English Studies

2011 Assessment Report

Government
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SACE
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ENGLISH STUDIES

2011 ASSESSMENT REPORT

SCHOOL-BASED ASSESSMENT

Assessment Type 1: Shared Studies

It is clear that teachers and students have embraced the new assessment procedures as the work presented at central moderation was, in the main, well designed, clearly packaged, and of a high standard. While the shared study of texts is a familiar component of the English Studies course, there have been obvious changes to the parameters for the design of tasks which have stimulated creative solutions. The 1000 word limit on tasks has meant that teachers have sought other mediums than just the familiar critical essay through which to assess students, such as paragraph comparisons on poems, shorter responses pairing texts around specific questions, annotated analysis of a poem or of scenes from a play, multimodal presentations comparing various shots or sequences from a film. In particular those tasks that require the comparison of a number of texts have required some alternative approaches since the essay format is difficult to manage in 1000 words when balancing a range of texts. It is clear, however, that this variety of tasks has benefitted the cohort in allowing students to explore texts in different ways that suit a wider range of learning styles. Amendments to learning and assessment plans also revealed that teachers realised that it was better for the students and the process of marking to reduce the number of specific features being assessed in each individual task. Thus it is apparent that the future is bright: inventive tasks assessing fewer specific features, catering to a wider range of skills, will enable the subject to evolve while still retaining the academic rigour for which English Studies is renowned. This will particularly be the case as it becomes clearer that the shared studies folio is a different type of assessment from the examination and while it has some transferrable elements that can help prepare students for the external assessment component, it is an exciting assessment tool in its own right that can stimulate diversity and innovation.

Students fared best in the Shared Text component when they had opportunity to draft and polish their work. While it is good practice in preparation for the examination to have students produce work under timed conditions, it is also beneficial to allow them to re-work the material produced under these circumstances to improve the quality for the folio. Many teachers used previous examination papers as a source for designing tasks which was good practice. Using and adapting previous exam questions enables students to experience the types of construction and question stems that are used in the external assessment component, and drawing upon previous Critical Readings is a sensible and time-saving approach. In the case of the latter it should be noted that it is not appropriate for students to have selected their best Critical Reading for submission in the folio since the task and conditions need to be in common for all students in the class. Of course it is acceptable for students to undertake a variety of formative critical reading tasks that then culminate in a summative task that is used for the folio.

Those students who fared best in the shared text component had developed a clearly analytical approach to the texts in coherent responses that addressed the question provided. Most students were able to display some knowledge and understanding of

the texts they had studied, including the use of the correct nomenclature to label stylistic features and language techniques. However, it was the more successful students who understood the difference between *knowing* about themes and techniques and events within texts as compared to *analysing* the author's choices and ideas. In particular moderators noted that the more successful students were aware of the techniques of characterisation and structure, and avoided recounting plot and presenting characters as people in their exploration of texts. Application for these students also involved carefully crafted responses that explored a central thesis while providing ample evidence and embedded quotation, communicated with naturally integrated metalanguage. In the case of connected text tasks, the more successful students created arguments that were centred upon the comparison of texts – observing both similarities and differences – rather than relying upon a structural placing of one text alongside another with only cursory connectives joining them. As already noted, these arguments and responses to questions were not always constructed as essays; paragraph responses, multimodal mediums, diagrammed annotations equally provided opportunity to be coherently analytical.

Assessment Type 2: Individual Study

The Individual Study is a task with which teachers are familiar. Its features are defined by the subject outline and therefore there is less flexibility in the task design than with pieces in the Shared Studies folio. A supporting study provides the context in which students individually analyse two texts and this culminates in a Critical Essay of up to 2000 words in which students compare the two texts in a cohesively structured argument. It is clear in the quality of work presented at central moderation that this particular task is still highly valued. Students appreciated the opportunity to independently exercise the skills, knowledge and understanding that the shared texts component of the course teaches them, exploring a range of literary works, producing a polished document over which they have ownership and obvious pride. Those students who understood that the development of the Individual Study is a process of selection, exploration, collation, refinement and drafting produced work that was a pleasure to read.

As in previous years the more successful students had:
- carefully selected texts that were both accessible and challenging;
- developed clear analysis of those texts that progressed beyond just knowledge and understanding;
- analysed the techniques appropriate to the texts types being studied and the authors' particular use of these stylistic features;
- displayed an appreciation for the connections between the texts, comparing similarities and differences;
- developed a succinct question that involved a comparative element and referred to the authors' construction of the texts;
- constructed a cohesive argument that integrated the discussion of both texts;
- provided ample evidence from the texts, embedding quotation, and using the metalanguage appropriate to the text type; and
- refined the final document so that it was communicated with precision and accuracy.

Assessment Type 3: Text Production

While the Text Production component sometimes presented challenges in task design – with some not sure as to the appropriateness of tasks, or the best way in which to create approaches to stimulate the best outcomes – the quality of work presented in the folios was ample evidence that teachers and students have embraced the creative potential of the text production folio and have appreciated the emphasis that the SACE places upon this aspect of the English Studies course. After all, to *create* is – in the hierarchy of academic skills – the culmination of knowledge, understanding and analysis. It is application at its most refined. Those students who clearly displayed an insight into the stylistic features of the text type with which they were working by applying them in creative ways produced the most successful work. More successful narratives, for example, demonstrated an understanding of imagery, characterisation, structure or setting rather than just recounting the 'events' of a plot. Conversely, tasks that were too derivative – a magazine article on body image that imitated similar pieces, for example – potentially limited creativity and originality. Similarly, tasks that were designed more in a text response style – relying on analysis and essay-like structures – did not always provide the opportunity to express creativity and tended to limit the range of text types with which students had the opportunity to work. It was important that students considered the audience for which they were writing and how the features of the form could be used to engage that audience. Experimenting with different forms presented exciting opportunities to produce a range of texts: from children's books, to poems, narratives, web sites, persuasive pieces, a sequence of letters to tell a story and create character, editorials, short scripts, biographical recounts, travelogues, reviews or experimental vignettes.

Oral presentations also came in a variety of forms: persuasive orals, biographical recounts, speeches, performance pieces or narrated photo stories. While the written text production tasks were not able to be responses to shared texts, it was appropriate for the oral tasks to involve aspects of shared text analysis. Thus some students delivered tutorials or presentations that taught the class about a poem, or an aspect of a novel, or provided the deconstruction of a scene from a film. This was an acceptable way to develop transferrable information across components of the course, with some even delivering an oral on their own Individual Study thus developing a different method of creating supporting material. With the representation of the oral tasks at moderation, accessible evidence of student achievement was the key. Where aural or video recordings were not manageable, transcripts of the content were essential and other artefacts from the presentation – such as cue cards, photos of interpretative displays, posters, or print-outs of PowerPoint presentations – were also useful, as were marking sheets on which teachers provided detailed feedback against the specific features and performance standards. Ultimately, moderators need as much access as possible to the same evidence used by the teacher to reach an assessment decision. It was also helpful in all sections of the school-based assessment for moderators to have a clear indication about how assessment decisions were made, whether this was provided through context sheets, feedback on the work itself, individual grades assigned to individual tasks, or shaded performance standards sheets.

It was a satisfying and rewarding process for moderators to read the text production work of the English Studies cohort. The subject and the students who choose to

study it are all the richer for this component of the course now being emphasised through moderation. This privileges originality, creative application and imagination.

EXTERNAL ASSESSMENT

Assessment Type 4: Examination

The insights gathered by the marking team reveal that the examination this year was clear and straightforward and enabled students to showcase their knowledge of texts and their writing skills. The majority of the students were prepared for the task and could adapt their knowledge of the texts to the demands of the questions.

The best answers were the ones that most clearly addressed the performance standards across the four task design criteria. The majority of students were able to convey their knowledge and understanding, although a small minority tended to write event-driven essays whereby the plot received too much focus. Those students who were able to show their awareness of techniques and textual conventions were better able to demonstrate their achievement of this performance standard. Additionally, the most successful students were able to demonstrate their analysis of texts, where they were able to make comparisons and show the effects of stylistic features upon the reader's response to ideas within texts. Addressing the set question, integrating discussion in essays involving more than one text, and use of evidence to support responses were also key elements of a successful essay. Markers commented on the need to write clearly, including the correct use of subject-specific vocabulary, without resorting to an overly dense register of expression.

Section A: Shared Studies

In the following section of the report specific comments are provided on each of the questions in the examination. Extracts from the instructions to markers are provided, as are comments made by markers about the specific ways in which students responded to the questions.

Questions on Paired Texts

In this section it is important that students referred to both texts in approximately equal proportions, making comparisons as they wrote their responses. This is an essential element of Ap2: 'Recognition of connections between texts, and an integrated approach to comparing and contrasting texts.' It is not appropriate if the student wrote half the essay on one text, and then the other half on the second.

Question 1

Compare the ways in which the authors of two texts use minor characters to emphasise ideas.

'Compare the ways' allowed students to analyse both similarities and differences. The question specifically refers to the stylistic feature of minor characters and this had to be the organising focus of the response. Markers were flexible in accepting students' definitions of minor characters; however, those considered traditionally as central characters (e.g. Hamlet) would not be appropriate for the organising focus of the discussion. The most successful students considered how the minor characters

are used by the author, whether they are central to the idea being discussed, are used as a contrast with central characters, or have symbolic connotations, to emphasise ideas. The word *ideas*, in plural form, suggested that students would discuss more than one idea in the essay; however, the balance of these ideas was determined by the texts chosen and such ideas may have involved several facets of one key concept. This question was generally well answered, except for those students who struggled to identify minor characters; the best answers were those in which students were able to clearly link the minor characters to the significant ideas in the texts.

Question 2

Compare the ways in which the authors of two texts explore the idea that it is important to have something to hope for.

'Compare the ways' allowed for both similarities and differences, and students had to discuss the stylistic features used by the authors to explore the idea that it is important to have something to hope for. Markers accepted a liberal range of stylistic features (such as contrast, repetition, symbols, characterisation, narrative viewpoint), and the better responses moved well beyond plot development and themes. Such students invariably focused on whether or not it is important to have something to hope for; for example, that it is hope that keeps us going, provides motivation, allows us to take a stand or is a key element of the human condition. Markers allowed students latitude regarding what they saw as being important in having something to hope for. The more successful students made reference to stylistic features and effects. Students were also free to contend with the statement.

Question 3

Compare the ways in which the authors of two texts explore the idea that redemption can be found in the most adverse circumstances.

'Compare the ways' allowed for both similarities and differences, and students had to discuss the stylistic features used by the authors to explore the idea that redemption can be found in the most adverse circumstances. The better students focused on whether this statement is actually true; some students said it was possible, some said it was not, some said both. Markers allowed students latitude regarding what they saw as redemption, whether this is emotional or spiritual, or achieved through a specific act. The same scope was provided for the phrase *adverse circumstances*, which may refer to environmental factors, poverty, deprivation, abuse, or isolation. Some students simply gave instances of redemption amidst adversity without any reference to stylistic features and effects. The better responses were those which focused on articulating the adverse circumstances which necessitated redemption, and used techniques as the vehicle for the discussion.

Question 4

Compare the ways in which the authors of two texts explore the idea that the need to belong is a powerful motivator.

'Compare the ways' allows for both similarities and differences and students had to discuss the stylistic features used by the authors to explore the idea that the need to belong is a powerful motivator. The best student responses focused on whether or not the need to belong is a powerful motivator: some students said it was; and some said it was not. Markers allowed students latitude regarding what they saw as a need to belong, (as this belonging might be to a society, culture, group, family, or movement), and what type of motivator in practice this is. The more successful students were those who went beyond simply offering a discussion on characters that want to belong; such students made pertinent references to stylistic features and effects.

Question 5

If your study involved pairs of contrasting text types, compare the ways in which the authors use the conventional features of each text type to explore similar ideas.

In this question students had to focus on text construction. The key phrases—*contrasting text types*, *conventional features*, and *each text type*—should have alerted students to avoid the question if their pairing was of two like texts. The role of conventional features in conveying ideas had to be explicitly dealt with; the better students explicitly labeled and explored devices that are pertinent to the relevant text types. The connecting element of this question is the *similar ideas* around which the more successful essays were constructed.

Question 6

Compare the ways in which the authors of two texts use hostile environments as a context for the exploration of ideas.

The better students emphasised the authors' use of hostile environments as a context and the way in which this context is used to explore ideas. Answers that merely stated that the environments are hostile missed the crux of the question. A generous definition was allowed for the term *hostile environments* as these could be social or physical environments, or other isolating factors. A number of students successfully analysed stylistic features and language devices in order to discuss how the hostile environment was created and used; additionally, such responses typically explored how other devices intertwine to construct hostile environments as a context to explore ideas. Such an approach was clearly preferable to one in which students commented on what characters did in hostile environments rather than focusing upon the environment as a context to explore ideas.

Section B: Shared Studies

Part 1: Questions on Single Texts

Question 7

How does the author of a prescribed text use stylistic features to explore the tension between generations?

The focus for the better student answers was on the way the author uses the stylistic features of the text to explore 'the tension between generations'. It was not adequate to just explore the theme of the tension between generations as represented in the text. Students needed to show how the stylistic features are used to explore the idea. Students generally read 'stylistic features' as 'techniques' and used the terms interchangeably in their answers to this and other questions.

Question 8

Show how the author of a prescribed text explores **one** *of the following pairs of ideas: near and far; lost and found, or inside and outside.*

There is contrast and tension within each pair of *ideas* and students were expected to discuss both aspects of the pair, but only one pairing. Each pairing could be read literally and/or metaphorically. The point is that the pairs of concepts are very general and students were free to apply each pair to their text as they chose. Much depended on the way students were able to show the pair of ideas to be relevant to the text and were able to discuss the text in terms of the techniques or stylistic features used to explore the ideas. The pairs needed to be seen for what they are – catchy strategies designed to give students opportunities to demonstrate their knowledge of a text, and students who answered this question invariably analysed the pairs in metaphorical ways to explain ideas or comment on stylistic features and their effects.

Question 9

How does the author of a prescribed text explore the idea that a sense of duty can be a source of conflict?

The best students contended with the idea that a sense of duty can be a source of conflict, and the qualifier *can* allowed some students to show in some cases it is not. The issue is though they needed to connect the tensions of duty and conflict rather than separating the two ideas (e.g. only discussing a sense of duty). The *sense of duty* and the source of it were open to interpretation and markers were prepared to accept the students' interpretations (e.g. duty to self, duty to society, duty to others). Similarly the resulting conflict may be varied (e.g. inner torment; family conflict; cultural and political tension; or war). Whilst students needed to show the nature of the *sense of duty* and the *conflict,* the main focus in their answer had to be on how this is explored. Thus the students who refined their evidence to support the idea of duty causing conflict often produced excellent essays, and avoided falling into plot recount.

Question 10

How does the author of a prescribed text explore the idea that it is essential to confront the truth about the past?

The idea that it is 'essential to confront the truth about the past' is open to question; an author may emphatically present this insight, or in contrast, may explore the notion that there is no point in confronting the truth. In either case the author is still exploring the central issue. The *truth about the past* may be a personal truth (e.g., *Candelo* and *Atonement*) but may also operate on a range of levels (personal and cultural as in *Radiance*) personal, cultural and political (as in *Reading in the Dark* or *The Reader*). The focus of the better answers was on how the author explores the idea in the chosen text. The wording of the question suggests that the *truth* to be *confronted* is something unpleasant or denied. However, a student who does identify a positive aspect of the past to *confront* will still be dealing with the question. This question drew a strong response from those who studied either *The Kite Runner* or *Atonement*.

Question 11

'We each have our own perspective.'
How does the author of a prescribed text use the conventional features of the text type to explore this idea?

The focus of the answer must be on how the author explores the idea that 'we each have our own perspective'. Different readings of this quotation were allowed, but the more successful students contended with the notion of perspectives in some form. It was not sufficient to identify the perspective of an individual or even a number of perspectives presented in a text. How the idea that perspectives vary from individual to individual is presented had to be the focus of the answer. The *conventional features of the text type* part of the question directed students to engage with the particular features of the film, the drama text or the prose text that enable the author to present and explore this idea. Students were expected to focus their answers on this aspect of the question.

Question 12

How does the author of a prescribed text explore the idea that freedom is worth the cost?

The focus of the answer needed to be on how the author explores the idea that *freedom is worth the cost.* Students had to contend with the tension between freedom and its cost. (Whether it is worth it or not may depend on the text.) The best responses were able to clearly link the cost of freedom to whether it was worth it.

Part 2: Questions on Poetry Texts

Students were instructed to write on a range of poets and poems. A range is defined as 'at least two'. While the subject outline requires *teachers* to select at least two poets from the prescribed list, the stem of each question includes the phrase 'the poets you have studied this year', and does not specifically require students to use poets from the prescribed list. Students are therefore permitted to write on any poets of their choice.

All four questions begin with the verb 'compare'. It was expected that students would examine both similarities and differences within the poets in response to this instruction. However, the balance of similarities versus differences was dependent on the poets selected for study.

All four questions required students to 'compare *the ways*' that poets approach the subject. This phrase allows students to examine the stylistic features and poetic techniques employed by the poets, and also to explore the approach taken to the idea stated in the question.

Question 13

*Compare the ways in which the poets you studied this year explore **one** of the following pairs: love and hate; shame and pride; faith and doubt; or mourning and celebration.*

Students should have selected *one* of the pairs. It was expected that students would deal with both aspects of the pair (love/hate, shame/pride, faith/doubt, and mourning/celebration); however, the degree of balance in the discussion depended on the poets selected for study. It was not necessary for students to contrast the aspects, and some chose to examine one of the words in the pair in one section of the essay, and the second in another section; others chose to construct an answer in which they integrated the discussion. The question required students to compare the ways the poets explore these pairs, and it was therefore necessary that the response examined the way in which different poets explore the same aspect. It was acceptable for students to compare the ways in which two poets explore one aspect (love, for example), and a different set of poets explore the other (hate, for example), but both aspects should have been explored somewhere within the essay by comparing the ways in which different poets approach them. The interpretation of the aspects themselves (love/hate, shame/pride, faith/doubt, mourning/celebration) was flexible (faith in God, faith in humanity, faith in oneself, hatred of others, hatred of injustice, hatred of cruel human actions), as long as one contended with concepts within the aspect. While this was a very popular question, students who dealt with poems sequentially with a nod to comparison by using connectives like 'similarly' or 'contrastingly' were not as strong as those who made clear contrasts or comparisons throughout the essay.

Question 14

Compare the ways in which the poets you studied this year explore different aspects of beauty.

While this was not a very popular question, the majority of students who attempted it did so very successfully. Students were able to define beauty in whatever way was consistent with the poetry they studied, and thus the reading of the term was broad, (beauty in appearance, beauty in nature, beauty in human attitudes and actions). The question required students to examine different aspects of beauty (beauty is alluring, beauty is fleeting, beauty is worth preserving), and so it was not acceptable to examine only one concept of beauty. There needed to be some contending with the idea of *differences* in the approach to the topic. How the student dealt with these differences was open to variation: some may have examined how two poets explore one aspect of beauty, and then how another two poets explore another aspect; other students may have explored how each poet explores different aspects. Comparisons did, however, need to be drawn between poets within the argument, and this was the distinguishing feature of the better responses.

Question 15

Compare the ways in which the poets you studied this year explore the desire to preserve things that really matter.

Students were required to compare the poets' exploration of a desire to preserve things that really matter. The definition of 'things that really matter' was dependent on the poetry the student studied – but there needed to be some justification that the 'thing' does matter, (simply writing about preservation itself was not an adequate approach; the value of the thing being preserved had to be considered). It was not enough for students to show that poets do want to preserve things that matter, but rather they needed to compare the ways in which the poets *explore* this idea. The weaker responses tended to compile a list of what mattered to each individual poet; the better ones paired concepts and looked at similar and different ways in which the poets addressed these.

Question 16

Compare the ways in which the poets you studied this year use variations in tone and mood to influence the reader's response.

Tone and mood can be interchangeable terms and thus be coupled throughout the essay, or students may have examined them separately. The question assumes that poets use variations in tone and mood in order to influence the reader's response. This response may have been to the ideas within the poem, or it may have been an emotional/visceral response – or both. Students may have explored these variations within single poems or across a range of poems by the same poet. They must, however, have compared the ways in which the poets they studied use these variations to create an effect. While some students simply examined single poets and pointed out different aspects of tone and mood, the better student responses looked at variations within the poems themselves, or grouped the variations in tone under pairs of poets, and discussed how one pair of poets may present a celebratory tone in a certain collection of poems, and then in the next paragraph, explore the same pair and highlight how they reveal a sinister tone.

Section C: Critical Reading

Markers noted that the two texts were highly accessible and that students were able to discern the meaning and main point of each author. The text type and subject matter were clearly familiar to students, and this seemed to afford students the opportunity to demonstrate their skills against the performance standards.

The main area of challenge for most students noted by markers was in the area of time management; some students wrote overly long responses to the first question in particular, and then seemed to have trouble in completing the last question to the required depth. Another point highlighted by a number of markers was that some students seemed to forget the imperative in the last question to *compare*. Students who simply wrote one paragraph on one text, and then a second paragraph on the subsequent text, were not really demonstrating an integrated approach to their comparison. In this regard, some markers noted the effective use of paragraphing that led students to cohesively synthesise the features of the texts together.
The great majority of students had little trouble with the content-based questions of (a) and (b). The point above, however, about overly long answers should be noted.

Additionally, many markers were struck by the different spellings of the authors' names, particularly for Shepherd.

Question (c) offered the possibility for students to discriminate more finely in their interpretations of the texts; for example, better answers pointed out that both authors acknowledge the high place sport has in Australian culture but that their opinions differ as to whether this is an entirely positive thing. Occasionally it was noted that some students quoted slabs of the articles to form the basis of their response. It is of course the better students who can synthesise ideas and write in their own words with textual evidence used judiciously to add to their own interpretations of the texts. In the main, however, this question was well answered with most students writing pertinent answers.

Question (d) was generally well answered, even by students who did not do a particularly good job on the first three questions. Students were able to recognise a range of textual features, and explain how those features and techniques further the articles' effectiveness. One marker commented that students sometimes limited themselves by writing three paragraphs on three separate techniques. Invariably, such an approach was not as effective as those students who were able to layer their paragraphs and discuss eight or more relevant techniques. It is also worth reiterating the point about comparison—less effective responses addressed the two texts separately, often identifying different techniques used by each author, so that the comparative aspect was lost. The best answers integrated the comparative elements within paragraphs, and made observations about how readers are positioned by the respective approaches of the authors.

Notes to Markers

The following notes were provided to markers to indicate the possible responses students may make for the critical reading section. Students would not need to have covered all of these points to receive a high mark. Some students may have thought of additional, perceptive insights. These notes are a guide as to what students may observe in their reading of the texts.

(a) How does G.M. Shepherd's recount of Bill Cumming's behaviour illustrate his central points about sport? *(one paragraph)*

Students' responses should concentrate on how Shepherd develops his central points through his depiction of Bill Cummings, rather than simply describing the latter's attitude. Connections must be made between the recount of Bill Cumming's character and the broader points made about sport. In recounting Bill Cumming's behaviour, Shepherd makes a number of negative observations about Australians' attitude to sport generally, his chief point being that 'taking our sport far too seriously … can bring out the worst in us'. He is used as a stereotype of all that destroys the virtues associated with sport such as participation, encouragement, acceptance of one's skills and limitations, respect for others including the umpire and spectator and the sheer delight of being part of a "fumbling, tumbling horde" that is focussed on the immediacy of the present. Cumming's attitude equates sporting prowess with manhood, and so demeans achievements in other cultural fields such as the Arts as measures of male fulfilment and success. Ultimately, this attitude leads us to behave 'as though our identity itself is tied up in our achievements' in sport.

(b) What does Waleed Aly suggest are the reasons why Australians "take sport more seriously than anyone else'? *(one paragraph)*

Waleed Aly asserts that Australians "take sport more seriously than anyone else" because of our young culture, we "never ruled an empire", we never developed culture as in Europe nor architecture as in Egypt but instead take solace and pride in the actions and behaviour of those who are on the sporting world stage. Aly suggests that we define our prowess and our place in the world in terms of sporting achievement rather than military or artistic achievements. Sport is thus more about life than just 'games': it provides us with a version of 'empire' through a form of world 'rule' that is sporting rather than political. Aly maintains that sporting achievement is no less legitimate because the concept of culture is broad enough to include sport as well as art and other fields of human endeavour. At the same time, sport provides us with our own national 'stories': those 'narratives and characters' which are the stuff of legend and which are our source of exemplars and role models.

(c) How do the two authors differ in their belief about the place of sport in Australian culture? *(one paragraph)*

Students should explore the differences each other reveals about the role played by sport in Australian society. Shepherd attempts to show how sport reveals the ugly side of the Australian character. Our over-emphasis on sporting prowess overshadows our achievements in other fields and marginalises those fields by comparison. As such, sport has become much more than 'just a game', to the detriment of our culture. Aly on the other hand promotes the idea that sport reveals the triumphant side of Australia in the world. Sport, he says, is as much a part of culture as the Arts, and as such deserves due recognition. For Aly, and Australians generally, sport is much more than just games; it defines our national identity and gives us our heroes.

(d) Compare the stylistic features used by the authors to influence the reader to respond to their point of view. *(two or more paragraphs)*

The operative verb in this question is *compare*, and so students must discuss the similarities and differences in the ways the authors use stylistic features to influence the reader's response.

Shepherd uses the power of story to influence the reader. His detailed narrative of Cummings's activities turns the average suburban Saturday morning into an emblem of broader Australian cultural attitudes. Shepherd's ability to draw strong general conclusions out of a particular example are augmented by the use of humour, in particular his creating of similes where hyperbole makes us focus on the ludicrousness of Cummings's behaviour. Shepherd thus appeals both to our common sense and to our senses of reason and proportion in order to win the reader over to his argument.

Aly relies instead on the power of description and exposition to make his points. Rather than relating specific incidents, he paints a powerful, big-picture view of the place of sport in Australian culture, and of the place Australia occupies in the world because of sport. His equation of sporting achievement with imperial grandeur creates a different sense of proportion in the reader by elevating sport above mere game-playing. Aly's persuasive strategy involves appealing to our senses of national identity and of pride in our heritage.

Both use the title to position the reader to contemplate the role of sport in our lives. Shepherd's title challenges the reader to question the role of sport and what is actually involved; the title is defiant and questioning in tone whereas Aly's, *This rich sporting life*, is more positive and alludes to the cultural wealth provided by sport.

Both Aly and Shepherd use structure to challenge the reader's attitudes towards sporting attitudes and values. Both present the reader with a sporting scenario; Shepherd's short sentences in his first paragraph provide us with a sense of urgency and the rough and tumble of a game involving six year old children whereas Aly's long, descriptive sentences challenge the reader to question why people are spectators at adult games considering that the temperature is often unconducive and where 'sense mandates sleep'. Shepherd presents us with a typical child's soccer game, which is spoiled by the aggressive parent who is symptomatic of those who believe we must 'win at all costs', on fields where we are renowned for 'sledging' and for 'witch hunting'. However, Aly develops our fascination with sport by assertions, and reference to renowned sporting heroes. He ignores the ugliness associated with sport. Both recognise that sport is associated with age for Aly comments that 'Our Olympic contingent seems to include most of the adult population', whereas Shepherd challenges us to realise that sport is age related and thus should be celebrated regardless of outcome for 'You did your best…' In Shepherd's penultimate paragraph he urges us to 'celebrate a diverse range of achievements' and possibilities that are not age and sport related and by using a series of rhetorical questions he persuades us of the urgency to think about our behaviour. His last paragraph reinforces his belief that 'to be sporting is more than just an activity: it is an attitude' but uses reference to his personal experience, including humour, irony, imagery and the exclamation mark in the final sentence to show how difficult it is to change people's attitudes to sport and how, despite one's intelligence and ability to persuade intellectually through an array of stylistic features, on a real field, 'brawn' wins out! However, Aly ends by extolling the virtue of sport and sporting heroes by alluding to Ian Thorpe, and uses the connective "but" to reinforce the enduring attraction of sport in our culture.

Shepherd's colloquial language, such as 'Kids' soccer,' and 'a bit of leather' reveal his casual attitude to sport whereas Aly's use of sophisticated words such as 'manifest', 'executed', and 'imbibe,' reveal the admiration and pensive tone of his article; he is respectful of sportsmen. Although both use personal pronouns such as 'you', 'we' and 'our', Aly's are less frequently used and with his assertions, create a serious and contemplative tone whereas Shepherd's connectives such as 'And you know what?' and 'Yes,' and 'If only we…' reinforce his chatty, light, conversational tone and involve us further; we are easily alienated from those parents like Bill Cummings, who take sport too seriously.

English Studies
Chief Assessor