspective on the world and grieves that "the things which I have seen I now can see no more". And thus, Wordsworth, throughout this poem is commenting on how human existence is fraught and fragile and contends that it is difficult to maintain this childlike purity that he associates with a more true aspect of human nature that needs to be preserved. A high-level student could focus on the rhyme scheme in this ode. The first five lines of the poem follow an ABABA rhyme scheme when the speaker refers to his childhood memories of nature. He breaks away from this in the subsequent lines 6-9 to a CDDC rhyme scheme which conveys the sense of discord and loss that has occurred through growing up. As this topic is a 'how' question, higher-level students need to focus on aspects of literary features such as the strong sense of personification in this poem - the moon, the rainbow and the sun are all personified and create within them a sense of simple and unadulterated joy. Wordsworth conveys a purity here throughout many of his poems that is at the essence of what he believes is our true expression of our humanity. Furthermore, a high-level student would focus on the imagery of birds, lambs and mountains to convey the immense beauty of nature synonymous with childhood.

Another poem that students could closely study is ‘A Slumber did my Spirit Seal’, which explores the death of a loved one. Throughout this poem, a high-level student could focus on how the speaker uses an ABAB rhyme scheme which creates a simple and predictable patterning, thus mirroring the predictability of death in life. Furthermore, his use of rhyme which alternates between iambic tetrameter and iambic trimeter, is similar to the rhythm of a ballad. Thus this poem is emphasising the nature of human existence. In addition, Wordsworth conveys a sense of deep reflection through his use of end stops, for example, “A slumber did my spirit seal; / I had no human fears:” these pauses invite the reader to ponder deep considerations about life and death.

Wordsworth explores the notion of immortality when he introduces the subject of the poem: “She seemed a thing that could not feel the touch of earthly years.” Yet the word ‘seemed’ connotes an unreality, and Wordsworth returns to the imagery of nature to solidify critical aspects of human existence. The speaker’s dead love, “Rolled round in earth’s diurnal course, / With rocks, and stones, and trees”, is, in essence, part of nature’s circle of life. Here Wordsworth encapsulates the essence of human existence as he postulates that the two concepts must exist together and that in understanding death, we can understand life. Man is a part of human nature and exists as thus. There are many literary devices within Wordsworth’s poetry that students could focus on throughout their response. By focusing on his use of natural imagery and personification, a student will exemplify how Wordsworth grapples with the notion of humanity and existence. A high-level student could refer to 4 or 5 poems of choice from this anthology to explore this topic.

SECTION B – Comparative analysis of texts**Pair 1 *Tracks* by Robyn Davidson and *Charlie’s Country* by Rolf de Heer**

- i. Compare how *Tracks* and *Charlie’s Country* explore the connection between landscape and personal identity.

*A high-level response to this topic will consider the notion of landscape and personal identity as both separate entities and concepts that cannot be separated. The introduction should contain some exploration of the relevant context of these two texts and how the notion of personal identity and landscape are present within the texts. High-level responses will consider landscape as not limited to the outback, but rather, the many different types of environments that these two texts feature. The introduction should define landscape as the environment/s within which these protagonists, Charlie and Robyn, find themselves throughout their journeys and list some of their contrasting features. For example, at the beginning of *Tracks*, Davidson’s first impressions of Alice Springs and the camel farm where Robyn works for Kurt and travelling through the many varied environments on her outback journey. In *Charlie’s Country*, students will inevitably want to discuss Charlie going into the bush first and foremost. Still, they must also consider, just as importantly, the settlement that Charlie lives in as well as the hospital in Darwin and the urban areas he inhabits with Faith. Moreover, the jail is another critical aspect of the landscape that could be discussed. Students who can explain the notion of landscape in the introduction without limiting their ideas to the outback or the bush will demonstrate a nuanced and sophisticated understanding of the topic.*

*High-level responses will demonstrate an intricate understanding of how the landscape and personal identity are intricately intertwined. This is most obvious in *Charlie’s Country* when Charlie repeats the notion of ‘Mother Country’, and much of the film is about his yearning to return to the old ways and live like his ancestors. Students could address this topic by exploring the scenes where Charlie goes bush and attempts to live off the land. A high-level response could explore the film techniques adopted by De Heer in this scene. These long shots show Charlie walking through the long grass with his spear, his lithe body blending into the landscape, connoting that nature and his identity cannot be separated. Significantly, in the scene where Charlie sits in the cave and ‘hears’ his ancestors living in the old ways - the mid shots demonstrate how he feels that he can access his ancestor’s spirits both within him and all around him. This is an important scene that highlights the how the landscape and Charlie’s identity are not separated but one. Yet, when Charlie lies defeated and sick on the ground and says that “Mother Country is so far away,” De Heer is demonstrating how merely being in the landscape is not enough anymore, because the landscape, through colonisation, has been so affected that the deterioration of Charlie’s health, a result of poor food and the cramped conditions of living in the settlements, as well as the denigration of the people and land through colonisation, means that he cannot truly feel a part of the landscape anymore.*

High-level students will be able to delve into the setting of each of the different landscapes and comment on how De Heer shoots the scenes in Darwin, inside the hospital, Faith and Charlie's illegal drinking in the park, as well as the settlement areas defined by the police presence, the police headquarters and the fast, good cafeteria. High-level students will discuss how Charlie moves fluidly through all of these areas, walking along the dirt tracks in and out of the settlement. Yet, in each, the environment around him subtly changes his identity. When in the settlement, he becomes angry and annoyed by the constant obstacles he faces. As an ever-present force both in the settlement and in the outback, the policemen means that he cannot honestly claim the land as a part of his identity anymore. Whilst all students will discuss Charlie, it is vital that some also consider the more minor characters, such as Charlie's best friend, Pete. Whilst Pete seems far more at home within the landscape than Charlie and is not too perturbed when the stolen car breaks down, he doesn't go into the mother country with Charlie. Students should mention how the policemen interact with the landscape and that, despite their cream uniforms that blend in with browns, they have no real connection to the land yet have been given the job of policing it.

High-level students will consider some of the essential differences between the two texts and how personal identity and landscape are connected. Robyn Davidson, unlike Charlie, longs for a connection with the land, not as her birth right but as a way in which she can find herself. A high-level student will be able to compare Robyn as somewhat antithetical to Charlie. The landscape beguiles her, she wants it to be her birth right, but it never can be in the same way as it can for Charlie. Her ancestors are colonisers. She is walking in the footsteps of her father, who traversed the Australian outback yet seems to ignore the prescient white privilege that allows her to do so, despite challenges due to her gender.

High-level students will be able to discuss the memoir writing and analyse Davidson's use of figurative language to convey the omnipresent beauty of the bush with her use of sensory description as she "incorporat(es) every dust mote, every spider's web into an orgy of possessive bliss". This, coupled with her self-conscious understanding of how others see her as "an object of ridicule" and a "crazy, irresponsible adventurer" creates a stark paradox and conveys how not only the environment impacts her identity, but the people within the environments do too.

High-level students could explore this notion of environment and identity in detail when Davidson experiences an almost 'splitting of self' brought on by the stress of the pre-journey. She comments on her self-identity and how it changes through constant objectification. In Alice, she is seen as crazy, Rick sees her as a love interest and someone he must protect, and in every environment she struggles to feel the freedom of being her true self. Robyn wonders if the young politician she meets is right when he tells her that she is a 'bourgeois individualist'. Students could explore when these moments of self-assuredness and peace occur in the novel, most significantly after Diggity dies and, when she wakes feeling "healed, weightless and prepared for anything."

- ii. "... being alone got awfully boring ... I needed people, wanted them." (*Tracks*)
"Charlie, Charlie, I thought I told you to look after yourself" (*Charlie's Country*).
Compare how the two texts explore the importance of companionship.

High-level students could explore some of the critical ideas and differences in the quotes and what they convey in the introduction. Whilst both texts explore the idea of companionship and the tension between the idea of solitude, loneliness and companionship, there are many nuanced differences. Charlie's journey is one of finding his 'mother country', which is, both far away yet inside himself as connoted through his final acceptance of teaching dance and culture to Aboriginal youth. There is a sense that the notion of companionship is one for which Charlie doesn't have to yearn. He has Pete and his family, yet he is yearning for the companionship of his ancestors, of his Aboriginality and his culture from a time before colonisation. This is signified in the scene where Pete tells him that he has 'broken the law' by being with Faith as she is from a different tribe. In the film, Charlie has experienced a spiritual breakdown exemplified by his physical illness. Symbolically, being taken to a hospital in Darwin signifies the end for many Indigenous people. Charlie finds Faith after he leaves the hospital, and she becomes a companion that he needs to help him through the spiritual loss that he is experiencing. Yet, one gets the sense that Charlie is never truly alone. When he speaks to his ancestors early on in the film, he 'feels' their presence upon returning to his 'mother country'. The mid-shot of the camera frames the audience as voyeurs and outsiders watching Charlie within the cave talking to his ancestors. We realise at this point that Charlie's Indigeneity can never be far away from him; it is who he is and part of every molecule of natural land that surrounds him. Only when he is in Darwin, away from any semblance of actual bush and his mother country, that he looks to Faith to fill in this void and where his yearning for companionship comes out of a place of dispossession.

Conversely, Davidson chooses a path of self-dispossession. Her deliberate journey into nature to find herself is an act of trying to divorce herself from her ancestry and culture and absorb the Aboriginal culture that is not her birth right, yet she feels an affinity with. Her love/hate relationship with Rick, who she sees as both 'a blood-sucking little creep...and a very warm, gentle human being who... care(s)' signifies the tension between her wanting to be alone yet wanting companionship. She oscillates between the two throughout her journey despite often railing in a rage at Rick's presence. High-level students could focus on the camera as a constant companion throughout her journey that causes her to see herself as part of a capitalist machine. To get the money, she must engage The National Geographic and to do this; she must make a Faustian deal to accept Rick and the camera and the lies that the camera tells. Students could look at this with nuance and highlight how companionship for Robyn is isolating in more ways than being utterly alone in the desert. She experiences an objectification of herself that she cannot divorce herself from, thus altering her way of being and her actual spiritual goals. Students could also explore Davidson's relationship with her animals and how they offer uncomplicated companionship and non-judgemental acceptance.

Pair 2 *The Queen* by Stephen Frears and *Ransom* by David Malouf

- i. 'Both texts demonstrate that disastrous events provide opportunities for individual growth.'
Discuss.

David Malouf's Ransom and Stephen Frears' The Queen both explore a range of challenges and to address this topic students need to demonstrate an understanding of the views and values inherent in England as well as Ancient Troy. They could explore societal expectations such as hierarchy, the monarchy, what it is to be a hero and the duality of rights and responsibilities. Students could also explore the notion of societal views and values playing a role in the creation of expectations which can in turn, exacerbate heightened tension.

This question offers the premise of disastrous events which students will most likely identify as the Trojan War and the aftermath of the death of Princess Diana. Some students might be more specific, identifying elements such as moments of self-reflection which are challenging or specific acts such as the death of Patroclus or Queen Elizabeth's decision to remain at Balmoral. Discussion could involve the challenges faced by the royal family in the face of unexpected public grief as well as internal challenges such as that presented by Charles who insists that 'in a situation like this you have to be flexible'.

Students must explore specific vocabulary within the question such as 'opportunities' and 'individual growth' which imply that positive outcomes are the result of suffering. The most obvious management of this topic relies on discussion of individuals within the texts who change as a result of the events which occur and their role within in them.

Within The Queen, students will be quick to identify the ramifications of the death of Diana for Elizabeth, however, some might also explore the consequences of the landslide win for Labor, taking the discussion to a more complex interpretation. The situation created by Tony Blair as the newly elected prime minister who takes the 'temperature' of the people and must advise Queen Elizabeth offers a complex role reversal which challenges both Blair and the Queen. Diana's death presents countless opportunities for Blair to become a much-loved Prime Minister who is adored by the people. Blair and his publication team coin Diana 'the People's Princess' and defy the rigidity of The Establishment. This receives an extremely positive reaction from the public and therefore securing and enhancing Blair's status as England's political figurehead. Likewise in Ransom, the notion of Priam's decision to act against the advice of those close to him rather than the pivotal moment of the death, desecration and ransom of Hector. Further, students might choose to explore the challenges presented to Achilles by the loss of his maid, his realisation of the impacts of a war and his musings on his own 'humanity'.

A more complex response would offer the counter argument that the events in question also create chaos which can undermine individuals and institutions. Stronger students may take this concept further and explore the notion of individuals who find decisions forced upon them and rather than acting as a consequence of reflection and a desire for change act in

ways which are forced upon them. Such discussion would enable students to explore more complex decision making and ideas such as duty and service. In Frears' film, Elizabeth is faced with pressure from intra-personal and extra-personal sources. Elizabeth decides to provide the 'non-royal', Diana, with a private funeral, decides to flee to Balmoral and chooses to ignore suggestions by 'her people' of 'flying the flag at half-mast'. Because of this, Elizabeth is subject to extra-personal criticism from the public as she has inadequately responded to the 'People's Princess's' death. Similarly, in Ransom, Priam, in deciding to ransom his son's body, must battle with Hecuba and all his children's resistance to him travelling as a 'man and father' rather than a 'King'.

- ii. "Duty first, self, second." (*The Queen*)
 'The grief that racks him is not only for his son Hector. It is also for a kingdom ravaged and threatened with extinction...' (*Ransom*)
 Compare how the texts portray the burden of responsibility.

Stephen Frears' The Queen and David Malouf's Ransom explore in parallel the burden faced by those in positions of responsibility, whether it be as King, Queen or warrior. Both texts follow the reactions of society and their leaders, following a catalyst in the midst of crisis. In The Queen, Frears draws on the stoic nature of the royal family, in particular their leader, Elizabeth, and the power of the public view; highlighting the challenges that Elizabeth and the monarchy face due to their responsibility as leaders through drawing on what is expected of them, the sacrifices that have to be made and the balance between tradition and paving the way for the new. Likewise, Malouf draws on the idea that one of the biggest burdens of being a leader is the inability to take on another role, such as that of a father and a human, as struggled with by Priam. Malouf also uses Achilles in order to highlight an overthrowing of this burden of responsibility and expected role, in contrast to Priam.

To answer this question students must look at the key elements of 'burden' and the duality implied by 'responsibility'. What is interesting in both texts is the fact that whilst key figures have prestige and power, they are also shackled by the expectations which accompany their roles; from their inner circles and also the demands of the societies in which they live. Students will raise discussion relating to Elizabeth and Priam but should be encouraged to look at other figures such as Blair, Achilles and even Somax, who bears the responsibility of carrying his unusual passenger to safety. Likewise they could discuss those who surround key decision makers such as Phillip, the Queen Mother and Hecuba; all of whom seek to provide advice, given their roles within the prospective families.

The notion of burden allows students to offer a range of insights in relation to key figures in the texts. They could explore the sacrifices made by those in power and the rigid, almost-dehumanising expectations that are set upon them when they take reign. Malouf's characterisation of Achilles and Priam, conveys the weight and burden that expectations can have, with Achilles the warrior, expected to be strong and devoid of emotions such as sadness or grief and almost dehumanised as his feelings of grief overwhelm and suffocate him (seeing

as he has had no experience with expressing them in a healthy manner), pushing him into an animal-like state of suffering. Likewise Priam, as King, is expected to be un-weathered by age as well as strong and stoic. Students could explore the idea that Priam is able to maintain this public façade until his journey, when Somax and the reader come to understand the fail ‘old man’ he truly is.

Stronger students might also explore the role played by the media/the public in both texts which would provide an opportunity for comparison also. There are glimpses of the public in Ransom, for example those who see Somax as a storyteller in the tavern at the end of the novel, but for the most part it is Somax himself who represents the common man. On his journey with Somax, Priam is able to experience the wonders of the world such as dipping his toes in the stream or eating the griddlecakes and during this journey Priam’s curiosity is ignited with his sense of isolation and responsibility as king lifted. Within Ransom, the use of Hector’s body and the griddlecakes symbolise the burden of responsibility and the ‘lighter role of being a man’. In The Queen, however, Elizabeth’s literal and figurative isolation from her people creates a situation in which she is under siege from media manipulation and a public expression of emotion which is entirely foreign to her despite her many years of putting duty first. Further, students could discuss how the film highlights the tensions from the public which require Elizabeth to alter her façade, yet due to constant protocol being ‘all she has ever known’ she is unable to empathise with the public’s emotions following Diana’s death, and thus unable to act appropriately within changing times.

Pair 3 *Stasiland* by Anna Funder and *Never Let Me Go* by Kazuo Ishiguro

- i. “Memory, like so much else is unreliable. Not for what it hides and what it alters, but also for what it reveals.” (*Stasiland*)
What role does memory play in both *Never Let Me Go* and *Stasiland*?

*A central focus of this task is for students to compare the way the texts present key concepts and to make meaningful connections between the ideas and issues which are explored. In this instance students need to consider the qualifier of the ‘role’ and how this relates to memory, its reliability, its suppression and the relationship between repression of memory in both *Stasiland* and *Never Let Me Go*. In this question the topic is constructed with an embedded key quotation and as such, this is a good starting point for students in terms of what the quote reveals.*

*Both texts offer the reader an opportunity to explore what can be learnt when we seek to understand our present selves through an exploration of our past. *Never Let Me Go*, whilst a piece of fiction, presents a world which is not impossible to believe, where science allows for the use of clones rather than petri dishes to create the ‘parts’ needed for humanity to survive. Ishiguro gives a voice to the clones through the recollections of adult ‘carer’ Kathy who is fully aware of her purpose yet identifies memories which are “tugging at her mind.” Carried along by stories of friendship groups, fights and misunderstandings, Ishiguro misleads the reader into believing that our narrator is human and thus, the realisation that she and her*

schoolfriends are little more than 'spare parts' is shocking. Further, Kathy's belief that her memories will remain upon her euphemistically labelled 'completion' encourages the reader to reflect upon the notion of what it is which makes us human and our role in life.

Students might argue that the individuals in Stasiland who share their recollections of their past with Funder also cause us to question the role of memory and its impact. Funder as author is clearly very concerned with the need to learn about and remember the stories of the individuals who lived through the GDR. She is shocked by the revelation that "no one is interested" in what occurred and whilst their history is kept safely at a distance in museums and 'behind glass', there is a very real risk of history being lost and possibly, repeated as a consequence.

Never Let Me Go, explores memory from the perspective of Kathy who looks back at her shared past with peers, Ruth, and Tommy and their childhood, which was spent at exclusive boarding school, Hailsham; a world of rules, cliques, unwritten understandings and a degree of privilege. As Kathy 'remembers' their collective past, she comes to identify their innocent acceptance of the reality of their world and their place within it. In Stasiland, the reader follows a collective narrative of personal recounts of lives lived behind the Berlin Wall and under the control of a totalitarian government and their oppressive tool, the Stasi. In both texts, what is real and what is not is very different, but these understandings are based upon the perceptions and memories of individuals.

These texts are very different yet the worlds of both provide the reader with personal stories which are open to interpretation. It is interesting to note that in both texts, the world being explored - life under the control of the Stasi, and behind the walls of Hailsham - have gone and are the open to a subjective exploration by Funder and Kathy, in terms of the impact of memories of those worlds and what has been learnt. The quote provided suggests that it is 'a given' that our memories are entirely subjective but that one needs to question why memory is unreliable.

- ii. Both *Stasiland* and *Never Let Me Go* are primarily concerned with the misuse of power.
Discuss.

In addressing this question there is a need to be aware of the use of the qualifier 'primarily' which infers the misuse of power as a key focus. Students may simply agree with the central premise and offer evidence which demonstrates who is in power in each text, how this power is misused and its impact upon individuals.

A more complex response, however, would explore the nuances involved with that notion of power and the different ways it can be misused. In such a response, students would identify the links between ideas such as the importance of compliance within regimented societies and the tools to maintain control, identifying these as consequences not only of the misuse of

power but also, a refusal to recognise the humanity of those whose lives are impacted by their regime.

Both texts present the reader with worlds in which humanity is denied in the name of the power of the state and its capacity to control those under its domain. In both, the idea of victimisation is explored in terms of the loss of voice, the manipulation of truth, the denial of personal freedoms and the self-interest and preservation of ideology at all costs.

Never let Me Go uses a world in which the harvesting of organs from purpose bred clones is an everyday reality to explore authorial concerns such as the loss of freedom and individuality. A work of fiction, Ishiguro’s novel confronts the reader with protagonist Kathy, a young woman living within a society which refuses to acknowledge her humanity. Despite her capacity to reflect upon memories of her upbringing in a seemingly benign rural English school, Kathy sees herself and her peers as having no purpose but to live a life which is destined “wherever it was [they were] supposed to be.”

Dramatically different in context and genre, Stasiland represents the desire of author Anna Funder to reveal the personal histories of those incarcerated within the totalitarian state of the ironically named German Democratic Republic. Yet both authors offer a moral perspective confronting their readers with issues relating the abuse of power and the impact of dehumanising treatment upon those whom their separate worlds sought to control for their own purposes.

Pair 4 *Reckoning* by Magda Szubanski and *The Namesake* by Jhumpa Lahiri

- i. Compare the ways Magda and Gogol approach travelling back to their parents’ countries.

Both Magda and Gogol travel back to their parents’ countries at various points in their lives, but these trips involve very different circumstances and very different outcomes. Two of the most significant differences are that Magda’s parents come from different countries, Poland and Great Britain, and that Magda is born in her mother’s country, Great Britain, not their new country, Australia. Things are more straightforward for Gogol; both of his parents are from India and Gogol is born in the United States of America.

Magda, unlike Gogol, is technically a first-generation migrant, and her first challenge is to adapt to life and school in Australia. Like many migrants, she is teased for her accent and her British habits. In her first years in Australia she has to reconcile her Scottish/Irish identity (mother), her Polish identity (father) – which she carries in her name – and her new Australian identity. Magda finds it easier to integrate her mother’s cultural background in part because there is no language barrier and also because she spends her early years in Great Britain. When Magda travels back to the land of her birth in her early twenties, she has an overwhelmingly positive and uncomplicated experience. She visits family in Yorkshire but

is particularly grateful for the opportunity to connect with Molly, her mother's cousin in Edinburgh, and attain a stronger understanding of her 'ancestral home'.

However, Magda's experience with her father and his background is more problematic. Her father's demands and behaviour during Magda's childhood and teenage years, prove more challenging, particularly his desire to have Magda excel at tennis and school. These demands stem from opportunities missed in his own life due to WWII. As Magda becomes an adult she learns more about her father's role in the Polish resistance movement; his family's protection of Jews and his execution of Gestapo officers and Polish collaborators. Thus, when she travels to Poland for the first time she experiences a great emotional upheaval. The time in Poland is more transformative than the time spent in her mother's country of origin. Significant experiences include sitting inside Pawaik with her cousin and namesake 'holding [her] hand while [she] bawled her eyes out' and sitting with her aunt, Danuta, and the family photo albums, 'looking at image after image of grandparents, aunts, cousins, great-grandparents'. These occurrences prompt survivor guilt. She also experiences confusion regarding her support for socialism amidst the backdrop of an oppressive communist regime and wonders if her 'father had been right all along'. Yet, despite the outpouring of emotion, Magda gains a tremendous amount from this journey. She successfully connects with her Polish family and her father's history; and begins the task of processing the trauma and guilt that have been passed down to her. Magda's first trip to Poland enables her to better understand this part of her cultural heritage and brings her closer to her father. These experiences are stamped by another trip, ten years later, when a now established and successful Magda takes her 'parents on a pilgrimage to the old countries'. Magda even speaks 'fluent Polish' when drunk, a language she had never mastered, symbolising her increased understanding of her cultural heritage.

Gogol is born in the USA and for the first part of his life he seems to have two identities, the American identity he embodies at school and amongst his friends, and the Bengali identity he embodies within his family and the growing Bengali community of New England. Gogol has a clear preference for his American identity which increases during his teenage years. Gogol's parents maintain closer ties to their home country than Magda's and embark on regular trips back to Calcutta during Gogol's childhood. Gogol finds these trips difficult; particularly the extended trip when he is in tenth grade. He prefers to deny his Bengali heritage and resents the time he has to spend with his Bengali family. He maintains a hostile attitude to India itself, regarding it as a backward country, and yearns to spend his holidays in the USA doing things that typical American kids do. Unlike Magda, Gogol does not want to travel to his parents' home country as an independent adult, rather he does the opposite, choosing a girlfriend, Maxine, from a well-off American family, and immersing himself in her family while shunning his. He lives with her in her family home, and even spends summer vacation with Maxine and her parents at their lake house. Gogol eventually comes to accept his family's Bengali heritage, but this takes a lot longer for him than for Magda and is prompted by his father's sudden death rather than a transformative trip back to the home country.

- ii. Compare the ways the migrant parents in *Reckoning* and *The Namesake* pressure their children.

Both Magda and Gogol have demanding parents who pressure them into achieving and fulfilling certain expectations. For Magda most of the pressure is applied by her father, who wants her to excel at tennis and at school. In Gogol's case the demands come from both parents who want him to become a success. They also want him to maintain the Bengali traditions that have characterised their own lives. In each case, the demands of the parents risk damaging the relationships they have with their offspring.

In Reckoning, the demands placed on Magda by her father, Zbigniew, stem from the disappointment and frustration he experiences as a young man. His life in Europe during and after WWII involves great sacrifice and a demoralising lack of opportunity. This begins in Poland during the war where he is a member of the Polish resistance movement, specifically, an executioner whose task it is to kill captured Gestapo officers and Polish collaborators. Other details include hiding Jews in the family home, escaping the Warsaw Uprising through a sewer, fleeing the Lamsdorf Death March and being liberated from a POW camp. In England, Zbigniew is denied the opportunity to complete his medical studies when funding for Polish survivors of the war is suddenly withdrawn.

As a young father in suburban Melbourne, Zbigniew has a close relationship with Magda, but makes the mistake of driving her too hard. The first expression of this is on the tennis court, where he becomes Magda's coach and demands excellence and extreme commitment. Zbigniew's experiences during the war impede him from understanding that sport can simply be a healthy activity that children play for fun. Zbigniew makes a similar mistake regarding Magda's schooling. A gifted student, Magda enrolls in the city's most prestigious university with her father's mantra, "It is a sin to waste the God-given gift of a good brain" traumatising her like 'Chinese water torture'. However, she drops out before the end of first year, shattering her mother's 'dream' and leaving her father feeling as if he had been 'horsewhipped'. She re-enrolls the next year but is drawn to the performing arts rather than the pure academic career imagined by her father. Another point of conflict is Magda's politics, she and Zbigniew 'argue' about her belief in socialism with the ex-Polish national rejecting all 'isms'. Linked to this is Magda's struggle with her sexuality and the difficulty she has 'coming out' to her parents. Magda's life does not unfold in the way her parents would have planned for her, and she actively rebels against some of the most intense pressure, particularly from her father, but eventually they work through the various points of conflict and the relationship she has with her parents becomes characterised by understanding, acceptance and love.

In The Namesake the pressure Gogol's parents place on him also stems from their challenging pasts. Gogol's father, Ashoke almost dies at 22 in a horrific train accident – which leaves him with a permanent limp, a love for the Russian writer, Gogol, and a yearning for a life beyond the narrow constraints of Calcutta and India. Ashima's great challenge is to leave behind her family and her country and move to New England with Ashoke, her husband, a man she barely knows. Life in Massachusetts is considerably more difficult for

Ashima as she faces long, lonely days while Ashoke is at work, communication with family in India is slow and frustrating and her efforts to reproduce the dishes of home equally difficult given the lack of important ingredients.

The first sign of resistance from Gogol comes when he begins kindergarten and is reluctant to conform to the Bengali tradition of using his 'good' name, Nikhil. Instead, he is determined to keep his 'pet' name, Gogol. Later, other conflicts emerge regarding Gogol's name, and he eventually changes it back to Nikhil, to the disappointment of his father. The fact that Gogol does not know the full story behind his father choosing this 'pet' name symbolises the distance between father and son. Gogol's parents adopt more American traits as they become more comfortable, but Gogol feels like he has two identities, Bengali and American, which is reflected in his two very different 14th birthday parties. The gulf between the parents on the one side and Gogol and his sister, Sonia, on the other, becomes starker when the family take an extended trip to India, when Gogol is in tenth grade. Gogol gains more freedom when he goes to Yale; he gets a fake ID, begins smoking, drinking and attending parties. However, he remains a disciplined son, doing well in his Architecture course, and regularly taking the train back to Boston to visit his parents. The next point of tension comes when he falls in love with Ruth who his parents call his 'American' girlfriend when they tell him he is 'too young' for a relationship. Gogol's next relationship, with Maxine, takes him further away from his parents and his Bengali traditions as he devotes himself to Maxine and her family.

Ashoke's sudden death denies Gogol the opportunity to become closer to his father, but ironically, prompts him to close the distance between him and his mother. His sister, Sonia, does the same, moving back from California to live with Ashima. Finally, Ashima begins to pressure Gogol about a girlfriend and even sets up a date with Moushumi, the daughter of family friends. Ironically, the two marry, surprisingly agreeing to a marriage in the Bengali tradition. However, the marriage is thoroughly modern, as Moushumi keeps her own surname, maintains a career and after a year, begins an extra-marital affair, which eventually prompts a divorce. Ashima's acceptance of this as the most sensible option, shows that, like Magda, Gogol reaches the point of being accepted and loved by his mother. The novel ends with Gogol reading a collection of stories by his namesake, which indicates that he too, is ready to understand and accept the choices of his late father.

Pair 5 *The Crucible* by Arthur Miller and *The Dressmaker* by Rosalie Ham

- i. Compare the ways in which isolation is explored in both texts.

Both Dungatar and Salem are geographically isolated communities and in both cases, this breeds insularity. For Salem, the isolation is self-imposed - it is zealous religiosity and a related “prodigious fear of the devil... where there be no road between God and Lucifer” that generates an insular Puritan community. This, in combination with a history of persecution in England and later conflict with the Indigenous people, evokes a sense of hyper-vigilance in Salem. Set in 1950s post-war Australia, Dungatar’s setting generates a sense of parochialism that whilst insular, is not as alarmist as Salem. The Hill houses “Mad Molly” and it is from this vantage point that a returned Tilly views the town’s inhabitants which includes the marginalised “McSweeney Mob” in their “ram-shackle home” on the fringes of the town next to the tip. Whilst geographically isolated, the inhabitants of Dungatar are in many ways isolated by choice rather than necessity as few ever venture beyond the town even though there is accessible transport (train-line) to do so.

Students might consider the psychological impact of isolation on a community. For the Salemmites, isolation has reinforced a rigid theocracy and this has a divisive impact on the village. For example, the residents of Salem are susceptible to psychological terror and this is clearly evident in the actions of Abigail whose graphic description of her parents having their heads “smashed in ” reinforces a fear of the outside world. So too, Abigail’s claims of witchcraft and her use of these as a vehicle to wreak revenge, are arguably a consequence of a myopic way of life. We also see this in the actions of Thomas Putnam whose petty grievances drive his response to witchcraft. Certainly, as the title of the play suggests, isolation promotes a situation where the inner machinations of the village - “the wheels within wheels” - are laid bare and the residents endure a crucible that exposes Proctor’s adulterous affair and ultimately sees the worst elements of the village (Putnam and Abigail) purged.

*In Ham’s *Dungatar* on the other hand, adultery also plays a role but is perhaps less a consequence of isolation and more a commentary on the darker side of human behaviour. The reader discovers that Evan Pettyman’s prodigious affairs are at the centre of Tilly’s character arc as he is her illegitimate father and her tormentor as he blames her for Stewart’s death and engineers the ‘murderess’ backstory that sees a young Myrtle/Tilly sent away. Students may like to compare the ways in which the behaviour of central antagonists - is tolerated in insular communities (Abigail is portrayed as an innocent child whilst Evan uses his power to silence any form of public criticism).*

*So too, students could contrast the reasons why individuals within communities are emotionally isolated. Ann Putnam’s grief over the loss of her seven babies and her willingness to easily accept the view of Rebecca Nurse (her midwife) as a witch is a consequence of parochialism. Indeed, within the confines of Puritanical Salem, other more ‘secular’ (medical) reasons for the loss of her babies were not entertained. Tilly Dunnage is never accepted in *Dungatar* because she was “an illegitimate bastard” and Molly Dunnage*

is driven mad through social isolation and loneliness that an entire community not only tolerates but perpetuates. Ultimately Dungatar, like Salem, endures its own crucible and this suggests that isolation can lead to a set of circumstances that result in drastic events.

- ii. “Yet there was the matter of the sour people of Dungatar. In light of all they had done, and what they had not done, what they had decided not to do - they mustn’t be abandoned. Not yet.”

Compare how the concept of revenge is examined in both texts.

The concept of revenge is explored in both texts but in different ways. In Miller’s The Crucible, it is the antagonist who is driven by a malevolent vengeance whilst in Ham’s The Dressmaker it is the protagonist Tilly Dunnage who, once discovering the truth about Stewart’s death and enduring the loss of her mother, decides to seek revenge on a town that perpetuated the lies that ruined her childhood. Abigail Williams’ initial response to Parris’ questions about Ruth’s illness are driven by both self-protection and John Proctor’s recent rejection and subsequent claim that “we never touched”. In positioning Abigail - a sixteen year old girl - as the antagonist, Miller examines the concept of innocence and sin through the lens of puritanical beliefs about childhood with few Salemites willing to believe that Abigail (a child) is capable of such deception and malice. Tilly, on the other hand is initially driven by a desire to reunite with her mother (“mad” Molly) and discover the truth about rumours she was a murderer. Students may note that the quote included in the prompt is positioned late in the novel and in response to the death of Molly.

In both texts we see petty grievances played out. In this sense, the minutiae of small town living is explored by both Miller and Ham. In The Crucible, we see Thomas Putnam using witchcraft as a vehicle for retribution over “land squabbles” whilst in The Dressmaker we observe Almanac with-holding pain medication from his wife and tampering with the medications of others less as a form of retribution and more as a form of power and control. Some consideration of the power structures of each community (both are patriarchal) and how revenge challenges and changes these would be relevant. For example, Abigail’s vengeance ultimately brings about positive change in Salem, albeit twenty years later. Tilly’s revenge is a vehicle for her and other women to seek retribution against their male oppressors (Marigold Pettyman and Irma Almanac) and she literally burns the town to the ground. At the end of both texts there is a sense that justice has been served - Abigail flees Salem and ends up as a prostitute in Boston and Tilly and her sewing machine leave Dungatar for a presumably better future.

Pair 6 *Photograph 51* by Anna Ziegler and *The Penelopiad: The Myth of Penelope and Odysseus* by Margaret Atwood

- i. Compare the ways in which relationships with men can limit women, in both texts.

*Personal and professional relationships with men can limit women when these relationships are nested within gendered and patriarchal cultures. Atwood's protagonist Penelope has a range of relationships with men, all of which are invariably challenging. Indeed, Atwood charts the succession of men who attempt to silence and manipulate Penelope. From her father's attempt at infanticide, to her positioning as a "gilded black pudding" Odysseus unfairly won in a race, and finally to Telemachus' betrayal in slaying her maids; Penelope is forced to "bite her tongue" and "close the door during the rampages". Students might compare this to the complicated relationships that Rosalind has with many of her male colleagues who ultimately appropriate her research data for their own use. Unlike Penelope, Rosalind has a loving father but it is his advice that "she must never be wrong" that galvanises her commitment to 'evidence' and her unwillingness to share data. This shaped her work relationships - all of which are with men - and arguably contributed to her inability to see what was "right in front of her". In this sense, her father's attempt to protect Rosalind, unintentionally limits her. Unlike *The Penelopiad*, Ziegler provides a male character - Caspar - who attempts to connect with, and support Rosalind. It is perhaps in his role as a foil to juxtapose other male characters, that we see the extent to which others (Watson, Crick and Wilkins) intentionally limit Rosalind.*

*A possible counter-argument might be that relationships with men can be used by women as leverage. This is most evident in *The Penelopiad* when we consider Helen. She uses her beauty and sexual attraction to manipulate others (she panders to their base desires) and her actions go unpunished. So too, the maids are able to manipulate Penelope's suitors although ultimately it is their actions in protecting Penelope from a forced marriage that results in their execution because they were "raped without permission of their Master". This highlights the ways in which social class can compound the oppression of women.*

*Students might also consider the ways in which women can limit others. They may, for example, compare the ways in which Helen, Anticleia and possibly Eurycleia undermine Penelope in *The Penelopiad*. So too, it can be argued that Penelope betrays her maids in implicating them in her scheme to stave off the suitors. Rosalind, on the other hand, treats Gosling poorly. As a PhD student, he has low status and the sharper (and perhaps hypocritical) elements of Rosalind's character are revealed through her treatment of Gosling.*

- ii. “...It’s my turn to do a little story-making. I owe it to myself.” (*Penelopiad*)
 “... whole worlds of things we wish had happened are as real in our heads as what actually did occur.” (*Photograph 51*)
 How is the concept of storytelling explored in these texts?

Both texts provide an avenue for a formerly ‘silenced’ female protagonist to have their story told. Whilst Penelope is the storyteller as indicated in Atwood’s choice of title (The Penelopiad); Ziegler provides six different storytellers and in doing so builds up a multi-perspectival view of the ‘story’ of Photograph 51. So too, Ziegler adapts real-life events for her purposes as a storyteller.

Students might consider that in The Penelopiad, Atwood overtly explores the parameters of story-telling. In referring to the “sacks full of words” the reader is aware that these words are possible stories and that the construction of these stories is an exercise in subjectivity. The “official version” (The Odyssey) “gained ground” and was “used as a stick to beat women” and in re-telling this epic through her own experiences Penelope is questioning the dominant and accepted narrative. In this sense, Atwood provides a parody of the original text and explores the idea that truth is not fixed by examining the gossip and rumours that abound in Odysseus’ absence. The fact that Penelope is narrating her story in contemporary times from the Underworld (Hades) and that thousands of years have elapsed reminds the reader that memory is imperfect and that the veracity of any ‘story’ should be considered. So too, Rosalind appears to be speaking from the grave although her narrative is repeatedly interrupted by male narrators who literally complete her sentences.

In both texts, the complexities of storytelling are explored. Whilst Penelope’s voice is privileged, the chorused voice of her maids reminds the reader that power dynamics transcend gender and that there are some whose story is never really heard. Ziegler also suggests that some stories (truths) are too difficult to accept and that some people respond by wanting to re-story the past. This is evidenced by Wilkin’s repeated desire to “start again” (“not again Wilkins. Really?”), and his claim that “Hermoine’s not really dead... she comes back”. Ultimately, it is Rosalind who reminds him that “there comes a point in your life when you realise that you can’t begin again”.

Students could also compare the range of symbols used to examine the concept of storytelling. Penelope weaves her story much like she weaves her father-in-law’s shroud - strategically - and she infers that she is possibly loose with the truth in stating “...It’s my turn to do a little story-making. I owe it to myself”. In Photograph 51 reference to microscopes and x-rays reflect a search to uncover the truth.

Pair 7 *The 7 Stages of Grieving* by Wesley Enoch and Deborah Mailman and *The Longest Memory* by Fred D’Aguiar

- iii. ‘I was asked if slavery would ever come to an end.’ (*The Longest Memory*)
 ‘Everything has its time ...’ (*The 7 Stages of Grieving*)
 What role does societal change play in the lives of the characters in *The 7 Stages of Grieving* and *The Longest Memory*?

The first quote comes from the editor of The Virginian. The editor’s response underestimates the rate of change with the end of slavery coming 55 years after the 1810 editorial. However, the end of slavery is only one indicator of societal change and The Longest Memory explores change in different strata of society and from various angles. The novella examines change from the perspective of those agitating for reform and those resisting it. The second quote comes from Scene 22 of The 7 Stages of Grieving and refers to ‘RECONCILIATION’. The play focuses on the growing ‘reconciliation’ movement mainly from the point of view of the activists.

All of the characters in The Longest Memory are affected by societal change. While at first glance, students might think that there is a clear delineation between old and young characters, a closer examination reveals that there are more subtle gradations at play. The oldest character, Whitechapel, has the most trouble adapting to change. He has relied on being the most loyal and hardworking slave on the plantation and believes that this type of slave ‘lives longer ... and earns the small kindness of the overseer and the master’. Whitechapel is not able to accept the attitude of his rebellious son, Chapel, who he views as the ‘type of slave [who] brings much trouble on his head’. It is this stubborn adherence to a life-long philosophy that prompts Whitechapel to betray his son. The resulting death of the boy breaks the old man, and it is only at this point that the ‘slaver’s dream’ admits that he has ‘been wrong all [his] days’. For his part, Chapel is at first encouraged by the developments in the North where African Americans are ‘free’ and ‘liaisons between white women ... and black men’ are possible. Chapel dares to dream, but the intransigence of his father thwarts his opportunity to take his place in the rapidly changing society to the North.

The next oldest character is Mr Whitechapel. He is desperately trying to preserve a paradigm that his forefathers ‘helped ... build’, yet, unlike Whitechapel, he recognises the need for some change and tries to reform the system from within. His calls for a more ‘Christian’ approach to the business of slavery are ridiculed by his fellow plantation owners at the club. However, Mr Whitechapel’s incremental approach is not sufficient for Lydia, his daughter and most able offspring. She falls in love with Chapel, plans to escape to the North and campaigns for the abolition of the system her ancestors have created. Another pair who confirms this pattern is Sanders Senior and Junior. Senior adheres to a hard-line approach to slavery and like the plantation owners, is critical of Mr Whitechapel’s calls for ‘restraint’ and ‘leniency’. The complex circumstances surrounding Junior’s attack on Chapel prompts him to eventually denounce the behaviour and legacy of his father and wish for Whitechapel, a slave, as a replacement. However, not all of the new generation share the reform fervour

expressed by Chapel and Lydia. Lydia's two brothers appear to have no qualms with the institution of slavery, moreover, they seem to relish their positions of power and privilege.

In The 7 Stages of Grieving the scenes extend from 1788 to 2000 and the focus is overwhelmingly on the Indigenous characters. Perceptive students should be able to recognise that 'societal change' has two very different applications in the play. The first application could refer to the arrival of the British and the dramatic and rapid change away from the traditional societies established by First Nations peoples and the second could refer to the more gradual movement toward recognition and equal rights for Indigenous people. There are four scenes that document the disruptive nature of the British 'invasion' – '1788', 'Invasion Poem', 'Black Skin Girl' and 'Home Story'. Scene 11, '1788' employs humour to signal the arrival of a British "boat", with the Aboriginal Everywoman yelling 'Oi. Hey, you! ... You can't park there.' However, astute students will know that this scene follows the more sinister scenes 'Black Skin Girl' and 'Invasion Poem': the former explores cultural imperialism and suggests sexual violence; the latter features explicit violence - the invader washing 'his face' in the woman's 'blood – 'stolen' children, and attacks on Indigenous culture. 'Home Story' reaffirms dispossession and explains how difficult it is for 'this mob and this mob' to practise 'family culture and language'. Another collection of scenes explores the challenges faced by Indigenous people living in a predominantly 'white' Australia. These scenes feature characters across the decades and the generations. Nana 'couldn't trust doctors' and 'couldn't talk to teachers or police'. Auntie Grace escapes to England and allows her skin to go 'pale'. The Everywoman's father 'hasn't stopped fighting since 1967'. More contemporary characters also face prejudice, persecution and death. The Everywoman observes that 'you get a lot of attention ... when you're black'; her brother is handcuffed and 'charged' for 'sticking up for his Bungies' and Daniel Vocke allowed to die in the Brisbane City Watchhouse.

In the latter section of the play, Enoch and Mailman introduce hope and explore a society in flux once again, this time moving in a positive direction. 'Suitcase Opening' introduces 'catharsis and release'. The next scene, 'Wreck/con/silly/nation Poem' introduces the idea of reconciliation, albeit in a sceptical fashion. 'Everything Has Its Time' presents a more hopeful tone and in 'Plea' the Everywoman 'places the Suitcase down at the feet of the audience', symbolically passing the struggle on to the wider Australian population. The final scene, 'Walk Across Bridges' documents the transformation of Indigenous resistance into a mass movement. The Everywoman approaches the march with some trepidation but is quickly encouraged by the size and goodwill of the crowd. The presence of the 'old aunty' indicates that the changing society is also accessible to older Indigenous people, despite decades of discrimination and disappointment. The most remarkable development in the play is that in the final scene, a '1/4 million people' indicate its preparedness to embrace societal change, in this case a society prepared to write 'sorry across the sky' and recognise the rights of First Nations people.

iv. Compare how the two texts explore the challenges faced by female characters.

Both texts feature strong female characters. Several of these characters experience violence and sexual abuse, nearly all of them encounter discrimination and persecution of some kind. Despite this, most of the women show remarkable fortitude and an incredible willingness to continue the fight against oppression. In The Longest Memory, there are three significant female characters students can focus on, Cook, Lydia and Great Granddaughter. All three narrate chapters and thus offer personal insights into their struggles. In The 7 Stages of Grieving, the Aboriginal Everywoman features throughout, but students can also reference specific characters like Nana, Aunty Grace, Black Skin Girl and old Aunty.

Cook, who narrates two chapters and features in several others, suffers at the hands of Sanders Senior. She is raped on two occasions. This jeopardises her marriage to Whitechapel and raises doubts about the paternity of her son, Chapel. The attacks cause great anguish and prompt her to seriously consider taking her own life. However, the more powerful narrative is Cook's refusal to submit to the overseer's attack - fighting 'so much that both [their] clothes were torn' - and her ability to rebuild her self-esteem and revel in her 'love' for her 'husband and son'.

Lydia narrates three chapters and features in 'Chapel' and 'The Virginian'. She is the privileged daughter of the plantation owner, but her sex is a severe barrier to her ambition. She debates her 'stream of suitors' on 'the rights of slaves', writes to the editor of The Virginian about paying 'blacks for their work instead of keeping them as slaves', is praised by her father for her 'wit and intelligence' and would be 'put ... in charge of his affair' in other circumstances. While Mother is fussing about her daughter's 'etiquette', 'carriage' and 'composure', Lydia conspires to live with Chapel in the North, 'under the same roof ... in the same bed'. Like Cook, she dares to resist the patriarchal forces that try to suppress her and ironically, her dream is shattered by a 'dream' slave's betrayal of his son and a junior overseer's ignorance.

Great Granddaughter narrates one chapter but appears only fleetingly elsewhere in the novella. Nevertheless, she is a third female character who shows courage and spirit in the face of male authority. She tells 'African Great Grandfather' (Whitechapel) she 'had a dream about Africa' and is immediately rebuked with 'Africa is not for you'. Great Granddaughter, like Cook and Lydia, refuses to submit. She returns 'him knitted brows', does not 'like what he had to say' and stops 'calling him Granddad'. Her 'dream' is replaced by 'nightmares ... of a beating that never ends', a clear reference to and rebuke of Whitechapel's tragic betrayal of his son. Great Granddaughter's failure to 'carry on' with the 'ablutions' of Whitechapel's corpse demonstrate her conflicted feelings for the old man; however, her adamant rejection of the betrayal signals the next generation's intention to reject the lessons of loyalty and obedience championed by the model slave. Moreover, the importance of this minor character is enhanced by the idea that she might survive to witness the end of slavery.

In the play, three characters - Black Skin Girl, Nana and Aunty Grace - represent the very different challenges faced by the Everywoman's ancestors. In Scene 9, Black Skin Girl is

harassed by the English alphabet and 'left topless with the letter Z on her chest' inviting connotations of cultural and sexual abuse. The abuse becomes more explicit in the next scene, 'Invasion Poem', when the woman, still topless, welcomes the strangers at the 'front door' and is beaten, bloodied and 'chained'. Her children are 'stolen' and 'forced to speak another tongue' and her mother 'told not to speak, not to dance'. In two short scenes, Enoch and Mailman capture the persecution of generations of Indigenous women from the late 18th century to the mid-20th century. The final stage direction stating that 'the woman retrieves her dress' indicates that she is intent on surviving and 'fighting'. This character links to Nana in the mid-20th century; a woman who lives her life in the margins of Australian society but whose 'stories' and songs provide a vital (if incomplete) connection to the past. Nana's sister, Aunty Grace, does not fit the pattern of oppression and resistance of the female characters; instead, she marries a 'Englishman after WWII', moves to London to sip 'tea with the Queen' and allows her skin to 'pale for want of sun'. The mob claim that she is 'stuck up and [not] really family', but Aunty Grace's outpouring of emotion at Nana's grave reveals the magnitude of her repressed connection to family and country.

The next link is the Aboriginal Everywoman who represents survival and the trials faced by Indigenous women in latter part of the 20th century. She is responsible for keeping the 'stories' and 'traditions' alive. She faces casual racism when trying to buy a 'dress' and more serious conflicts when protesting against police injustice and brutality. The confidence and the power of the Everywoman increases as the play progresses as she comes to embody the transition of the struggle into a mass movement. This transition is most evident in the juxtaposition of the two protests: the Scene 15 'peaceful march' at Musgrave Park draws the headline 'Defiant Aboriginal March', while in Scene 24, '1/4 of a million people' walk across Sydney Harbour Bridge forming a 'rainbow serpent' beneath the word 'sorry'. Finally, students can write about the old Aunty who attends the bridge walk. This character is mentioned in Scene 7 as the woman who attends random funerals in the hope of finding her 'real family'. The old Aunty can also be regarded as a survivor, someone who remains hopeful and continues to campaign for a better a deal. In this she might be viewed as an alternative to Aunty Grace - someone who stays connected and fights on. At the bridge walk, she is 'crying' but 'not the kind of crying you do at funerals' and her resilience continues the defiance that typifies the female characters in the two texts.

Pair 8 *I Am Malala: The Girl Who Stood Up for Education and Was Shot by the Taliban* by Malala Yousafzai with Christine Lamb, and *Pride* directed by Matthew Warchus

- i. ‘Malala and the protesters in *Pride* demonstrate that the brave will not be silenced.’
Compare how the texts *I Am Malala* and *Pride* explore the importance of speaking out.

In the age of the #MeToo and Black Lives Matter movements and the current landscape regarding the courage of women to speak out against intimidation, this topic provides students with the opportunity to discuss the paired texts drawn from seemingly opposing contexts, but which promote the need to speak out against discrimination, violence and marginalisation like never before.

There are numerous ways into the topic – perhaps the first path for students is to discuss dimensions around the power of speaking out – and what is expressed. In both texts, there is the powerful voice of conservatism, depicted in the opening scenes of the film, where Margaret Thatcher uses the media to espouse her ‘new kind’ of staunch Tory politics by annihilating the once powerful coal miners’ unions. Thatcher is depicted as an authoritarian voice which will drown out those protesting minorities – not just the coal miners, but the burgeoning gay rights movement seeking to have their rights and choices recognised and respected. Similarly, through his manipulative radio broadcasts, Fazlullah speaks out to also silence and intimidate – both to threaten those in the educated minority such as Ziauddin, who would question the Taliban, and then to oppress the Pushtan women into subjugating themselves even more severely. His radio broadcasts, like Thatcher’s televised speeches, act as a form of propaganda to dictate what is considered ‘right’; – that women must wear the burqa, restrict themselves to their homes, or expect to be punished for their brazen defiance, all couched in language that to obey is to be honourable and devout in their observance of ‘purdah’, yet, denying them freedom and any kind of voice in their patriarchal region. Although one context is set in rigidly traditional Pakistan, the other context of 1980s Britain contrasts in that it might be presumed as a place of democracy and freedom of speech, yet clearly the importance of speaking out against oppression is actually being suppressed.

Students could also draw clear links between those who speak out and those who are silenced. In the Swat valley, women are silenced – even as a child, Toor Pekai is silenced by illiteracy, which she comes to regret in her adulthood, while Malala’s classmate, Malka-e-Noor, the other female student against whom Malala competes for prizes, ultimately surrenders to the conformist Pushtan burden of ‘purdah’ rather than continue with her studies, after the Taliban brands the girls’ school as an affront to Islam. Students can examine how the disempowerment of a girl whose potential rivals Malala’s is an important point of difference – where one is oppressed into silence and anonymity, yet Malala bravely speaks out against such educational repression. While it is the females in Swat who are intimidated into silence, in Matthew Warchus’s film, there are men who would be silenced by societal pressures, such as Joe, Gethin and by inference Cliff – men who would live estranged lives from their sense of truth, rather than be rejected and ostracised by their families and

communities. Yet, like Malala and her school friends, certainly Joe and Gethin find courage to speak out, knowing that they at least have belonging in the L.G.S.M. community, while Cliff finds an implicit acceptance among the women of Onllwyn, who also embrace the support of the L.G.S.M. campaigners more readily.

Students would also explore those who most readily speak out – Malala and Malala’s role-model, former Pakistan Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto, whose courage, eloquence, and progressive thinking via her Harvard and Oxford education delivered her a powerful voice for change, whilst still adhering to her Muslim virtue and faith, yet who was silenced in a terrorist assassination. There are strong parallels between Malala and miner’s wife, Sian James, whose ‘sharp mind’ could either be wasted in her domestic sphere of wife and young mother, or pursue a budding career in politics, which she too later fulfils. Paired with Sian is the community power-house of Hefina, who likewise could be silenced by the bigotry of Maureen and her sons, but instead speaks out in gratitude and support for the L.G.S.M. members who have raised sorely needed funds for the coal-mining community. There are strong links between Malala and Mark Ashton, both brave leaders whose communities would rather have them conform and be invisible than speak out and confront the injustices being perpetuated, or the parallels between Ziauddin and unionist Dai Donovan, both men set against more powerful authoritarian forces who would break their wills than tolerate their continued defiance. Interestingly, students could also draw parallels between Toor Pekai and the emerging character of Joe, both silenced by their respective conservative communities, yet finding empowerment and belonging through the brave examples of a daughter who would advocate for generational change, and Mark - a man who created solidarity through his leadership, even in the face of entrenched prejudice and violence.

- ii. Compare how the texts *I Am Malala* and *Pride* explore the notion of powerful realisations.

Powerful realisations shape individuals, communities and history; - they impact our sense of self and the path of our journeys forward. For this pairing, the topic offers students the opportunity to examine not just powerful individual realisations, but also the broader notion of powerful realisations experienced by collectives.

Students might commence with an exploration of powerful, life-altering realisations experienced by individuals across the text pairing, such as the similar ways in which naivety is realised and falls away to reveal clarity and identity. There is a strong correlation between Ziauddin and Malala and the young gay character of Joe; in both cases, their sense of awareness and confronting truth have been latent or buried, not wanting to admit the ramifications and outcomes if their façade of naivety is shattered and the harsh realities of their intolerant worlds target them. In both Ziauddin and Malala’s case, the naïve belief of the Taliban not targeting ‘a school-girl’ shields them from the terrible possibility of Malala becoming a victim of violence, and it is only after the act that they both face the powerful realisations that they must make a choice – to surrender and be silenced, or to continue and

defy. In Malala's case, her realisation is that she has survived and been given her 'second life' – having faced death, she is now empowered with the realisation that she must use her life and fame to powerfully drive forward her advocacy for educational and gender change. In Joe's case, he has lived a life of suffocating suburban heterosexual conformity, and it is not until he is swept up in the L.G.S.M. protest march, that he begins to realise he could live a life true to his choices, but knowing there is a powerful turning point of realisation ahead in confronting his family with his sexuality. In both cases, their powerful realisations will lead to life-altering decisions, yet what unites them is their determination to protest for equality and acceptance.

Students could also examine the powerful realisation which lead women to change – in both Malala's case, and across a range of key female characters in the film, women are drawn down life-altering paths as a result of powerful realisations about their static lives and the potential they harbour. The character of Sian James, for example, commences the film as a peripheral character, but is encouraged by Dominic West's character of Jonathan not to waste her 'sharp mind', and thus she experiences the powerful realisation that she is more than miner's wife, committee member and mother – that her understanding and eloquence concerning the injustice suffered by the miners is equal to any male unionist or spokesperson, which later propels her to pursue tertiary education, culminating in her becoming a British MP. This provides contrasting ideas with Malala's mother, Toor Pekai, who surrendered to the conformity of wife, homemaker and mother, and who regrets her missed opportunities to learn and fulfil her potential. Her powerful realisation is prompted by her daughter's education and activism, and – like Sian – she later comes to re-define herself and her potential by learning to read in Birmingham. There are opportunities to explore how women surrender or rise above – Maureen experiences the corrosive realisation that she and her sons are prepared to betray bonds of trust in their community, by succumbing to fear and prejudice regarding the L.G.S.M group, which draws an equally powerful and empathetic realisation from Hefina, to expose Maureen's discrimination and instead welcome and accept the L.G.S.M. supporters, since they both share the struggle for rights and justice. Other powerful realisations can be explored through the parallels of Mark Ashton and Dai Donovan – leaders in their respective communities, but who arrive at the same powerful realisation that – although their causes are different – what unites and bonds them is the fight for human worth and respect against oppressive authority.

Most poignantly, there is the parallel between Mark and Malala, who both face the powerful realisation of confronting their mortality – Malala after the assassination attempt and Mark in realising he is HIV-positive. As leaders in their respective groups, they each face the terrible choice of abandoning their cause, or rising above their individual frailties, to continue to protest and advocate. In both cases. Malala and Mark become more determined to campaign, although for Mark – despite his HIV diagnosis – he is determined to leave a legacy of contribution, by making a difference to the lives of emerging gay men like Joe, even if Mark would not live to see positive change.

Strong students could then move on to exploring the notion of powerful realisations gained as a collective. There are comparison between the violent aggression of homophobic 1980s Britain, where even the coal miners initially question and fear the 'difference' of the L.G.S.M group, yet they come to powerfully realise that both the L.G.S.M. and the coal miners experience persecution, repression and demonisation via the press and conservative government, and that their shared injustice serves as a basis for solidarity and understanding. Students could link these insights to the same repressive intimidation and violence enacted under the Taliban in the Swat valley, where only the defiant voices of Malala and Ziauddin speak out to campaign and change the collective views of their society. There is the powerful realisation of solidarity and integrity, explored through both the schoolgirls who speak out and campaign with Malala against the formidable dictums of patriarchal tribal norms, and the powerful conclusion of the film where Dai Donovan and the unionists march with the L.G.S.M. community to defy a common enemy in the form of the press, the brutality of the police and the echelons of Thatcher's conservative government. There is also the notion that despite their significantly contrasting contexts - Malala and her school-mates and the miners and the L.G.S.M. movement - they are united in their humanity and their struggle for a voice of worth and recognition, bound by a common thread seeking human rights and change in their respective communities. Finally, there is the powerful realisation shared by both texts that nothing changes if you do not stand up and fight for it. In both cases there was no clear victory, the miners were broken by Thatcher's policies, and Malala had to flee her homeland to live out her dreams in England, but through their courageous protests and advocacy, they were instigators of change by raising awareness for issues beyond the conservative, often repressive norms that had controlled their communities.

SECTION C – Argument and persuasive language

High level sample response with annotations for each paragraph.

Jane Bowman has written another article exploring the often-debated merits or otherwise of millennials. She compares this generation of people born between the early 1980s and late 1990s to the older baby-boomer and Gen X generations. Bowman’s editorial, ‘The Cost of Convenience’ was published in an online publication called The Ethical Investor. It argues strongly that millennials desire to make decisions based on ‘convenience’ could have dire consequences for society. Bowman is the Lifestyle Editor of this publication and clearly represents one of the older generations mentioned above; she appears to have a clear bias against the millennials. She attempts to write in an authoritative, contemporary style. The editorial is aimed at the publication’s typical readership, mostly older, privileged progressives with the means to invest. However, the editorial also attracts some millennial readers, and attempts to persuade them to change their habits. One such reader, Millennial and Mad, has written a spirited defence of her generation. The comment, aimed at Bowman and others like her, contends that ‘millennials are unique problem solvers who seek to work smarter, not harder’.

The introduction highlights the issue, the types of articles and the contentions. It also analyses the identities of the writers, the target audiences and the comparative styles.

Bowman opens the article with a reference to the Disney-Pixar film, Wall-E, before claiming that millennials ‘laziness and lack of self-sufficiency’ is harming society. The editor’s decision to reference a popular Pixar film may be an attempt to appeal to millennials who would have been the target audience for Wall-E, but her claim that the ‘obese people moving around in robotic couches’ could be apt metaphor for a society run by millennials would resonate more with baby boomers and Gen Xers, as it appeals to the natural prejudices each generation has for the one that succeeds it. This is an aggressive beginning and the aligning of terms like ‘convenience’ and ‘no real effort’ with ‘possible dark future’ represents a further attack on millennials. The editorial becomes more serious when Bowman explains that ‘millennials have surpassed baby boomers as the largest demographic’ and their ‘consumer power and choices are highly influential’. This information could alarm older readers who might be reluctant to release their grip power. The negative portrayal of millennials is supported by the visual, albeit, in a more light-hearted fashion. The illustration depicts two stylishly dressed millennial men adopting power stances and looking hyper confident. The statistics to the left and right of the duo reveal the irony of graphic. The juxtaposition of ‘How Millennials see themselves’ with ‘How Millennials see other millennials’ attempts to portray millennials as ‘narcissistic’, ‘entitled’ and self-deluded. The vast disparity between the numbers aims to undermine the rising demographic. The repeated use of anti-millennial material in the first section of the article aims to reinforce the prejudices of the primary target audience, baby boomers and Gen Xers.

This paragraph analyses Bowman's reference to Wall-E and attack on millennials. It explains how key strategies attempt to position different readers, analyses the visual and identifies tone.

In the next section, Bowman focuses on her specific concern, the food industry, and argues, in a critical and nostalgic tone, that millennials 'increased reliance on food delivery services' will cause severe damage to society across a number of areas. She employs another juxtaposition, 'baby boomers and Gen Xers [reaching] for pots and pans' versus 'millennials ... reaching for phones and computers' to highlight the younger group's lack of industry. Next the editor draws on a report, 'Did Someone Kill the Kitchen' commissioned by ALPHA investment bank, and statistics – 'delivery sales could rise from \$35 billion a year ... to \$365 billion worldwide by 2030' – to support her point that millennial's lazy habits are going to have a significant impact on society. She argues that millennials are becoming 'conditioned to having things delivered to them' and claims that 'knowledge and skills that currently reside in homes ... could potentially be made irrelevant'. These critiques attempt to illicit a critical response from older readers who value a strong work ethic and traditional skills. Finally, Bowman argues that 'we could be at the first stage of industrializing meal production' which removes any sense of romance from the food experience and links to the idea of millennials killing the kitchen. Bowman suggests that this first killing will lead to other losses: 'jobs [in] supermarkets and ... traditional retail spaces'; 'appliances and ... employment in manufacturing'; and even 'the death of cafes and restaurants'. She creates a bleak picture when she states that all of this will damage our 'sense of connection and community'. These emotional appeals attempt to alarm older readers and position them to support her attacks on millennials. Her final appeal which references a 'COVID world, 'isolation' and 'obesity' subtly reminds her audience of the dystopian world of WALL-E and is clearly aimed at millennials, as she uses second person, imploring this demographic to think about the 'lost sense of community ... the next time you consider placing an order for food to be delivered'. This highly emotive ending attempts to provoke guilt and reflection and prompt millennials to reconsider the habit of prioritising 'convenience'.

This paragraph analyses Bowman's key arguments, explains how key strategies attempt to position different readers and notes tonal shifts.

Millennial and Mad shows no sign of reconsidering her behaviour, conversely she employs an aggressive tone to accuse 'Jane' of perpetuating the 'stereotype of millennials as lazy and entitled'. Her use of Bowman's first name indicates that Millennial might be a regular reader and the word 'stereotype' aims to undermine Bowman's argument. Next Millennial uses a more positive tone to argue that 'each generation is marked by its own unique characteristics'. The commenter emphasises this 'difference' in order to rebut Bowman's attacks; using positively connotated descriptions like 'unique problem solvers' and 'work smarter, not harder' to portray her generation in a positive light. These phrases aim to win

the support of other millennials and make older readers reconsider their bias. Following this, Millennial addresses Bowman's concerns about the food industry, arguing that 'consumers, including millennials, are spending more time at home ... cooking'. She supports this with a vague reference to 'studies' and a joke about millennials bragging about their 'personalised' cooking experiences on 'social media'. The failure to mention a specific study might concern some readers, but the use of humour could generate support from readers that think that Bowman's approach to the issue is too serious. Millennial and Mad concludes the comment with a focus on dystopian fantasy, subtly referencing Bowman's Wall-E example. The commenter uses the exaggerated term 'economic Armageddon' to ridicule Bowman's fears and discredit her argument. This aggressive use of satire aims to inspire other outraged millennials to take a stand against critics of their generation.

This paragraph begins with a link to the second article. It then analyses Millennial and Mad's key arguments, identifies tonal shifts, and explains how key strategies attempt to position different readers.

Bowman and Millennial and Mad offer two very different responses with opposing arguments. Bowman employs emotive and at times alarmist rhetoric to demonise millennials. She portrays them as 'self-centred', deluded and 'entitled' and is most critical of their 'reliance on food delivery services'. The Lifestyle Editor draws on an investment bank's research paper to support her case and then introduces a litany of worst-case scenarios to win over older readers and shock millennials into changing their behaviour. Millennial and Mad rebuts Bowman's arguments with a mix of passion, positive connotation and humour. She refuses to accept the older woman's attacks and appeals to other members of Bowman's generation to look beyond the 'stereotype'. Moreover, Millennial's clever rhetoric attempts to rally other millennials to her cause.

The conclusion summarises the key arguments and strategies of both articles, mentioning style, tone and audience.