



Units 3 and 4 English and ESL

Practice Exam Question Booklet

Duration: 15 minutes reading time, 3 hours writing time

Structure of book:

Section	Number of questions	Number of questions to be answered	Number of marks
A	21	1	20
B	4	1	20
C	1	1	20
Total			60

- Students are permitted to bring into the examination room: pens, pencils, highlighters, erasers and rulers.
- Students are not permitted to bring into the examination room: blank sheets of paper and/or white out liquid/tape.
- No calculator is allowed in this examination.

Materials supplied:

- This question and answer booklet of 11 pages.

Instructions:

- You must complete all three sections of the examination.
- All answers must be written in English.
- You must not write on two film texts in the examination.

Section A – Text Response (Reading and Responding)

Instructions

Section A requires students to complete **one analytical/expository** piece of writing in response to **one** topic (either i. or ii.) on **one** selected text.

Indicate in the box on the first line of the script book whether you are answering i. or ii.

In your response you must develop a sustained discussion of **one** selected text from the text list below. Your response must be supported by close reference to and analysis of the selected text.

For collections of poetry or short stories, you may choose to write on several poems or short stories, or on one or two in very close detail, depending on what you think is appropriate.

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

If you write on a film text in Section A, you must **not** write on a film text in Section B.

Text List

- | | |
|--|---------------------------|
| 1. <i>A Christmas Carol</i> | Charles Dickens |
| 2. <i>Brooklyn</i> | Colm Toibin |
| 3. <i>Bypass: The Story of a Road</i> | Michael McGirr |
| 4. <i>Cat's Eye</i> | Margaret Atwood |
| 5. <i>Cosi</i> | Louis Nowra |
| 6. <i>Dear America – Letters Home from Vietnam</i> | Edited by Bernard Edelman |
| 7. <i>Henry IV: Part I</i> | William Shakespeare |
| 8. <i>In the Country of Men</i> | Hisham Matar |
| 9. <i>Interpreter of Maladies</i> | Jhumpa Lahiri |
| 10. <i>On the Waterfront</i> | Directed by Elia Kazan |
| 11. <i>Ransom</i> | David Malouf |
| 12. <i>Selected Poems</i> | Gwen Harwood |
| 13. <i>Stasiland</i> | Anna Funder |
| 14. <i>The Old Man Who Read Love Stories</i> | Directed by Rolf de Heer |
| 15. <i>The Reluctant Fundamentalist</i> | Mohsin Hamid |
| 16. <i>The War Poems</i> | Wilfred Owen |
| 17. <i>Things We Didn't See Coming</i> | Steven Amsterdam |
| 18. <i>Twelve Angry Men</i> | Reginald Rose |
| 19. <i>Will You Please Be Quiet, Please?</i> | Raymond Carver |
| 20. <i>Wuthering Heights</i> | Emily Bronte |
| 21. <i>Year of Wonders</i> | Geraldine Brooks |

1. *A Christmas Carol* by Charles Dickens

- i. "I hope to live to be another man from what I was."
Who or what enables Scrooge's transformation in *A Christmas Carol*?

OR

- ii. 'Despite the name of the novella, *A Christmas Carol* is about charity no matter the season.'
Do you agree?

2. *Brooklyn* by Colm Toibin

- i. 'Secrets are both important and difficult to keep in the communities that Ellis inhabits.'
Discuss.

OR

- ii. 'Ellis lives and works in two different places, but neither is really her home.'
Do you agree?

3. *Bypass: The Story of a Road* by Michael McGirr

- i. 'McGirr's tale gives real meaning to the saying "it's the journey that's important, not the destination".'
Discuss.

OR

- ii. '*Bypass: The Story of a Road* is about people, not places.'
Do you agree?

4. *Cat's Eye* by Margaret Atwood

- i. "We have been shark to one another, but also lifeboat."
'*Cat's Eye* explores the contradictions and tensions within any relationship.'
Discuss.

OR

- ii. 'The timespan of the novel means that the reader follows not only Elaine's life, but the changing landscape of Toronto.'
Discuss.

5. *Così* by Louis Nowra

- i. '*Così* shows the different ways people can choose to evade reality.'
Discuss.

OR

- ii. What is the significance of the play within a play structure of *Così*?

6. *Dear America – Letters Home from Vietnam* edited by Bernard Edelman

- i. "It's a beautiful country, but I hate it!"
How does the physical landscape shape the experience of the writers of *Dear America – Letters Home from Vietnam*?

OR

- ii. '*Dear America – Letters Home from Vietnam* gives a perspective on war beyond the history books.'
Discuss.

7. *Henry IV: Part I* by William Shakespeare

- i. What is the significance of low status characters in *Henry IV: Part I*?

OR

- ii. In what ways and to what ends does Shakespeare use symmetry in *Henry IV: Part I*?

8. *In the Country of Men* by Hisham Matar

- i. "Nationalism is as thin as a thread, perhaps that's why many feel it must be anxiously guarded."
Discuss the significance and complexities of the narrator's relationship with Libya.

OR

- ii. The narrator asks himself: "Can you become a man without becoming your father?"
How is the narrator shaped and affected by his father?

9. *Interpreter of Maladies* by Jhumpa Lahiri

- i. "Because we're never going to see each other, ever again."
'There is no sense of permanence in Lahiri's stories.'
To what extent do you agree?

OR

- ii. 'Lahiri describes characters and scenes in meticulous detail.'
For what purpose and to what ends is this specificity used?

10. *On the Waterfront* directed by Elia Kazan

- i. "Shouldn't everybody care about everybody else?"
'The characters of *On the Waterfront* are motivated by selfishness and greed.'
Do you agree?

OR

- ii. 'For all the focus on those with power, *On the Waterfront* is really about the powerless.'
To what extent do you agree?

11. *Ransom* by David Malouf

- i. 'For all its focus on the immortals, *Ransom* is really about those who face mortality.'
Discuss.

OR

- ii. "His heart softened by fellow feeling, since he too was a father."
'It is paternal love that unites the men of *Ransom*.'
Do you agree?

12. *Selected Poems* by Gwen Harwood

- i. 'Harwood's poetry reflects on the challenges and mundaneness of married life.'
Discuss.

OR

- ii. 'It is Harwood's use of recurring motifs and imagery that allows her poetry to resonate with the reader.'
Discuss.

13. *Stasiland* by Anna Funder

- i. "You cannot destroy your past, nor what it does to you. It's not ever, really, over."
'*Stasiland* reflects on the power that memories have on people's lives.'
Discuss.

OR

- ii. '*Stasiland* isn't just a story of trauma and suffering, it is also one of optimism in the face of great obstacles.'
To what extent do you agree?

14. *The Old Man Who Read Love Stories* directed by Rolf de Heer

- i. 'Through the life of Antonio, *The Old Man Who Read Love Stories* suggests that happiness can stem from choosing unconventional paths.'
Do you agree?

OR

- ii. 'The film portrays the ability of love to overcome adversity.'
To what extent do you agree?

15. *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* by Mohsin Hamid

- i. '*The Reluctant Fundamentalist* suggests that there are many different kinds of loss.'
Discuss.

OR

- ii. 'For all of its focus on the story that Changez tells, *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* is really about silence.'
Discuss.

16. *The War Poems* by Wilfred Owen

- i. Does Owen's poetry offer a complete account of the realities of warfare?

OR

- ii. 'Owen's poetry speaks to the deep fraternal bond that is built between men in times of conflict.'
Do you agree?

17. *Things We Didn't See Coming* by Steven Amsterdam

- i. 'The relationships in *Things We Didn't See Coming* are based on the need to survive, not love.'
Do you agree?

OR

- ii. 'Amsterdam's portrayal of the future is bleak.'
To what extent do you agree?

18. *Twelve Angry Men* by Reginald Rose

- i. What comment does *Twelve Angry Men* make about democracy?

OR

- ii. '*Twelve Angry Men* suggests that it is easy to influence, but impossible to alter people's prejudices.'
Do you agree?

19. *Will You Please Be Quiet, Please?* by Raymond Carver

- i. 'The simplicity of Carver's depictions adds to the emotional intensity of the collection.'
To what extent does Carver's writing style impact on the collection?

OR

- ii. 'Carver's collection reveals the secret thoughts and secret fears of suburban America.'
Discuss.

20. *Wuthering Heights* by Emily Bronte

- i. 'For all of his cruelty, Heathcliff is not a totally unlikeable character.'
Do you agree?

OR

- ii. "Far rather would I be condemned to a perpetual dwelling in the infernal regions, than even for one night abide beneath the roof of Wuthering Heights again."
What is the significance of the eerie setting of the story on the plot and its characters?

21. *Year of Wonders* by Geraldine Brooks

- i. '*Year of Wonders* suggests that in times of crisis it is more important than ever for people to hold on to traditional values.'
Do you agree?

OR

- ii. "These times, they do make monsters of us all..."
'The actions of the villagers of Eyam highlight the motivational power of fear in *Year of Wonders*.'
Discuss.

Section B – Writing in Context (Creating and Presenting)

Instructions

Section B requires students to complete an extended written response.

In your writing, you must draw on ideas suggested by **one** of the following four Contexts.

Your writing must draw directly from **at least one** selected text that you have studied for this Context and be based on the ideas in the prompt.

Your response may be an expository, persuasive or imaginative piece of writing.

If you write on a selected film text in Section A, you must **not** write on a selected film text in Section B.

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

Context 1 – The Imaginative Landscape

- | | |
|--|--------------------------|
| 1. <i>Island</i> | Alistair MacLeod |
| 2. <i>One Night the Moon</i> | Director: Rachel Perkins |
| 3. <i>The View from Castle Rock</i> | Alice Munro |
| 4. <i>Peripheral Light- Selected and New Poems</i> | John Kinsella |

Prompt

‘There is much more to human interaction with landscape than what can be physically experienced.’

Task

Complete an extended written response in expository, imaginative, or persuasive style. Your writing must draw from at least one selected text for this Context and explore the idea that ‘there is much more to human interaction with landscape than what can be physically experienced’.

OR

Context 2 – Whose Reality?

- | | |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. <i>Death of a Salesman</i> | Arthur Miller |
| 2. <i>Spies</i> | Michael Frayn |
| 3. <i>The Player</i> | Director: Robert Altman |
| 4. <i>The Lot: In Words</i> | Michael Leunig |

Prompt

‘Subverting reality is easier than accepting it.’

Task

Complete an extended written response in expository, imaginative, or persuasive style. Your writing must draw from at least one selected text for this Context and explore the idea that ‘subverting reality is easier than accepting it’.

OR

Context 3 – Encountering Conflict

1. *Paradise Road*
2. *Life of Galileo*
3. *The Rugmaker of Mazar-e-Sharif*
4. *The Quiet American*

Director: Bruce Beresford
Bertold Brecht
R. Hillman and N. Mazari
Graham Greene

Prompt

‘Conflict can only be resolved by dispelling ignorance.’

Task

Complete an extended written response in expository, imaginative, or persuasive style. Your writing must draw from at least one selected text for this Context and explore the idea that ‘conflict can only be resolved by dispelling ignorance’.

OR

Context 4 – Exploring Issues of Identity and Belonging

1. *Growing Up Asian in Australia*
2. *Summer of the Seventeenth Doll*
3. *Member of the Wedding*
4. *Skin*

Alice Pung
Ray Lawler
Carson McCullers
Director: Anthony Fabian

Prompt

‘The community we are a part of plays a role in establishing how we see ourselves.’

Task

Complete an extended written response in expository, imaginative, or persuasive style. Your writing must draw from at least one selected text for this Context and explore the idea that ‘the community we are a part of plays a role in establishing how we see ourselves’.

Section C – Analysis of Language Use

Instructions

Section C requires students to analyse the ways in which language and visual features are used to present a point of view.

Section C is worth one-third of the total assessment for the examination.

Read the opinion piece *The Greatest Tragedy of All* and then complete the task below.

Write your analysis as a coherently structured piece of prose.

Task

How is written and visual language used to attempt to persuade readers to share the point of view of the writer of *The Greatest Tragedy of All*?

Background Information

The opinion piece *The Greatest Tragedy of All* was published in the Winter edition of a Melbourne quarterly art journal on the 4th of June, 2012. The piece was in response to a Melbourne Theatre Company report on dwindling attendance numbers during the 2011 season.

The Greatest Tragedy of All

Giles Whittaker

I regard the theatre as the greatest of all art forms, the most immediate way in which a human being can share with another the sense of what it is to be a human being. -Oscar Wilde

Few art forms have seen such a profound decline in public attention as that of theatre. Nowadays the theatre is considered “elitist” and school plays see bigger audience turn outs than professional productions. Some say that there is no harm in letting theatre die naturally, that progress has allowed films to take their place in society. But the truth is that if stage art dies the human race will have lost something more important than we ever realised.

I remember the first time I went to the theatre. I was eleven years-old and my mother, an English teacher, took me to see *Hamlet* at the Melbourne Theatre Company. At such a young age I could hardly comprehend the complexities of Shakespeare’s work, but I was deeply moved by the passion in the performers and I knew then and there that theatre would become my life’s work.

Through the years I have been an actor, writer, director and now a critic. Never before have I been so discouraged as when I behold the distinct disinterest of the younger generation in the dramatic arts. *Hamlet*, which affected me so deeply as a youth, has been transformed into no less than 13 film adaptations. I don’t hate film, and I don’t disagree with plays being turned into movies, but when the screen removes all interest in the stage, boundaries have been crossed.

Theatre is important for so many reasons. Part of being human is having the capacity to reflect on our history. So much of our culture stems from traditional theatre, from the Greek tragedies of Sophocles and Euripides, to the Elizabethan plays of Marlowe and Shakespeare. We can barely comprehend how much of what we understand and value in the world is related to this lengthy relationship between humanity and theatre. Where we are today as a species is inextricably linked with our engagement with this art form throughout civilised culture.

Film is also deeply entrenched in our history and culture, although for a significantly shorter period than theatre. I don’t dispute that art on the screen serves a purpose, but I do question if much of what we see today can be considered art. Regardless, cinema will remain central to modern culture. But this should not mean the destruction of theatre, which has served as not only entertainment, but as a mirror which can be held up to society by the hands of a great master of prose.

Cinematic adaptations of plays are another issue. In theory the transformation from stage to screen is a smart one; it allows for things only previously hinted at to be animated or edited in, and it captures the interest of a generation of square-eyed children in a way that theatre could not. That said, the idea of “showing” rather than “telling”, as modern film does, removes so much meaning from a play. By taking away the need to describe things that the audience cannot see, the power of imagination is stolen from viewers. Editing enables film directors to correct mistakes and gives actors the chance to repeat poor performances, but in turn we lose the power of understanding that this performer’s soul is wholly invested in this singular performance.

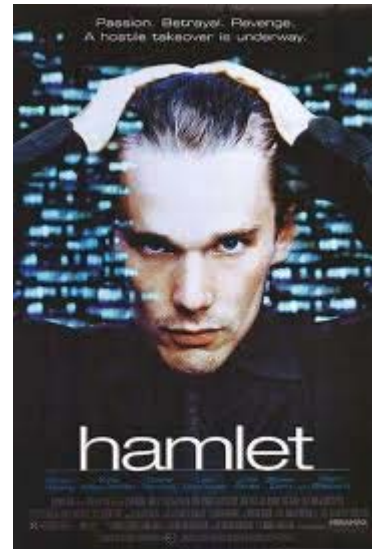
Many of these adaptations have worked. With the right director and actors who understand the theatre, a play can be beautifully transformed. But when things go wrong, they reflect badly on not only the film, but the play as well, making a mockery of an already wounded art form. This was best articulated for me in the 2000 Almereyda adaptation of *Hamlet*, where heart throb Ethan Hawke turns the Prince of Denmark into a snivelling, spoilt film student. Most recently, Julie Taymor took it upon herself to transform Shakespeare’s masterpiece *The Tempest* into a heavily stylized animation-fest featuring Russel Brand, no less. The Bard

must be rolling over in his grave.

I believe there is a future where theatre and film can coexist, but we have deviated from that course. If we are to truly embrace our humanity we must not only look forward, but back, to our lengthy and complex relationship with stage performances. I think the answer to the dilemma of dwindling audience numbers lies somewhere in between embracing the art form and understanding that we live in a changed world. Film often changes too much, but adaptations that remain on the stage can be wonderful celebrations of a merge between the new and the old. The theatre community must answer to this call from the generation of today for something new and exciting. Let us not shy away, but instead endeavour to bring the world of theatre to a whole new audience.



Doing it right: Kenneth Branagh's film adaptation of Hamlet shows his passion for Shakespeare



Doing it wrong: Ethan Hawke as a "modern" Hamlet



The way forward: The Melbourne University Shakespeare Company perform an adaptation of Hamlet set in a Rocky Horror Picture Show inspired Psychiatric Hospital.

End of Booklet

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