

# VCE ENGLISH CREATIVE TEXT RESPONSE



## SMASH YOUR SACS!

tsix



# **A CREATIVE RESPONSE TO A SELECTED TEXT IN WRITTEN OR ORAL FORM WITH A WRITTEN EXPLANATION**

## **TASK CONDITIONS**

You are required to respond to the set text in a creative form. Although the response is to be *creative in nature, the set text remains central to this task*.

For the achievement of Outcome 1 the suggested length of written responses is approximately 800–1000 words.

To be awarded a “**satisfactory**” for this outcome you will need to write a creative response to a set text. On completion of your script, you are required to justify your decision making and writing process with a **written explanation**.

**You are required to plan your creative response to a text by:**

- Analysing the text, considering opportunities to explore meaning.
- Selecting key moments, characters and themes that are worthy of exploration.
- Taking into account the purpose, context and audience when deciding on the selected content and approach.
- Developing and sustaining voice and style.
- Transforming and adapting language and literary devices.
- Explaining and justifying decisions made in the writing process.
- Drafting, reviewing, editing and refining for expressiveness, accuracy, fluency, coherence and stylistic effect.
- Applying conventions of spelling, punctuation and syntax accurately.

## **IMPORTANT POINTS**

- **Your creative script must be closely linked to the text.**
- The connections made between the original text and the *creative response need to be credible and authentic*.
- To write a **credible and authentic** creative response a **detailed understanding of the chosen text is vital**. Part of your study will involve discussing writing approaches to the creative task; therefore, you will need to understand the detail of the text.

## WRITING YOUR CREATIVE RESPONSE



### Suggestion:

Do not start writing your creative response until you've determined what you'll be writing about, your target audience and the form, style and purpose of your writing.

### SUGGESTED APPROACH

**Step 1:** Brainstorm and decide how you will develop your creative script.

**Step 2:** Research and plan out your creative piece using **MAPS**.

#### For example:

**Text:** Cloudstreet

**Approach:** Expanding on a character (Rose)

**Form:** Monologue

**Purpose:** To explore and explain Rose's perspective of her relationship with her mother.

**Narrative Perspective:** First person

**Context and Audience:** To be delivered as an oral presentation to a Year 11 audience who is familiar with the story.

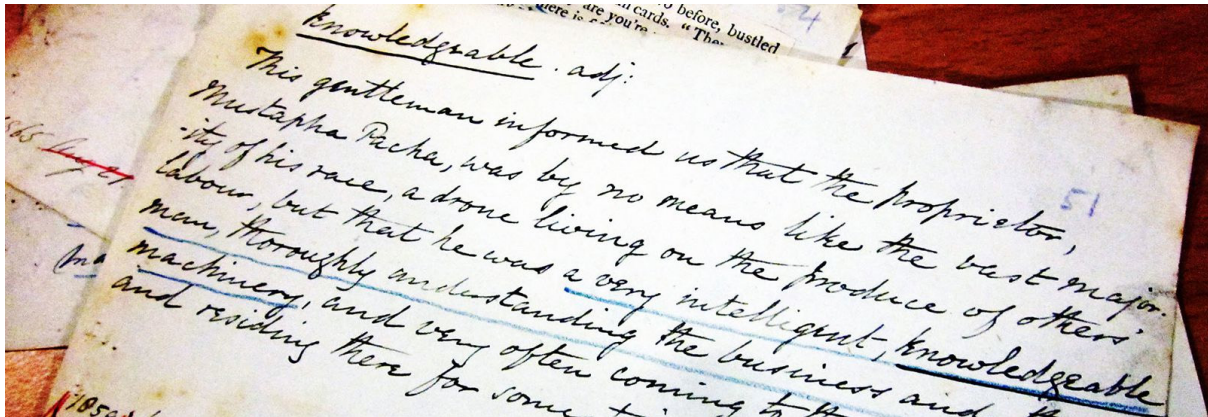
### Note:

Make sure that you avoid selecting an obvious focus (one that has been done many times before) as this is a task that asks you for a creative and individualised response.

**Step 3:** Write your creative response.

**Step 4:** Revise and edit.

**Step 5:** Write the written explanation (see **CFLAP** on following pages).



## STEP 1: BRAINSTORM & AND DECIDE HOW YOU WILL DEVELOP YOUR CREATIVE SCRIPT

You can develop your creative script in the following ways:

- **By adding** to the original text to fill a silence or gap.
- **By creating an adaptation** of the text, presenting an aspect of the story from a different perspective.

## OPTION 1: ADDING TO ORIGINAL THE TEXT

- **Creating an addition** to the text means that you're adding something to the existing story. This addition must therefore fall within "the world of the text", so you'll need to consider the physical, social, cultural and ethical settings.
- An addition must fill a silence or a gap in the text. Search for such gaps and silences by asking yourself the following questions:

*What silences exist in the story for you?*

*Is any character's voice missing from the text that could add another element to it?*

*What's absent or missing between chapters, scenes and lines?*

*What would happen if you changed the ending?*

*What may have occurred before the start of the original text?*

What could happen after the text, in an epilogue or sequel?

### Additions to a text can include:

- A **prologue** (a short chapter that occurs before the start of a text).  
Ensuring that you capture the original style and tone of the author. Make connections to the original text by showing causes. Use the same narrative voice as in the original text, and at least some of the same language devices.
- An **epilogue** (a short chapter that occurs at the end of a text).  
Ensuring that you capture the original style and tone of the author. Make connections to the original text by showing consequences. Use the same narrative voice as in the original text, and at least some of the same language devices.
- **Insert another scene** at a pivotal point in the story. This also needs to be written in the same voice and style as the original text. An additional scene should be written in a way that it would seamlessly embed into the original text.
- An **internal monologue** (thoughts or a conversation in one's own mind).
- **Developing a character.**
- A **letter** from one character to another.
- **Fill a gap** that is in your text with additional information about the lead-up or after effects of an event or incident – extending the original story.
- Write a piece from the **perspective(s) of one or more minor characters** whose voices are not heard in the original text. This could be written in a different form eg. letter, monologue etc.
- **Explore a silence** in a story where **attitudes or experiences are implied** rather than articulated.

## OPTION 2: TRANSFORM OR ADAPT THE TEXT

**Transforming or creating an adaptation** of the text means that you're changing the way a reader will view the story.

This transformation/adaptation must be within **'the world of the text'** so you'll need to consider the physical, social, cultural and ethical settings.

An adaptation/transformation must **show the story from a perspective that doesn't exist** in the text.

*The adaptation **MUST** remain within the world of the text.*

**Examples of transformations/adaptations to a text include:**

- Transposing the original text into a new setting.
- Transposing the original text into another form.
- Re-writing a scene in a novel from a different perspective.

This can show how people can perceive situations and events in strongly contrasting ways. For example, a scene written from a male point of view could be rewritten from a female point of view (so long as a strong female character was involved – don't make one up).

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## **ADDITIONAL SUGGESTIONS**

- Explore a scene or event from another character's point of view.
- Create a genuine extension of a conversation or event by finding a gap in the text of the narrative.
- Explore an idea, issue or theme from the original text in detail.
- Adapt the language of the original text to create a new or different impact.
- Allow a character to voice his/her attitude or experience about an important event or issue that is left unacknowledged by the main characters.
- Take an idea from the text and incorporate it into a new original character, setting and/or context.
- Take two or more characters from the text and put them in a different setting. Describe how they would behave and what they would say to one another if they had the chance.
- Take a character from another text you have studied and script a piece of dialogue between this character and one from the text you are currently studying.
- Imagine one of the characters twenty years into the future. What do you see happening to them? What would they be like and why?
- Imagine you are one of the characters writing a diary entry detailing how you feel and why you feel this way after some event had occurred.
- Two characters are interviewed by the media and they talk about one another. What did they say? What led them to this point?
- Write about an event or discussion that occurred in the original text from a different narrative point of view.
- Explore a scene/event from another character's point of view.
- Insert another scene at pivotal moment in the story.
- Add a beginning or extension to the story, ensuring that you capture the original style and tone of the author.



### Example 1:

Rewrite the ending, adding another character or taking one out. This type of creative response differs from other responses as you are changing the details of the text. Take care to ensure that your changes are sympathetic to the original text.

When changing the ending, make sure that you don't dramatically change the ideas of the text by doing so. Instead, look for symbolic parallels between the ending and other parts of the text. For example, the death of a character may be interpreted to represent the death of something more abstract.

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### Example 2:

Transport the details of the text to another time and place. Whatever you choose must be suitable to that time and place.

- Which key elements of the text can be paralleled in another time or place?
- How will you maintain the characters but give them traits and backgrounds consistent with the 'new' setting?
- Take note of key aspects of the setting in the original text. Don't ignore them, look for parallels instead.
- Look for symbols and images in the original text and ask yourself how you can use these, or create your own images which will be consistent with the text.

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**Example 3:**

Step outside the text. Take out an aspect or aspects of the text and put them in another context.

**For example:**

- A dialogue between two or more characters. They speak to one another in a context and setting which does not appear in the text.
- A character writes to the author to discuss his or her role in the text.
- A psychiatrist gives his or her analysis of a particular character.
- The subject of a poem answers the poet.

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## IMPORTANT POINTS

- Remember to *transform and adapt language and literary devices to generate particular responses, with consideration of the original text* (VCAA English Study Design).
- Remember that above all you are presenting an interpretation of the text and you must show that you have something to say about the ideas that the text is dealing with.
- You may think about the text as a whole or narrow your focus to even a single paragraph in a novel or speech in a play.
- Your response may be written or in a non-verbal form.
- Avoid just rewriting a text in modern language. This will look like a retelling without any interpretation.
- Work with recurring motifs eg. animals, landscape, roads, islands, mines, thistles etc.
- There are two common pitfalls associated with responding creatively to a text:
  1. Recreating the text – sounding too much like the author and using the same characters in the same situations.
  2. Writing a piece too far removed from the text and making the links to the studied text too hard to identify.

You will need to carefully navigate between these extremes and use the text's features to inform and prompt your own response.

### Examples include:

- Drawing on a specific moment in the text
- Exploring similar key concepts
- Using similar language or structural features.



## STYLES AND FORMS

You can select from a broad range of varying creative response forms but make sure your form is carefully selected to reflect both the original text and your response to it. For example, you might elect to do:

- A monologue from a minor character's perspective or a character who has been silenced or not given a voice.
- A feature article. Take on the voice of a journalist who is either a resident or an outsider and reflect on the changing social, political and geographical landscapes of the area. You could include interviews and descriptive writing as part of your feature article.
- A debate
- An editorial
- A letter to the editor
- A script for an additional scene (movie or TV)
- A short story (NB very difficult) – one that explores the same issues, ideas or themes as the original text.
- An exchange of letters
- A eulogy
- An obituary
- A diary or journal entry/reflection
- A newspaper report
- An opinion column
- A pamphlet
- A research paper
- A speech
- A poem
- A review with a personal reflection
- A blog post
- Comic or graphic novel
- Fan fiction
- Play or skit
- Reflective narrative
- Song lyrics
- An afterword
- An interview
- A fable

- A chronicle of a character's thoughts
- A script of a conversation between characters
- A missing chapter

## **SOME TEXT FORMS TO INVESTIGATE**

- [www.imdb.com](http://www.imdb.com) external reviews e.g. Roger Ebert, *Into the Wild*
- This [...] Life, Weekend Australian – Review section. You will need to extend the word limit.
- Personal columns such as those written by Susie O'Brien and Rita Panahi (they have strong personal voices)
- Personal reflections such as those written by Martin Flanagan, 'Saturday reflection' or Bob Murphy, Waleed Aly or Michelle Obama's final speech.
- Access [www.speakola.com](http://www.speakola.com) for transcripts to speeches. (Free subscription. Many different categories are covered).

## **VARIOUS CREATIVE RESPONSE FORMS EXPLAINED**

### **A MONOLOGUE**

A monologue is a long speech by one of the characters in the text. It is usually confessional in nature where the character reveals something about their life, attitudes or actions that they may have previously ignored or hidden from others.

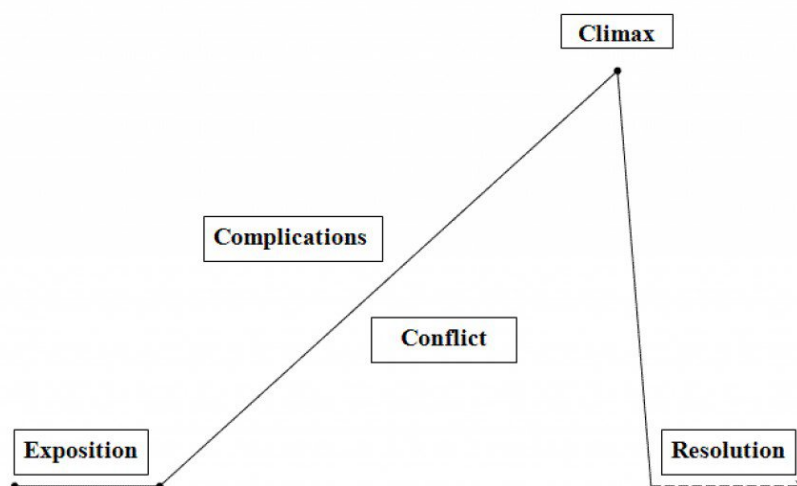
You will need to closely examine the development/regression of the character from the text. To help the authenticity of the character, it may be useful to create a character profile.

#### **Considerations:**

- Often a monologue is written like a play script and includes stage directions, sound effects, scenery and props.
- Monologues are usually delivered to an audience either to another character or to a theatre audience.

## A SHORT STORY

A short story is concisely written and tightly structured. Below is a diagram summary about how to create a short story.



### Streamlined Plot Diagram

(Source: <http://hubpages.com/literature/Creating-Plot-Diagrams-for-Stories>)

#### Considerations:

- You will need to create an interesting opening. Look at the following openings taken from novels:

*“Mother died today. Or perhaps it was yesterday.”*

*“It is a well known fact that a single man in possession of a fortune, must be in search of a wife.”*

*The past is a foreign country. They do things differently there.”*

The first is from *The Outsider* by Camus and grabs the reader by its lack of emotion. The second is from *Pride and Prejudice* by Jane Austin. It too surprises the reader. The third is from *The Go-Between*, by Hartley. It makes a startling statement too.

- Using dialogue is great in a story. It needs to be appropriate to your intention and must be natural. You need to follow the conventions for direct speech. They are:
  - New line for each new speaker.
  - Talking marks at the start and end of speech.
  - Comma after *“He said,”*
  - Lower case after the quote.

**For example:**

*“Don’t go there,” she said.*

*“Why not? he asked.*

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## A EULOGY

A *eulogy* is a funeral oration or memorial speech given in memory of someone who has died recently as a way of paying tribute to the deceased.

### THE INTRODUCTION

The introduction is the place where you will want to explain your relationship with the deceased as well as establish the direction that you will be taking with your speech.

### THE BODY

The body of the speech is where you will flesh out the main point, which you made clear in the introduction, by providing specific examples. For instance, if you are centering the eulogy around the kindness of your grandmother, then this is your chance to show her kindness in action by providing stories. The best way to build your speech is not to tell the audience about something, but to show them. Show the person's character by giving examples. As to how many stories exemplifying the theme do you want to include? This depends upon the length of the stories. If they have a good amount of heft to them, you will probably only need 3 or 4. Remember that you want to keep the organization of your speech as easy to follow as possible. Keep this in mind when you are writing the body of the eulogy. When you are demonstrating the theme by giving detailed stories of the deceased's life, keeping those stories in chronological order is best.

### THE CONCLUSION

Simply put, the conclusion of your eulogy will be where you wrap everything up. You will concisely review everything that you have said in the intro and body of your speech. The final sentence or two will be the most important part of the entire address as it will be the lasting statement that you leave with the audience. This final thought is most likely the last chance that you will have to honor the life of your recently departed loved one, in a public forum, so use it wisely. Use it to leave a lasting mark on everyone that is listening in a way that truly pays tribute to the deceased. These ending remarks will stay on everyone's mind for days, so make sure and utilize your opportunity to the fullest.

(Source: <https://eulogy.com/how-to-write-a-eulogy>)

### CONSIDERATIONS

- Ensure your eulogy is credible about the character you have chosen to write about. It may be beneficial to create a character profile before you begin to write the script.
- This genre leans itself to using direct quotes from the text.

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## A DIARY ENTRY

A diary entry includes details of an individual's life. It includes thoughts, feelings, aspirations, fears, hopes. It is usually based on events of the day, or a significant experience.

You will need to closely examine the development/regression of the character from the text. To help the authenticity of the character, it may be useful to create a character profile.

### Considerations:

- You may choose to write a consecutive series of diary entries. A diary should be written in chronological order.
- You could pinpoint a significant event/turning point for a character and write about it as a diary entry.
- Writing a journal entry is not the same as a diary entry! A journal entry is usually a record of events, such as an explorer who is recording their findings.
- Write in the first person and use emotive language.
- Begin with "Dear Diary" and write a date.

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## A NEWSPAPER REPORT

A newspaper report should be factual and thus it should precisely mirror the text.

Given the scope of this task, you could choose to develop one of the scenes from the text and fill in the gap. Keep in mind that how you develop a gap in the story needs to be authentic, consequently you will need to take into account the bigger picture of the text.

### Considerations:

- The lead of the report (the first few sentences) should be attention grabbing.
- Include the "who, what, where, when, why and how" of the news event.
- Use quotes from the characters in the text.
- Include an attention grabbing headline.
- Use columns in accordance with newspaper presentation.

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## **A PRESENTATION OF AN ALTERNATIVE PERSPECTIVE**

You will need to think about the narrator’s perspective on other characters, issues and ideas in the text.

### **Considerations:**

Think about which point of view is best to create your piece of writing.

### **First person point of view.**

First person is when “I” am telling the story. The character is *in* the story, relating his or her experiences directly.

### **Second person point of view.**

The story is told to “you.” This is common in nonfiction writing.

### **Third person point of view, limited.**

The story is about “he” or “she.” This is the most common point of view in commercial fiction. The narrator is outside of the story and relating the experiences of a character.

### **Third person point of view, omniscient.**

The story is still about “he” or “she,” but the narrator has full access to the thoughts and experiences of *all* characters in the story.

- Choose a character who you have analysed and thoroughly understand.
- The character’s point of view must influence and filter everything in the story.
- You may need to include a backstory to establish the authenticity of your story.
- You will need to create an interesting opening.

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## A SPEECH TRANSCRIPT

You will not necessarily need to orally present this script.

The structure of your speech will be determined by your purpose. For example, a persuasive speech needs to include at least ten different types of persuasive techniques in your script.

### Considerations:

- Write a clear introduction (this will be determined by the purpose of the speech)
- Use first person
- May build in personal experience
- Aim to finish with a thought provoking or memorable conclusion
- Research top speeches on the internet (e.g. <http://www.americanrhetoric.com/top100speechesall.html>)

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## A MOVIE OR TELEVISION SCRIPT

### Considerations:

- Research examples of scripts online (e.g. <http://www.dailyscript.com/>)
- You will need to use film jargon to create your script. This is covered later in this booklet.

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# A POEM

## Considerations:

- Decide what themes you will write about.
- Emotions and feelings about themes and issues are expressed through powerful use of language.
- Types of poems you may like to write:

### Sonnet:

Traditionally, the sonnet is a fourteen-line poem written in iambic pentameter, which employ one of several rhyme schemes and adhere to a tightly structured thematic organization.

### Limerick:

A Limerick consists of five lines.

- The first line of a limerick poem usually begins with 'There was a....' and ends with a name, person or place.
- The last line of a limerick is normally a little farfetched or unusual.
- A limerick should have a rhyme scheme of aabba:
- This means lines 1, 2 and 5 rhyme and lines 3 and 4 **rhyme**.
- Also, lines 1,2 and 5 should have 7 – 10 **syllables** and lines 3 and 4 should have 5 – 7 **syllables**.

### Free Verse:

Free verse is a literary device that can be defined as poetry that is free from limitations of regular meter or rhythm and does not rhyme with fixed forms. Such poems are without rhythms and rhyme schemes; do not follow regular rhyme scheme rules and still provide artistic expression. In this way, the poet can give his own shape to a poem how he/she desires. However, it still allows poets to use alliteration, rhyme, cadences or rhythms to get the effects that they consider are suitable for the piece.

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## FLESHING OUT AN IDEA

Using a graphic organiser can assist you in the early stages of your planning.

### STORY MAP TEMPLATE

Characters

Setting  
Where:  
When:

Problem/Goal

Major Events

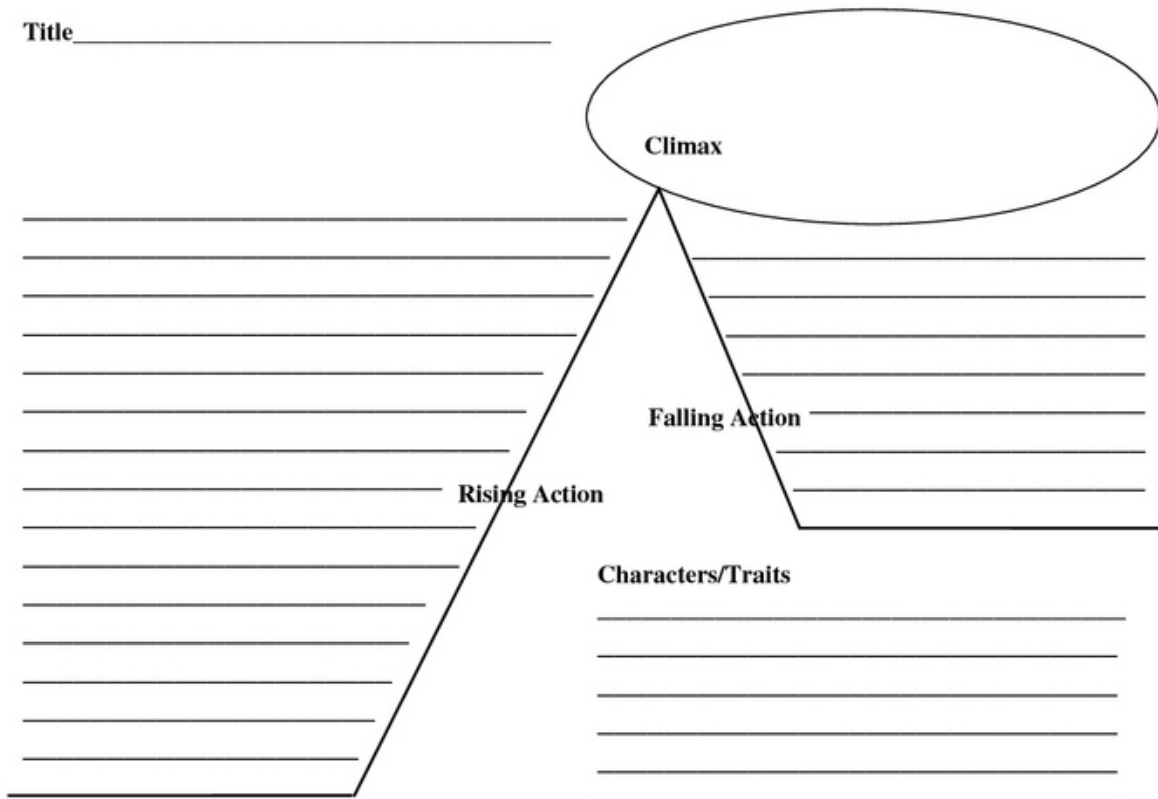
1. \_\_\_\_\_  
2. \_\_\_\_\_  
3. \_\_\_\_\_  
4. \_\_\_\_\_

Story Outcome

# PLOT DIAGRAM

## Plot Outline

Title \_\_\_\_\_



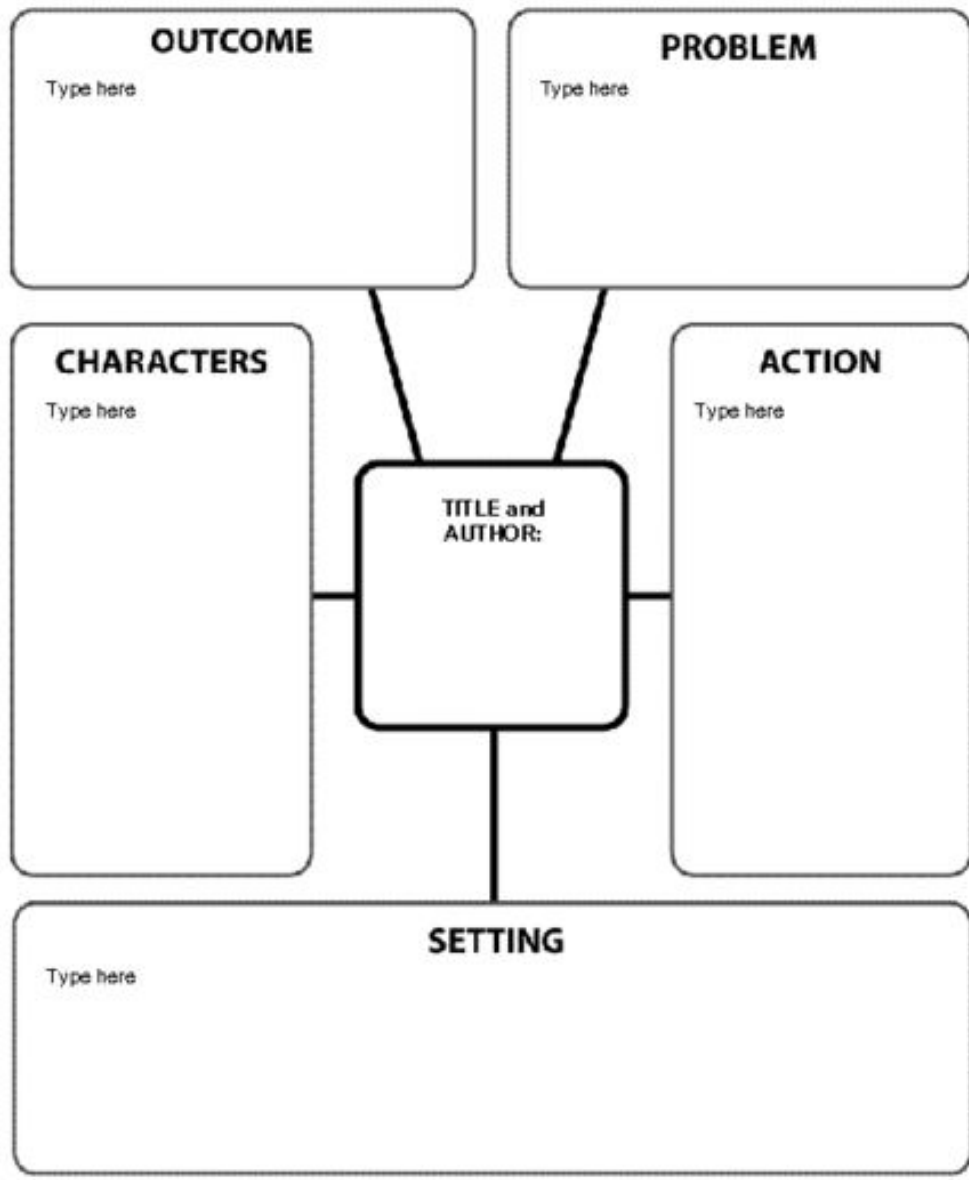
Setting

Resolution

Conflict

Theme

# STORYBOARD TEMPLATE



## STEP 2: RESEARCH AND PLAN OUT YOUR CREATIVE PIECE

### MAPS (MESSAGE-AUDIENCE-PURPOSE-STYLE)

#### MESSAGE

- Spine of your piece i.e. underpins, everything links to message
- Theme/s related
- 25 words or less
- Answers the question: What are you trying to tell reader?

#### *Sample message from creative piece on Burial Rites:*

Blondal was blinded by his own prejudices and self-importance and he lacked any empathy for others.

#### AUDIENCE

Who will read your piece?

After you have decided why you are writing, you must decide for whom you are writing. This is very important because the audience that you decide to target will influence your writing style and your language use. You will need to consider their needs, interests and values and perhaps prior knowledge of or attitudes towards the topic that you are writing about. Like the purpose of your writing, you may also need to modify your intended audience as you re-draft your writing.

#### PURPOSE

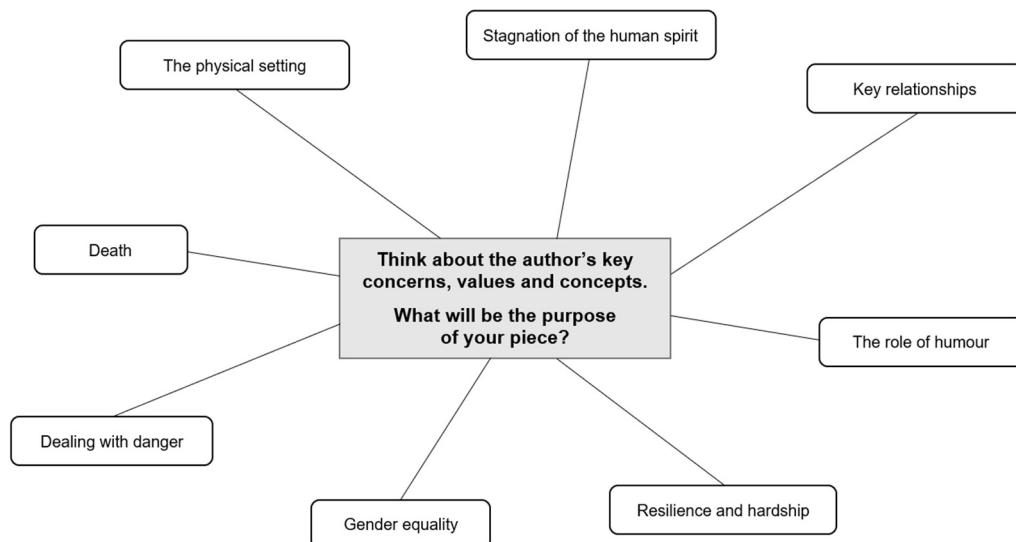
- Why are you writing the piece?

Before you begin to write you must first decide why you are writing. E.g. to explain, postulate, challenge, inform etc.

You need to work out what it is that you wish to communicate and then your primary purpose should be to communicate this clearly and interestingly. Keep your purpose simple and realistic and bear in mind that you may have to re-word, modify or clarify your purpose in the course of the drafting process.

- If you are writing as a persona/character e.g. to set the record straight, to reveal inner doubts/thoughts etc.





## STYLE

- Includes FORM and the structure and conventions associated with that form.
- What language will you use?

When planning a personal or creative piece, it is up to you whether you want to follow a chronological structure or whether you want to start in the present and then go back. There are other structures, of course, but you must give the purpose and form some thought too.

For example, if you use diary entries, there are conventions, like starting with “Dear Diary” each day. Letters need to follow the conventions of addressing the person and being signed. Letters to the editor may have a heading as they would appear in the paper or just start with “Dear Editor”. Editorials never use first person and are often carefully structured to give background and be somewhat bi-partisan.

## PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

Idea	Message	Audience	Purpose	Style	Reference/s to <i>Island</i>
A story that connects with reader	Our past affects the present	Literary journal e.g. 'Make up title'	Show how stories connect with readers, enriches appreciation	Reflective review	Flashback 1 <sup>st</sup> person
We are not 'instant people'	Importance of family on our identity	Family	Reveals family mantra	Personal. Memory of family Christmas	Observational detail
'The stories are about fathers and sons' Sue Haigh	Role of female characters	Women's journal	Persuade	Alternative perspective	Essay

## EXERCISE 1 – USING MAPS

Write your idea for your creative response and your MAPS. Use the 'Putting it all together' example to help you.

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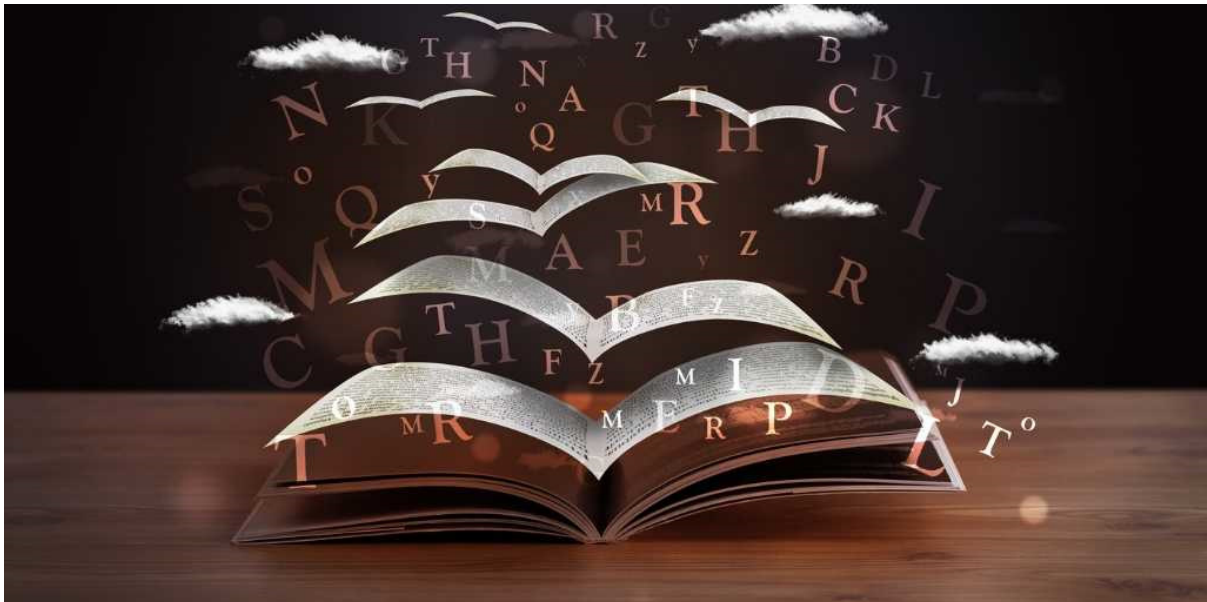
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# **A DETAILED PLAN OF YOUR CREATIVE PIECE**

## **1. PURPOSE**

- The first thing you should decide on is the **purpose** of the creative response that you've been asked to produce.
- The purpose is the message you would like to relay to your audience. It will be the focus of your creative response.
- Keep your purpose simple and realistic and be prepared to re-word, modify or clarify your purpose in the course of the drafting process.
- If you have decided who your audience will be, your purpose should be based on the characteristics and experiences of your audience that most closely identifies with your views and values.

### **Producing a Strong Message:**

- You need to provide a clear and compelling central message that is crafted with a strong awareness of the intended audience and purpose.
- Your message must be grounded in concrete language and examples.
- The message must be theme/s related.

### **Questions to Consider:**

- What is your purpose in writing your creative piece?
- What message are you wanting to communicate? What are you trying to tell reader?
- What key ideas or themes from the original text does your response focus on?
- What would a new reader learn about the original text by reading your response?

## 2. AUDIENCE

- The next thing to decide on is the **audience** for your creative response. This includes their age, interests and experiences.
- Choose an audience that most closely identifies with your views and values.
- You **must** aim your piece at a specific target audience.
- Your choice of audience is critical. Your target audience will influence the content of your creative piece, your writing style, the tone that you adopt and your language use.
- Keep in mind that you may need to modify your intended audience as you re-draft your creative piece.

### Questions to Consider:

- Who is your audience for your creative response?
- Do you have more than one audience?
- Is there an internal and external audience?
- Is your audience predominantly male or female?
- What age bracket are you targeting?
- Why have you chosen this particular audience?
- How and why is your creative piece relevant to this audience?
- What interests, values and needs do your audience have?
- What attitudes does your audience have towards the topic that you'll be writing about?
- What do you hope to achieve by targeting your audience?



### 3. STYLE

The third stage in your planning should concentrate on the **style** of your creative piece.

Style refers to how your writing sounds. This includes a consideration of the structure, tone, language, point of view, form and the conventions associated with your chosen form.

A well thought-out and consistent style distinguishes ordinary writing from great writing.

### STRUCTURE

- Structure can play a significant role in how well you convey your message and the way that your reader interprets your response.
- The structure of your piece should be determined by the purpose and audience that you have decided on.
- When planning a personal or creative piece, it is up to you whether you want to follow a chronological structure or whether you want to start in the present and then go back.
- In most cases, if you are writing in a different form, there will be specific conventions associated with that form that you will need to include when writing your creative response.

#### For example:

Diary entries have specific conventions such as daily entries starting with “Dear Diary”.

Letters need to follow the conventions relating to how a person is addressed and include a signature at the end of the letter.

Letters to the editor may have a heading as they would appear in the paper or just start with “Dear Editor”. Editorials never use first person narrative and are often carefully structured to provide background to the theme or issue being addressed. They are also usually somewhat bi-partisan.

Unlike an analytical text, there is a little in the way of a set structure for creative texts.

#### Questions to Consider:

- How is your creative response structured?
- Will your response have a conventional start, middle and end structure, running in a straight line?
- Or will you have a more complex way of constructing time in your response?
- Does your piece have any interesting features of structural design?
- Will you have multiple stories told alongside one another?
- Will you go back in time in a circular motion?

## FORM

- Form is the type of response you plan to produce.
- There are many forms to choose from such as a prologue, epilogue, short story, interview, speech, etc. Refer to Step 1 for a comprehensive list of formats you could use for your creative response.
- You do not have to write your creative piece in one format. You can blend different formats together to create a hybrid piece (a piece that is a mix of two or more different forms).
- It's important that you're familiar with the features and conventions of the format you have chosen. You must adopt these features and conventions in your creative piece.
- You also need to consider what voice, style and approach is most appropriate for your chosen form.

### Questions to Consider:

What are the structural features and conventions of your chosen form?



## tone

### Questions to Consider:

- What is the predominant emotion/feeling/mood/tone of your creative piece?
- Does the mood or tone change at any stage throughout your response? Why?
- What emotions or feelings are you trying to evoke in the reader?

## NARRATIVE VOICE

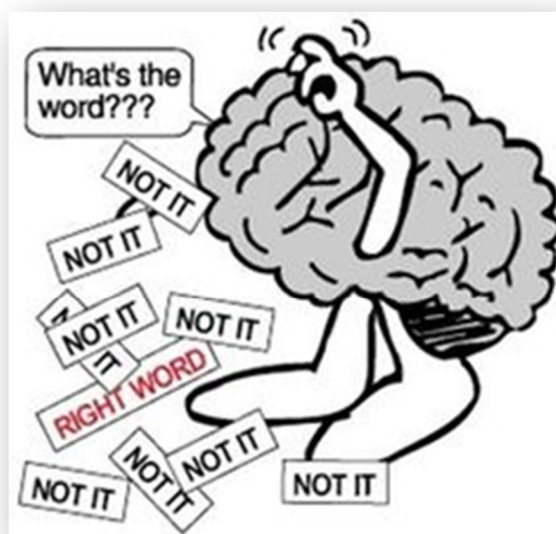
- Narrative voice is the perspective a story is told from.
- Narrative voice affects the way the piece of writing unfolds and sounds and can make a huge difference in the way that you create mood and atmosphere in your response. It also has great potential to affect the way the reader understands and appreciates the creative response.

### Note:

- It is crucial that your chosen voice remains consistent throughout your creative piece.
- Your adopted voice must demonstrate a sound understanding of the chosen character's personality /perspectives/ outlook.

### Questions to Consider:

- How do you want your response to sound?
- What would it sound like if it were spoken aloud?
- Who does this voice belong to?
- What sort of words does this narrator use?
- What type of person would be the best narrator for your response?
- Who should be telling your story? Who is the narrator?
- What perspectives would be interesting to explore? (e.g. an outsider or passer-by)
- Will your response carry the perspective of just one person or narrator, or will you offer different perspectives or voices?



## LANGUAGE FEATURES

- Decide on the language features that you'll integrate into your creative response.
- Write your creative response using the same language features as that present in the original text.
- You'll also need to consider your audience and what sort of tone and language choices they'll respond best to.

**Step 1:** List the most important language features that are present in the text you are currently studying.

**Step 2:** Highlight the features that you believe you could adapt or use in a piece of your own creative writing.

**Step 3:** Choose the features that will enable you to accomplish your purpose and that will suit the theme(s), characters and context of your creative response.

### Questions to Consider:

- What language will you use?
- Is your piece written in formal or informal style?
- What verb tense will you adopt?
- Which persuasive techniques do you intend to use and why?
- Is the language appropriate for the subject and/or the theme?
- What effect does the language have on the creative response's achievement?
- Are there phrases that are specifically connected to the studied text that you could include in your response?

## 4. MOTIFS & SYMBOLS

Motifs are recurring images, expressions, settings, objects or concepts in a text that represent specific element or idea.

Consider what ideas you would like your audience to appreciate and select appropriate symbols and images to represent these ideas. As an example, Harry Potter's scar is a motif that represents destiny and the power of love, the yellow brick road is a motif in 'The Wizard of Oz' and represents the journey of life.



## 5. CHARACTERS

**The types of characters you include in your writing will affect:**

- the mood and atmosphere of your response.
- the messages that can be or are delivered.

Therefore, think carefully about the characters you'd like to include in your response, the role they will play and their characteristics and personalities.

You should have one or two main characters in your creative piece. You can also include one or two other characters that will play an important role.

To make your writing more interesting, the characters should be as different as possible

**Note:**

- Each character should have a purpose i.e. they need to communicate certain ideas and messages to your audience.
- Every character in a piece of writing carries meaning and significance to a reader, so choose your characters carefully!

**Questions to Consider:**

- How old is each character?
- Are they male or female?
- What are their likes and dislikes?
- Where were they born and when?
- Are they religious? If yes – which religion do they follow?
- Does your character have siblings? If yes, how old are they and who are they?
- What is each character's personality like?
- Is your character meant to be likeable or not?  
What personality traits should they therefore have?
- How do these characteristics affect each character's demeanour?
- What motivates your characters at the deepest level?  
Understanding these motivations will help to shape what issues you include in your text and the methods you use to communicate these ideas.
- What are their fears and their desires?
- What tensions operate within them and pull them in different directions?
- What will each character add to your response?
- What messages/ideas will each character deliver?

## 6. CONTEXT

Context or background refers to the time and circumstances under which a text is created.

### Questions to Consider:

- What kind of society do the characters live in?
- Where do your characters live? (geographical context)
- Has the historical, social or cultural context of your response created limitations or opportunities for your characters?

## 7. SUBJECT MATTER

### Questions to Consider:

- What happens in your creative response?
- Which story/moment/character/idea/scenario /event is your response linked to?  
You may need to make it clear at what point in the original text your response would fit.
- What is the central concern/idea/conflict which your creative response explores? Why have you chosen this concern/idea/conflict?
- What key ideas or themes from the text does your response focus on? Why did you decide to concentrate on this theme?
- What do you hope to achieve by focusing on these ideas?
- Which aspects from the 'world of the text' will influence your piece?  
For example: Cultural content, physical location, ethical or moral choices, social order etc.?

### Note:

- Introduce your own views and values statement, and phrase it in a way that it's evident you're responding to views and values of the set text.
- Don't choose a plot that's exciting or riveting at the expense of one that will act as a solid medium in conveying your views and values.



## WRITING YOUR CREATIVE RESPONSE

- As you begin to write, consider the nature of the text that you are responding to in this task. You are not being graded on your creativity, but rather on the way that you are able to use your creative piece to communicate your understanding of the text.
- You can use quotes from the text to help show your understanding of the text, and to capture the narrative voice that you have adopted. You will also need to find ways to bring the world of the text to life by recreating the text's context and employing some of the text features that characterise the author's work.
- Choose particular language or structural features of the original text and use these in your response. For example: symbols, themes, views, values, context or point of view.

### SUGGESTED APPROACH

**Step 1:** List the key concepts explored in the text you are currently studying.

Next to each concept, write down the author's ideas or message about it.  
What does he/she suggest or argue about the concept?

**Step 2:** Choose one of these concepts and brainstorm three possible creative responses that would draw on and extend the author's ideas.

**Step 3:** Choose your favourite response and draft a creative response to your text.

#### Set the Scene

Describe in detail the context to your story, including your main character/protagonist.

#### Create Conflict and Tension

As you plan your plot, make sure you explore a significant source of conflict or tension for the protagonist.

#### Build a Crisis or Climax

*As a result of your chosen conflict or tension, what crisis or climax will occur?  
How does the character change?*

A detailed description of these events will be important.

#### Deliver a Resolution

This doesn't mean that all loose ends need to be tied up and every question answered, but the reader should be left with a satisfactory ending that doesn't feel like you abruptly stopped writing.

**Step 4:** Share your response and invite feedback from as many other people as possible.

When writing and redrafting, regularly ask yourself the following questions:

*Am I waffling?*

*Am I sounding the way I want to sound?*

*Where am I going with this?*

*Does my response say and do the things I want or need?*

*Does my response sound good?*

*Could I phrase things better in a different way?*

## **SUGGESTIONS**

- Include an engaging opening. Signal the angle or approach you are taking and be intriguing and interesting.
- Show rather than tell. Focus on description rather than statements.
- Vary the sentence length, e.g. Use short sentences for impact and to create an atmosphere of speed or panic.
- Make your characters believable by showing their strengths and weaknesses, hopes and fears.
- Be descriptive. Include imagery (e.g. similes, metaphors) and appeals to the senses.
- Show the reader how things appear, sound, taste, smell and feel.
- Include statements that link your writing to the original text.
- Where possible, use vocabulary, imagery and symbolism to express your points.
- **Adopt an authentic voice.** Use language appropriate for the context, place, character, time period etc. Can the reader believe that the voice is real? You can use first person, third person omniscient (all knowing narrator) or a third person limited (focusing on narrating through the perspective of a character e.g. Bill knew he could do it and felt frustrated that max was being so negative.) Second person is 'you'.
- Make the dialogue real and believable. Different characters talk differently i.e. different words or phrases. People rarely speak in whole sentence. It can be a very powerful way to start a narrative.
- **Appeal to the senses.** Focus on not only what is heard, seen, but also touched, smelt and tasted.
- Consider starting a narrative in the middle of the action and then taking your reader back to an earlier time.
- Make use of **different text types** within your writing (bricolage) – e.g. letters, text messages, information texts.
- **Narrative Structure:** Use of flashbacks, circular narrative, differing viewpoints.

## WHAT YOU MUST DEMONSTRATE IN YOUR CREATIVE RESPONSE

- Your understanding of the text will be judged first and foremost. This assessment will be largely based on how well you address the views and values of your text. It may also be dependent on how well you demonstrate your understanding of the characters, the nuances of their construction, how the socio-political context shaped your author's work, and stylistic features that are used to create meaning.
- You need to show a sophisticated and complex understanding of the original text by carefully and insightfully selecting the moments, characters and themes that are worthy of exploration.
- Your creative piece must **offer a relevant interpretation of the text** and show that you **understand the text's messages and how the text creates meaning**.
- Your creative script must be closely linked to the text.
- The connections made between the original text and the *creative response need to be credible and authentic*.

### You Must:

- Establish a genuine relationship between the creative writing script and the text.

This can be accomplished by adopting the author's style of writing with particular use of features such as characterisation, setting, narrative structure, tone and style of the original text.

- Show a detailed and sophisticated understanding of the text.
- Insightfully explore a moment, character or idea that is important to the text.
- Write with a consistent and well-developed voice that uses or adapts the language features and literary elements of the text.
- Write in an expressive, fluent, clear and coherent way.
- Use language and literary conventions that are appropriate to the form, style and genre of your writing.
- Provide a clear and thoughtful justification for the choices you make about voice, style, form and language during the writing process, and explain how these help to demonstrate key aspects of the original text.
- Show a sophisticated understanding of how the voice style, form and language are appropriate to the chosen purpose and audience of the piece.

## STEP 4: REVISE AND EDIT

- Edit your plan and redraft your response as many times as you can so you can create the best possible piece of writing.
- Reflect on your response as a whole and critically evaluate it.
- If your creative piece is different from the response you planned before you started writing, that is fine, but make sure that it still achieves your purpose.
- Make your response as perfect as possible. Consider your use of punctuation, spelling, vocabulary, grammar, sentence and paragraph structure, and connections to the world of the text.
- Know your tendencies, weaknesses and gaps and edit with a critical eye.



## **STEP 5: WRITE THE WRITTEN EXPLANATION (STATEMENT OF INTENTION)**

**From VCAA:**

*'Insightful justification of decisions related to selected content and approach made during the creative process, demonstrating meaningful connections to the original text and complex understanding of purpose, audience and context.'*

As part of your creative writing task, the VCAA Study Design requires you to explain and justify decisions made in the writing process and how these demonstrate understanding of the text.

**The written explanation must:**

- outline your creative intentions;
- explain and justify the decisions you made during the writing process;
- show how the decisions you made demonstrates an understanding of your text;
- explain how your understanding of the characters, themes and text features of the text shaped your decision making.

**Your statement must:**

- Express your insights into the original text studied by commenting on the distinctive literary and thematic concerns and what aspects (style, structure, use of imagery, characterisation) of the text you found particularly interesting and noteworthy.
- Comment on why you chose the particular option you completed.

What were you trying to highlight and explore in the text studied?

What was it about the original text that inspired you to write in the manner you did?

- Describe as well as you can what you see as the connections between your response and the original text. Make it clear how your response adds to the text and why you chose to do so.
- Reflect briefly on what you learned about the text in the process of creating your response.

**For example:**

Did you develop greater insights into a particular style and use of language?

Was there anything you found difficult to achieve in your response?

Did you change in any way what you set out to do and what you eventually produced and why?

**You also need to answer the following questions:**

- What idea did you want to explore? Why?
- What is your message?
- Who is your audience?
- What is your purpose?
- Style? Form? Language? Literary devices? Structure?
- Why did you choose this form?
- What research was completed?
- How does it reference text?
- What do you feel worked? Why?

Be prepared to modify your Written Explanation as you draft and re-draft your piece.

**Suggestions:**

- The Written Statement should be prepared in essay form.
- You can write the Statement as yourself, in first-person (I).
- Write in past tense.
- Aim for three paragraphs
- The word limit will be decided by your school
- Use metalanguage when discussing elements such as characters and the theme(s).
- Use formal language
- Your written statement must be coherent, thoughtful, and fluent. It will be assessed.
- Be prepared to modify your Written Explanation as you draft and re-draft your piece.
- Use appropriate metalanguage to present your written explanations regarding personal authorial choices.



## CFLAP – ANOTHER WAY OF DEVELOPING YOUR WRITTEN STATEMENT

<b>PARAGRAPH 1</b> <b>What?</b>	C	Form	My creative response is a.... It fills a gap/addresses a silence/provides an alternate perspective on/of ...
	F	Focus	The focus of my piece is ... introduce character and setting of your response
		Context	Overview placement of your response in relation to original text
<b>PARAGRAPH 2</b> <b>How?</b>	L	Language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Narration - first or third person? Why?</li> <li>• Inclusion of dialogue? Why/why not?</li> <li>• Stylistic choices - formal/informal language? Slang? Jargon?</li> <li>• Reference to specific time period? Why?</li> <li>• Inclusion of quotes/references to original text? Why?</li> <li>• Emotive language? Why?</li> <li>• Aim is to justify the authenticity of your piece as a response to original text.</li> <li>• You MUST provide examples from your response to evidence your claims.</li> </ul>
		Symbols	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Symbolism - names, objects, or metaphors? Why? Link to original text?</li> </ul>
<b>PARAGRAPH 3</b> <b>Why?</b>	A	Audience	Discussed through Theme
		Purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• External audience (us - the people who watch or read the text) - what do we learn from your response?</li> <li>• Internal audience (characters in original text) - what do they learn from the insertion of your response into the original text?</li> <li>• Explicit reference to theme is required</li> </ul>
	P		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strong statement about purpose of response - it must further reveal/unpack the specified theme.</li> <li>• You should aim to demonstrate a sophisticated/nuanced understanding of the specified theme and refer to the theme in the original text and in your response.</li> </ul>

**Planning your written explanation**

<b>Context</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Why did I focus on this particular character/relationship/theme/event/issue/crisis point?</li> <li>• Why did I include the ideas and examples I used?</li> <li>• Why did these examples or this story seem relevant for my purpose?</li> </ul>
<b>Form</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What was the format I chose?</li> <li>• Why did this seem like the best format to choose? Justify in terms of context?</li> <li>• What does this format allow me to explore?</li> <li>• what insight does it allow the reader?</li> </ul>
<b>Language</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What kind of language have I used to write this response (formal/informal? Sophisticated/simple? First/Third person? Through which persona do you channel your piece?)</li> <li>• What language techniques do you use (repetition, metaphors, symbolism etc.) and why?</li> <li>• What is my style like and why does this seem to be the most appropriate way to write for my purpose?</li> </ul>
<b>Audience</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Who am I writing for? (Who are your target audience?)</li> <li>• Realistically, why would this audience be interested in your work? (provide a convincing reason)</li> </ul>
<b>Purpose</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What was my purpose in writing?</li> <li>• What was I trying to explore?</li> <li>• What did I want the reader to understand about my ideas at the end?</li> </ul>

Consider the following sentence stems for your reflective commentary and create others:

- I have chosen to write in the form of:
- Using this format, I have focused on language that is:
- I have tried to not write in language that is:
- The structure of the ... form requires me to:
- I have written my material for the audience of:
- This audience may be interested in my content because of the following context:
- The purpose of my writing is to relate to this audience in the following way:
- My interpretation of the prompt has incorporated ideas that address the following concepts:
- The text has helped to inspire my writing by discussing the following themes:
- These themes were raised by the following events in the text:
- Final summary statement: After reading my writing I feel my audience will learn:
- With this information they may feel:

## SAMPLE WRITTEN EXPLANATION 1

**Sample Text:** *Burial Rites* by Hannah Kent

For my creative response, I decided to write an internal monologue for the character of Steina in the novel *Burial Rites*. This seemed appropriate given that the text presents the story from a range of points of view, including that of the protagonist, Agnes. I thought it would be interesting to view the narrative from the perspective of the eldest daughter of Jon and Margret, because there seems to be so much that she would like to say to the murderess who is lodging in her house, yet she is forbidden to do so. Steina recognises Agnes from a childhood incident, and as a result, sees the humanity in her. This is in direct contrast to her mother and sister who initially regard Agnes with disdain and treat her as an animal. I chose a first-person narrative to allow Steina to express her views about Agnes instead of having to share the views of her mother. I used simple and spare language to reflect the fact that Steina cannot probably read or write very well because she is a girl and the daughter of a peasant farmer. This would have been very typical of the context in which the novel is set.

(Source: [vcaa.vic.edu.au](http://vcaa.vic.edu.au))

## SAMPLE WRITTEN EXPLANATION 2

**Tim Winton – Briony Nevis Poem**

Briony, Briony,  
With hair like ivy,  
And big brown eyes,  
With personality **per** size.

Briony, Briony,  
What could have b'n,  
What could have b'n,  
Yet would've been a sin.

Briony, Briony,  
Shackles confine me,  
Biggie denies me  
The opportunities had.

Potential is but a word  
But never taken into account  
Is that friendship comes at a price.

The choices were mine,  
Yet I am not fine,  
Thinking of you  
Briony, Briony.

### SAMPLE WRITTEN EXPLANATION 3

I have chosen to write a poem on behalf of the narrator for Briony. It would appear after the following lines on page 66 of the text 'The Turning'.

*'Not that I don't think about her. Hell, I write poems to her, draw pictures of her, construct filthy elaborate fantasies she'll never know about. But I never touch her again. Out of loyalty. Briony isn't exactly crushed. If anything she seems amused. She sees how things are.'*

While the narrator uses a great deal of Australian colloquialism and slang, the poem is more formal because of its personal nature. Given that the narrator admitted that "I'm not as stupid as I make out" and because of his emotional feelings for Briony he would be true to himself and glad to have room to express his emotions. Furthermore he admits to writing a number of poems for Briony and so the relative short length would be credible because it belongs to a catalogue of his other poetry. I have also imitated Winton's use of short and sharp sentences, and refrained from decorating my writing with too many adjectives. Winton occasionally writes in a more elevated way, echoing the mood of the text when it is particularly hopeful or grim. For instance, when describing an idyllic summer setting, his sentences are longer and more descriptive, and his narrative is noticeably more vivid and positive.

Winton creates a character who we don't know by name, yet he is endearing because of his matter of fact manner and wry sense of humour. Living a repetitive life brings about boredom and unhappiness in the narrator. And so when a pretty girl finally takes notice of him she becomes centre of his attention.

I began my poem by emphasising the narrator's preoccupation with the physical beauty of Briony Nevis, a symbol of an alternate life, what could have been. The poem continues on his regretful feelings of "what could have b'n". However given his conventional upbringing he still comes to this conclusion that to leave Biggie would have been a sin because he has this great loyalty towards him, and so, he slowly drifts from Briony. In order to express his broken heart he repeats "Briony, Briony" to again appeal for a lost future. Despite all this regret originating from friendship with Biggie, he accepts full responsibility and although he may have occasional emotional outbursts, he never places blame on anyone but himself.

This poem has acted as a release of emotions for the narrator. In summary it is an assessment of his life, he finishes with 'Briony, Briony' in order to echo how she has haunted his memories albeit in a fond way. Although Briony his first young love, she is also a symbol of life in Angelus and what could have been. Since he had escaped the town she is now considered a youthful learning experience and indeed his first love and broken heart.



## EXERCISE 2 – REFINING YOUR CHARACTER

What are the traits of your character? Using a character template can assist you in your characterisation.

TRAITS	
OPTIMIST OR PESSIMIST, AND WHY	INTROVERT OR EXTROVERT, AND WHY
DRIVES AND MOTIVATIONS	TALENTS
EXTREMELY SKILLED AT	EXTREMELY UNSKILLED AT
GOOD CHARACTERISTICS	CHARACTER FLAWS
MANNERISMS	PECULIARITIES
BIGGEST REGRET	MINOR REGRETS
BIGGEST ACCOMPLISHMENT	MINOR ACCOMPLISHMENTS
CHARACTER'S DARKEST SECRET	
DOES ANYONE ELSE KNOW?	
IF YES, DID CHARACTER TELL THEM?	IF NOT, HOW DID THEY FIND OUT?
SELF-PERCEPTION	
ONE WORD CHARACTER WOULD USE TO DESCRIBE SELF	ONE PARAGRAPH DESCRIPTION OF HOW S/HE WOULD DESCRIBE SELF
WHAT DOES S/HE CONSIDER BEST PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTIC?	WHAT DOES S/HE CONSIDER WORST PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTIC?
ARE THESE REALISTIC ASSESSMENTS?	IF NOT, WHY NOT?
HOW S/HE THINKS OTHERS PERCEIVE HIM/HER	

Now think of a specific desire for your character. One driving desire. This will help you to understand the character's motivations. Just write down their name and finish the following sentence in their voice (change the wording if you wish):

**'What I want most in life is...'**

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**Now add details:**

1. What do they perceive to be standing in their way? This might be a real obstacle or it might be something they imagine or feel is in their way even if this is not true.
2. Now consider a personal quality that stands in contrast to the person you are imagining.

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**Take this character and dig a little deeper into who they are by asking the following questions:**

Do they have a nickname or a name they hate being called?

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What colour is their hair and do they like their hairstyle?

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Do they have a birthmark or scar? Can others see it?

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Who is in this character's family or friendship circle? Is there an individual they are closest to? Is there someone they have fallen out with?

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What is your character's biggest fear? Have they told anyone about it? If not, why?

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What makes this character laugh?

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If you opened this character's fridge what would be on the top shelf? What three items would be on the bedroom floor? What is next to them on the bedside table at night?

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What sort of shoes is the character wearing? Are they comfortable in these shoes?

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When the character thinks about their childhood kitchen what smells do they recall? Is this a pleasant memory?

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It is the night before the character's birthday. What are they doing? What exactly do they eat for dinner that night?

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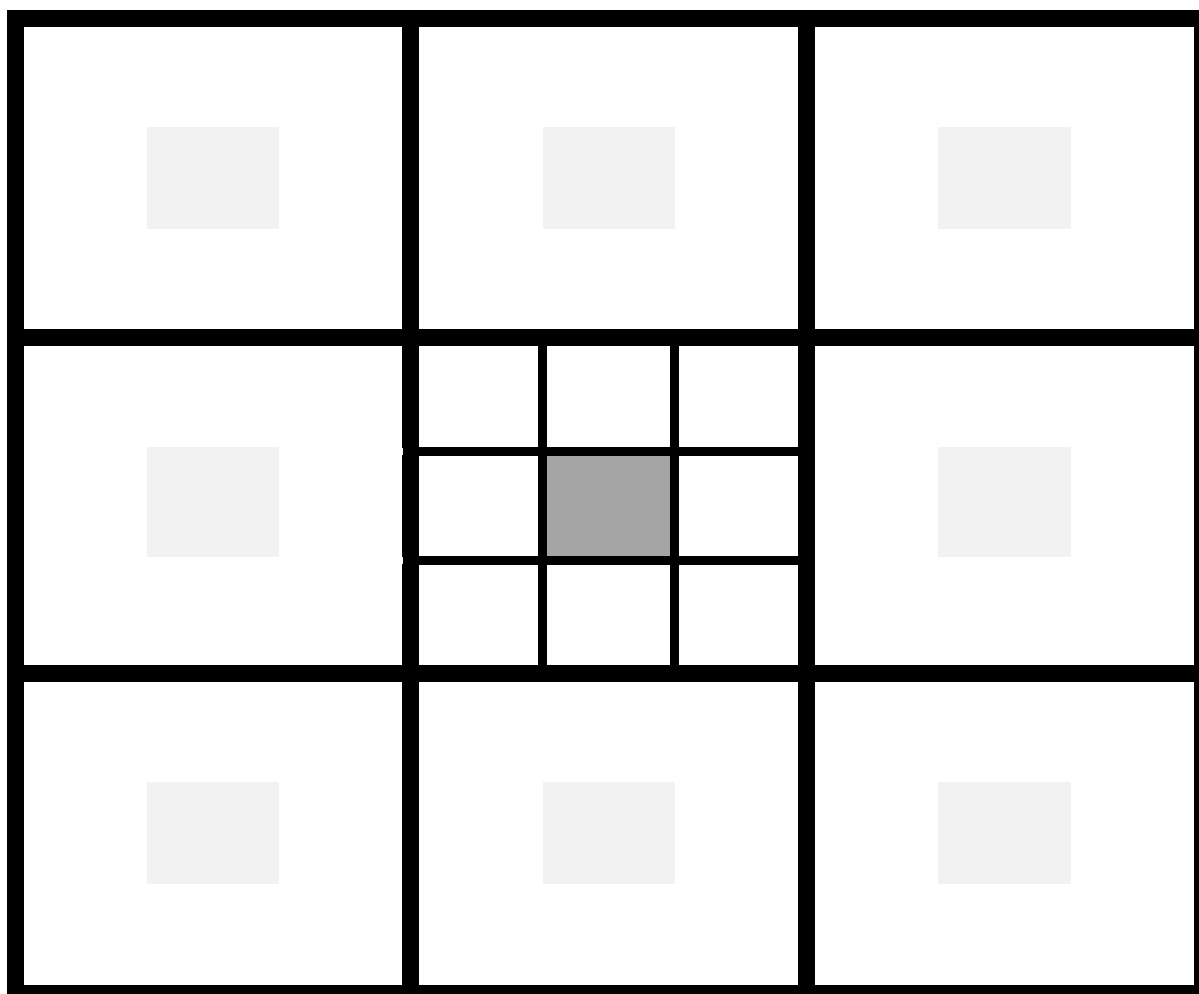
### EXERCISE 3 – WRITING IN CHARACTER

When setting out to write creatively you will often need to establish a ‘voice’. This might be done in order to reflect or represent a particular character in an authentic way, or it may be your aim to mirror the authorial style of a text you are responding to. A good way to do this is to define the voice or your narrator or the character for whom you are writing dialogue.

Below is a lotus diagram. This is an organisational tool with which you can define the qualities of your ‘voice’.

In the central zone, write the name of your narrator in the centre box (dark grey). In the eight boxes around this write adjectives that you might associate with this character. Are they abrupt? Measured? Joyful?

In the eight zones that surround the central zone you should establish rules for writing in a voice authentic for this character. For instance, you might feel that they always open discussion of an idea with a declarative statement that is short. Put this in the central box (light grey) and then put some examples of the sort of starting phrase they might use around this. Alternatively, you may feel that when the character speaks, they often use contractions. Put this rule in the central box and provide examples of the sorts of contractions they use in the boxes around this.









Now think about another of your descriptive experiments. Place a person in the setting – sitting in the dark space, wandering in your familiar space or sitting opposite the well-known person. From the point of view of this character, write about them wanting to change something significant in their life. They might be moving to another country, changing career, picking a university course. How does the setting impact their thinking, reflect their feelings or shape their perception? Can you use the description of setting to expose their inner thoughts rather than describing what they are thinking explicitly?

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Rewrite the above experiment but shift the perspective. You might write in third person or you may be another character in the space interacting with the person and maintain the first-person point of view. You might also shift from present tense to past tense and use the reflective position to add insight to the moment.

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## EXERCISE 5 – CREATING SUSPENSE

When writing a creative response, you need to develop a sense of suspense so that the reader wants to keep reading. After all, there needs to be a purpose (and a clear plot) driving your creative response. Let's have a go at developing suspense using the table below.

WHAT INFORMATION IS THE READER MISSING?  _____ _____ _____ _____ _____	HOW CAN YOU DIVIDE IT UP & REVEAL IT BIT BY BIT?  _____ _____ _____ _____ _____	WHAT NEW CLUES ARE FOUND THAT DEEPEN THE MYSTERY?  _____ _____ _____ _____ _____
HOW CAN YOU INCREASE THE HOPE FOR SUCCESS?  _____ _____ _____ _____ _____	WHY IS THE READER ROOTING FOR THE CHARACTER?  _____ _____ _____ _____ _____	HOW ELSE CAN YOU (PLEASURABLY) DELAY THE READER?  _____ _____ _____ _____ _____
WHY IS THE GOAL IMPORTANT?  _____ _____ _____ _____ _____	HOW CAN YOU MAKE IT EVEN MORE IMPORTANT?  _____ _____ _____ _____ _____	HOW CAN THE SITUATION BECOME EVEN WORSE?  _____ _____ _____ _____ _____
HOW CAN YOU USE SCENE & CHAPTER BREAKS TO INCREASE SUSPENSE?  _____ _____ _____ _____ _____	HOW CAN YOU USE DIALOGUE TO INCREASE SUSPENSE?  _____ _____ _____ _____ _____	HOW CAN YOU USE DESCRIPTION TO INCREASE SUSPENSE?  _____ _____ _____ _____ _____

## EXERCISE 6 – SCENE WRITING

Your creative response is a response to your allocated text. As such it has to 'sit' in relation to the text. The following exercise can assist you to make links to your allocated text.

SCENE WRITING STORY: \_\_\_\_\_

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CHARACTERS' INTERNAL STATE(S) AT START:

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BRAINSTORM 20 WAYS TO TELL THIS SCENE:

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INTERESTING SETTINGS:

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INTERESTING PEOPLE:

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INTERESTING OBJECTS:

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# SCENE WRITING

STORY: \_\_\_\_\_

**CLUES:**

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**DIALOGUE:**

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**SUBTEXT:**

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**CLIMAX:**

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**GENRE CONSIDERATIONS:**

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**REVELATIONS:**

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**HOW DOES THIS SCENE BUILD ON THE PREVIOUS ONE?**

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**LIST A FEW THINGS FROM PREVIOUS SCENES:**

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**CAN YOU EXPAND ON THEIR MEANING OR IMPORTANCE?**

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**HOW DOES THIS SCENE SET THE STORY UP FOR THE NEXT ONE?**

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**LIST A FEW THINGS YOU'LL NEED IN UPCOMING SCENES:**

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**CAN YOU INTRODUCE ANY OF THEM IN THIS SCENE?**

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## **EXERCISE 7: ANALYSIS OF A CREATIVE RESPONSE**

### **SENSE AND SENSIBILITY BY JANE AUSTEN**

This sample shows how a creative response to a novel can take the form of letters written by a character.

In this case the text is Jane Austen's *Sense and Sensibility*.

#### **The example includes:**

- A detailed explanation of how to approach the task through a close study of the text.
- An annotated piece of creative writing – two letters written by a character from the novel.
- Links between the creative response and a close analysis of the text.

### **THE TASK**

Write two letters by Fanny Dashwood, one to Elinor and one to Mrs Dashwood, composed after she has learned of Elinor's engagement to Edward.

### **SAMPLE CREATIVE RESPONSE**

Upon receiving the unwelcome, but not entirely unexpected communication from her brother regarding his engagement to Miss Dashwood, Mrs. John Dashwood sat stiffly at her writing table composing a letter in response to Edward's invitation for John and Fanny Dashwood to visit the Parsonage. Mr. John Dashwood would, had his wife agreed, have willingly acquiesced, for there was also the matter of Marianne's future to be decided. Mr. Dashwood was tolerably fond of his half-sisters and glad, despite his wife's vexation, to see Elinor settled; she could now have no claims upon her father's estate. He had been entirely judicious, he now reassured himself, in withholding the three thousand pounds promised her by his father, for what use would such a sum be to a clergyman's wife? Mrs. Dashwood, however, had little desire to partake of the dubious pleasures of Devonshire, and most certainly not in the humble surrounds of a parsonage. Of course, an invitation to Delaford would be an entirely different matter, and one upon which she would not look unfavourably. Colonel Brandon was a man of rank and property and his country residence, while lacking real elegance, was infinitely more suited to her cultivated sensibilities. No, she would not go! She would not be induced to admire Elinor's screen paintings when Miss Morton's landscapes were very much more to her taste. Fanny Dashwood's letter to Elinor was all insincerity and ill-disguised rancour: "How delighted I was to learn of your impending union with my elder brother; your situation as the wife of a clergyman will be

admirably suited to your simple needs and sanguine disposition. You will, of course, be aware that Mr. Robert Ferrars is recently married to Miss Lucy Steele, a delightful creature who has quite enchanted us all. Edward was most pressing in requesting our company at the Parsonage once you are married and settled, and for myself, I would welcome the prospect of such visits; indeed, were it not for the dirt, I would take much pleasure in the many pretty scenic walks, and I am excessively fond of cottages—there is always so much comfort and elegance about them. Alas, my poor little Harry is of a delicate constitution and I fear that the climate may prove detrimental to his health. I do remember that your poor sister twisted her ankle, and was brought very low by a severe chill. Devonshire must be an uncivilised place indeed! We would, of course, be pleased to receive you at Norland Park whenever you find yourselves in Sussex, although a constant incursion of guests leaves us with few rooms to spare. Please convey my compliments to your mother; how gratifying it must be for her to have her eldest daughter so well settled.

Mrs. Dashwood's letter to her mother was no less ill-tempered. With Mrs. Ferrars, however, Mrs. Dashwood had no need for the affectation of civility. The letter found its recipient most amenable to the sentiments expressed and it intensified the anguish felt by the unhappy lady over the defection of her favourite son, whose even more unsuitable union with Miss Steele had entirely dispossessed Mrs. Ferrars of male heirs. Her daughter's letter, however, brought her little comfort: "I am too ill to leave the house and beg you to come immediately. Despite my entreaties, Edward does not chuse to marry Miss Morton, and she, the daughter of a nobleman, with thirty thousand pounds! Miss Elinor Dashwood set her cap at him the moment he arrived at Norland Park and her tricks and allurements have made him entirely forget his duty to his family. Miss Dashwood's ingratitude, after all that has been done for her, is quite intolerable. How can my dear husband advance his position with a brother who has so very little to recommend him to men of consequence? Robert's offence is equally unpardonable and we must look to little Harry for the honour and advancement of the family. No expence can be spared for his education; a German riding master and a French fencing master must be engaged without delay, for when he attends Westminster, he must shew himself to be a young man of consequence. I myself require German piano-forte, as Harry finds music excessively soothing, but it must be performed on a superior instrument. Lady Middleton called this morning, no doubt to rejoice at our misfortune, for her pitying glances shewed that she had heard the news from Mrs. Jenkins. It is too vexing!

I remain, your most unhappy daughter &c." Mrs. John Dashwood remained secluded at Norland Park for the duration of the season; her absence was not regretted nor her company sought by those whose approbation she most desired. In due course she ventured forth, her spirits lifted by the misfortunes of others. Mrs. Dashwood's incivility failed to diminish the domestic felicity of the inhabitants of the Delaford Parsonage when the expence of a journey from Sussex, with young Harry suitably attired against the possibility of inclement weather, was finally undertaken. Elinor's impulse to forgive her relatives was tempered by her censure of their continuing coldness towards Edward, and by his mother's susceptibility to the persistent flattery of Mrs. Robert Ferrars, which gradually overcame his mother's haughty displeasure. Elinor, on the other hand, Mrs. Ferrars could never forgive! Marianne, while feeling most keenly the injustices done to her sister, was more circumspect than she had hitherto been, having discovered that the most passionately felt sentiments are not always the most enduring, and are often best left unspoken.



Features of the Text	Analysis
<p><b>Long, complex sentences; formal language</b></p>	<p>Elegance and formality of Austen’s style</p> <p>This feature of Austen’s style reflects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The (often superficial) elegance and formality of the society.</li> <li>• The ideals of a ‘civilised’ society, based on restraint and decorum.</li> <li>• Austen’s characters highlight both the benefits and the disadvantages of these social constraints.</li> <li>• Look for examples of these complex sentences in passages and comment on how they reflect character traits, e.g. restraint, secrecy, dishonesty, hypocrisy, frankness, indiscretion, etc.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Use of clauses to qualify the main meaning of a sentence</b></p>	<p>The main idea in the sentence can be modified, qualified or reaffirmed.</p> <p>This allows for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Considered deliberations or differing points of view.</li> <li>• Shades of meaning, most often in the mind of the protagonist, whose considered point of view we are invited to endorse.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Irony</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Humorous irony might reveal a flaw in one of Austen’s heroines, which will be overcome as the character gains insight.</li> <li>• Humorous irony is part of Austen’s wit; she is an entertaining social critic.</li> <li>• Austen’s caustic irony condemns the values embodied in certain characters (such as Fanny Dashwood) – values which should not be endorsed by the group as a whole.</li> <li>• Irony provides a way of making a criticism – if only subtly – according to the rules of ‘concealment’ which keep disruptive tensions below the surface of society.</li> </ul>

Features of the Text	Analysis
<b>Juxtaposition of opposites</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Opposing terms suggest underlying tensions.</li> <li>• Austen suggests that tensions between opposing forces need to be reconciled if the individual and the society are to achieve balance.</li> </ul>
<b>Setting, costume, imagery</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Images associated with characters indicate the qualities and values they embody</li> <li>• Understanding these subtle clues to character helps you to link specific features of the text to the text’s wider meaning.</li> <li>• Marianne’s love of nature reveals a highly Romantic sensibility – which is not always prudent or practical.</li> <li>• The imagery most strongly associated with Marianne (the Romantic poets, music and illness) strengthens her connection with the Romanticism.</li> <li>• Elinor’s screen paintings suggest her ability to keep secrets and to ‘screen’ or restrain her emotions.</li> <li>• Imagery connected with other characters includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Willoughby’s horses</li> <li>• Nancy Steele’s clothes</li> <li>• Mrs Jennings’s association with food</li> <li>• Fanny’s associations with money and material possessions</li> <li>• The constant entertainments at Barton Park</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

(source: [https://www.insightpublications.com.au/pdf-literature-for-senior-students/Sense&Sensibility\\_creativeresponse.pdf](https://www.insightpublications.com.au/pdf-literature-for-senior-students/Sense&Sensibility_creativeresponse.pdf)) Reproduced with permission.

## SAMPLE A+ STUDENT CREATIVE RESPONSES & WRITTEN STATEMENTS

### SAMPLE 1: LIKE A HOUSE ON FIRE – CATE KENNEDY

#### 'FLOTSAM'

You wouldn't believe it, people said when they heard the news. Old Frank, tough as they come. Doctor Mason had said he could go any day. Or last for years. Still, what would doctors know? Trapped in his bed. Immobilized. Useless as a one-legged man in a three-legged race. *He wouldn't have wanted to live that way. It's for the best, really.*

Now the heat beating down, the ground scorched and cracked, stubble smouldering on the far horizon, sending up a disorienting haze. Autumn has been a scorcher this year. The birds silent and the grass still, as if too hot to move. Standing on the veranda that runs the entire length of the house, observing the few dozen farmers milling around her front lawn, is Frank's wife. Scattered around the pathetic remnants of a property which was once was theirs, now hers, for whatever time remains.

'Should be worth forty,' Bob Wilkes says, as he caresses the leather arm chair that used to assume pride of place in front of the television. Frank's chair. Sitting in it now you could almost conjure up an image of him, the face fixed and immobile, wreathed with contempt. Now it is out on the ramp the boys from Rotary had built three months ago. Cracked and faded, the barest imprint of his withered buttocks still visible.

Other farmers further off in the distance, gathered around the machine sheds, picking over what seemed valuable. For a farmer that could be anything. Not too many of them meeting her eye; even fewer offering a greeting.

At first it had all seemed like a warm blanket wrapped around her. The day of the funeral, mass at St Matthews and the eulogy delivered by his brother, Ivan. Full of praise for the brave fight which Frank had put up. A great deal of talk about what a fine fellow he was and how much he was loved by those in the district. All rubbish of course, but there was no denying that Frank's reputation as a fine fellow was growing with each passing day. Everyone was remembering his courage (undoubted) but no one seemed anxious to recall how testy and bitter he could be. Then the slow procession out to the cemetery. Tea and sandwiches in the church hall.

Only much later did she notice how people had changed. Averting their gaze. Half whispered voices on the main street. At first, she had been inclined to think it was all her imagination. Only later did Beverly let her in on the secret.

'There's some that's talking .....

This from Beverley, wife of Bob Pritchard the local pharmacist. The same man who had grilled her over the number of pills prescribed by Dr Mason. Cautionary words about how many he should take and how frequently. Always leaving her feeling vaguely guilty as though she was somehow in the wrong.

'I'm telling you this for your own good, Shirley. There's some that reckon it was all a bit too convenient the way Frank died so suddenly.'

'Yeah, but Doc Mason said he could go anytime. And Frank was getting weaker.'

How could they think such a thing? Everyone knew how severe the injury was. They could see the toll it was taking on her. What kind of people would even entertain such thoughts? People she had known for years. At least that's how Beverley recounted the story. Her voice filled with sorrow, but also with something very close to relish.

Could she even trust Beverley anyway?

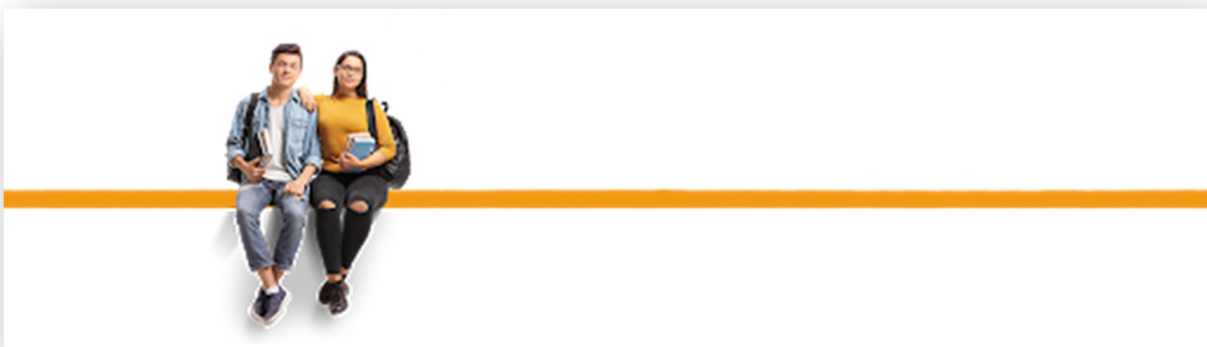
And so the pressure grew. The bank manager shaking his head in mock sorrow. Hell of an overdraft, Shirley. Really, do you think you can manage on your own out there? It was just a matter of time before he called it in.

And so she had acted first. Put it on the market. Watched as those people she once called friends picked over the carcass. Couldn't wait to get their hands on what she and Frank had spent years building and collecting.

Even Bob Wilkes, their nearest neighbour, had changed. Something in the way he could not meet her gaze; something in the way their paths never seemed to cross in town anymore. Still, it was he who had helped lay out the items for the auction. It was he who had got a good prize for their two cows. And it was he who had shot the dogs, something she could not bring herself to do so. But it was also Bob Wilkes who had bought the land and driven a pretty hard bargain.

Tomorrow it would be time to move. Phil and David, her nephews, would make the trip up from Melbourne, pack up the last of her belongings. The flat was tiny, but after all did she really need that much space? And with the train station handy travelling into town would not be such a chore. Her nursing qualifications may have lapsed, but she should have no trouble getting work in the local nursing home. After all, she was used to taking care of people. Wasn't that her speciality?

*'I'm only forty-five she tells herself. That's not old. Lots of women... are forty-five, and they're all getting along with life.'*





## **'LIKE A HOUSE ON FIRE' WRITTEN STATEMENT**

My story derives its inspiration in part from Cate Kennedy's 'Flexion.' However, it concerns the aftermath to that story and what may have happened to Frank's wife.

In my account Frank has recently died and the wife is faced with some very grim decisions. She fully expected the community to rally around her after Frank's death and, certainly, they did so at first. Much to her surprise and consternation however, a kind of whispering campaign sprung up in the district soon after Frank's funeral. Certain elements in the community have begun to suggest that Frank's death had been convenient for her. To make matters worse, the memory of Frank and what a difficult man he was is beginning to fade. He is now recalled as a brave soul who fought against his terrible injuries and who was one of the 'true' sons of the district.

My story begins with the sale of the farmhouse and the land. It follows the woman and all her thoughts and feelings about what has happened since Frank died. She recalls the day of his funeral and how, at the time, people seemed so kind and loving. Now she is not sure whether she can trust anyone to be her true friend. The people that she once thought of as her friends and neighbours gradually pick over the farm implements, snatching up bargains here and there.

In writing this story I have sought to emulate some of the aspects of Cate Kennedy's prose style. There is a concentration on the small details of domestic life and how they seem to crowd out any consideration of the bigger issues. There is also a deliberate 'flattening' of emotional response even though my main character is clearly in great pain. She is struggling to hold herself together and maintain her sanity in the face of enormous emotional pressure. In my creative piece, I have mimicked Kennedy's use of language, in particular her use of similes and how she has the tendency to begin her sentences with conjunctions. Additionally, I have italicised some quotes from 'Flexion' to demonstrate how the themes in my story are true to Kennedy's work.

For my inspiration I have also drawn from Cate Kennedy's 'Cross-Country' and the idea of how difficult it is to 'get out and move on.' Rebecca actively struggles with the loss of her relationship, still obsessed and can't move on. I've also found a similar theme in 'Ashes' of a person repressing their own emotional life in the relationship which Chris had with his father, and in his mother, who subsists by embellishing past events. In addition, I was interested in the way Cate Kennedy focuses on medical mishaps and the impact they can have on people's lives. In 'Like a House on Fire' the impact of the spinal injury shrinks the 'locus of existence' of the main character as though there is nothing else in the universe. The 'immobilising pain' of the protagonist infects all characters. In a similar way, Frank's injury has become the centre of the universe for him and his wife. It dominates their lives entirely forcing Frank's wife into a new kind of slavery.

## SAMPLE 2: REAR WINDOW – ALFRED HITCHCOCK

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Just after dog died, before Lisa dropped off the note “WHAT HAVE YOU DONE WITH HER?”- DUSK

Oh what a day I've had! While the last rays of light drain away and the shadows in the apartment disappear, the sweltering heat doesn't. The sound of the birds above the noise of the bustling street indicate that the business of the day is drawing to a close. Soon enough the streets will be swarmed by the laughter of those socialising because sleep is hard to come by. Alongside dusk comes the time to think. And I sure have a lot to think about. My ears become sharper and my senses are heightened to the point where I wonder if my mind is becoming more paranoid. I don't expect any relief to come to me this night, not because of the heat but rather because I know that the dog is dead!

No one can conceive the hurricane like thoughts that swirl my mind. I'm beginning to frighten myself.

Oh my! My Jeff's right and my feminine intuition never fails me. I just need to trust in it. Up until this point, Jeff and I were ready to throw in the towel and concede that perhaps this time, we'd gotten it wrong and took things too far. And to think I was on the brink of believing Doyle and considering my poor sweet Jeff, confined to his wheelchair, to have been making it all up in his head. We'll show him. What more proof does he need? Trips at night in the rain, knives, saws, the rope tied trunks, a missing wife and now the poor dog...Why is it that my Jeff and I are more aware of the matter than a detective? Doyle needs to do his job.

That blood curling scream sent all those in earshot to their window in a dash. Well everyone but one it seems. The one that didn't need to see. Thorwald. His name makes my stomach churn. The rosy tip of his winking cigarette still glows faintly within the envelop of darkness cloaking the apartment across the way; a manifestation of reignited suspicions and of the alluring and possibly sinister truth that awaits revelation. Still I can't comprehend what such evil possesses a man to murder his wife in cold blood? To parade his crime in front of an open window for the world to see?

I'm not much on rear window ethics and I'm not particularly sure that it is right to pry into other people's lives like we are. Assessing their every move, thinking the worst. I mean, I could only imagine how I would feel if someone were watching me through my window like a bug under a glass; violated, humiliated and vulnerable, I suppose, even if you had nothing to hide. As Doyle said, people do a lot of things in private that can't possibly be explained in public. Our community has views on what is admissible and makes assumptions about those who don't act with typical human behaviour. But we're already too invested in the situation. We know what we know. We've seen what we've seen. Heavens! Neighbours should look out for one another, care for one another. Now that the dog is dead it points an obvious finger towards the man in question. We're certainly onto something. It's clear as crystal really. After everything that has happened, that man is far from innocent. It is clear to me that my duty to expose a murderer justifies the means and I will sleep at night knowing I have done the right thing albeit by dubious methods.

Oh Stella, dragged into this mess with us. She knew trouble would follow when we chose to act like peeping toms. Us women need to stick together. I know she's been trying to convince Jeff that marriage isn't as bad as he thinks. And for that I'm so thankful. Jeff needs someone like her. Telling him how it is. It's just unfortunate that my Jeff has allowed his fear of commitment to blind him to the beauty and security of having someone by his side.

By helping Jeff, he can finally see that I can be like him. Clever! Daring! Brave! Not just a girl who reads Harper's bazaar... I can see that my actions have impressed him. It is in his eyes when I provide any new advice on the matter at hand. It's like he's looking at me for the first time. Finally paying attention to me. Imagine that!

Leaning over Jeff's shoulder, I make out, scratched out in sharp, capital letters, a chilling question as it comes into view. Its undeniable, glaring accusation sends a weak shiver creeping down my spine. The letter is addressed to Lars Thorwald. The message reads, simply: WHAT HAVE YOU DONE WITH HER? Oh my! Here we go now, sticking our fingers into the lion's den. Is this too far? I'm afraid it might be.

Don't you know? Curiosity kills the cat. And the dog's already dead. If that's not a clear caution to stop I don't know what is. But this case is far from over.

As Jeff hands me the envelope, I smile, happy that we're in this together and I know he's thinking the same.

### **'REAR WINDOW' WRITTEN STATEMENT**

I have chosen to write an internal monologue using the persona of Lisa Freemont. It takes place in Jeff's apartment shortly after they discover that their neighbours' dog has been strangled. I found this to be a key point in the film as it acts as a moment of reflection for Lisa and evokes a newfound sense of determination to solve the potential murder case. Throughout the film, heat and panning shots are used to set the scene and echo the mood of the scene. I mimicked this by opening the monologue with Lisa's observations of her surroundings and describing dusk as a "time to think", whilst emphasising the constant "sweltering heat" to highlight the intensity of the moment.

The monologue form allows Lisa's inner-most thoughts and emotions to be revealed, such as her repulsed feelings about Thorwald and her mixed opinions regarding the ethics of voyeurism. In addition, thoughts about being involved in the case to challenge Jeff's perception of her as only "a girl who reads Harper's bazaar" as well as her feelings and appreciation for Stella which is not explored in the film.

I have written in first person, included direct quotes from the film and focused on language that imitates Lisa's elegant and classy mannerisms and speech such as referring to Jeff as her 'poor sweet' and using phrases such as 'I mean', 'to think', 'not particularly', and 'it seems' while she is reflecting on the recent events that have transpired. At times in the film, Lisa's sophisticated manner is offset against colloquial, witty and sarcastic dialogue- a device I applied in phrases such as 'Here we go now' and 'Imagine that!'. I also imitated Lisa's vivacious disposition by including exclamations such as 'Oh my!' and 'Heavens'. In addition, to reinforce Lisa's deliberation between further partaking in the investigation and what she knows to be ethical, I have used questions that Lisa poses to herself such as "is this too far?".

The purpose of the piece is to shed light on Lisa's thoughts on situations that have only been lightly touched on in the play and to act as a release of emotions for Lisa that would otherwise be undisclosed since Hitchcock's focus was from LB Jeffries point of view and this perspective was predominant. Through Lisa's internal monologue, themes of voyeurism, privacy, female roles, neighbourhood principles and relationships are explored. The intended audience of this piece are those who have watched Alfred Hitchcock's film 'Rear Window' or have read the script. As they have familiarity with the concepts I discuss, my aim is for readers to depart with a greater understanding and appreciation of the ideas surrounding the character of Lisa Freemont.

### SAMPLE 3: NINE DAYS – TONI JORDAN

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#### Kip's Father: Tom

In a moment or two, seemingly everything and nothing is happening. The dispassionate, yet unforgiving February rays catch both sides of the shilling simultaneously as it flutters between King George's equally dispassionate bust and emu duo ten times a second and beads of sweat start forming on Danny's bulging temple just above his squinted bulging eyes and sickly electricity runs up and down my spine and threads in between and around my joints at a hummingbird's pace, where blobby mounds of water begin to spark on my very own circuit of skin.

This isn't even the best part.

The shilling reaches its maximum altitude, just a metre short of the first branches of a naked acacia and begins its rapid descent. It plummets to the ground, inches away and fire starts to form around the comet bracing for impact with Richmond's atmosphere. Mayday! Mayday! Dirty nails dig into soft, fleshy palms. Skin tightens over white knuckle-bones. In a moment or two it's over.

The voltage to my body is shut off. My sweat turns cold and my cotton shirt sticky with all the excess. Danny's eyes widen so much you could scoop them out with a dessert spoon. If I had a spoon on me right now, trust me. I bloody would. They're saved from falling out only slightly by the crinkling at the bottom, where his toothy grin creeps up his hollowed cheeks and paws at his sockets.

'Looks an awful lot like tails, dont'cha reckon Tom?' He doesn't bother to hide his grin. Why should he? The indignant smirk reserved for a winner. The kind that screams across Punt Road that *I'm a shilling richer, and that would be all thanks to you, Tom and send your mother my regards.*

I want to think about the shilling, what will happen to this week's rations of sugar and flour and meat and what-have-you but all I can think about is how loud everything is.  
Thump.

I'm starting to feel aware of when my heart receives another care package of blood to pump like the Yarra up to my brain and down to my toes and in to tiny branching vessels where they tickle and trickle and it's all too much.

Thump, thump.

'Oi. Dingbat. I believe your reparations are due.' He opens and closes his palms. Expecting. Cripes. It finally registers. I feel my blood freeze over into a human ice lolly.

'Don't get your lacey little knickers in a twist, awright?'

I kick it over, pitting my luck against the sun and heaving a hefty hoik, hoping it lands on the coin. I'm not bending arse over tit for this moron. He doesn't care. He won, and I didn't.

You've gone and done it now, Tom. You've bloody done it now. I rehearse the lines over and over in my head to brace for the incoming verbal air-raid from Ma, but I'm not sure if she's saying it in my head or if it's just me. I lost our rations. I lost my tram fare. I lost a bet. And the only way I can get back to Cubitt and face my impending doom is the short-cut through bloody St. Stephen's, where the bloody sermon's just finished. I swallow my pride in one hearty gulp, because I know for a fact that that's all I'm eating for the week.

It's not so bad at first. Girls with their hair done up to the nines, braided this way and that, tucked under this sleeve of hair and coming out that other side all covered with a neat little bonnet that berates innocent bystanders, yelling *I'm better than you because I can afford to make my hair look like a peacock with genetic defects*. Sheer, frilly little gloves. Piercing stares. One in particular pierces right through like a sewing needle under your thumbprint and sends my blood pumping again in a confused frenzy of fear and intrigue.

'You.'

'Me?'

'No, the other juggins with the cotton shirt in the middle of Winter. Catholic-types, I'm telling you.'

Ouch. I've had so many bones to pick today that I'm only a couple short of a lamb's ribcage. The girl in the least extravagant peacock-feathers bends her index to and fro, beckoning me with an invisible thread. Don't worry, she more than compensates with her hair that would put Marie Antoinette's servants to shame. Not a stray lock.

'With people like you, I don't know why we're not sending off the girlies to scare off the Jerries. You'd be quite good at it.'

That stare could kill. She lets out a little exhale to inform me my joke wasn't absolutely rubbish. Painted lip corners soften.

'Why would we need to do that when we've got perfectly healthy young men like yourself to do it for us?'

She stabs a chicken feather into my lapel before I can get a word in.

'Folks of your denomination are the ones killing us. Not the Hun. Consider it.'

'Likewise.'

I do consider it. All the way home. I mill over a thousand pros, half the cons. Sifting through grains, left with a few tiresome clumps. First, family. I think about Ma and Cassidy and about them clenching a telegram back from the Somme so tight their knuckles go white and the ink starts to smudge with summer sweat and tears. But maybe they'd be happiest when I'm gone. A mouth less to feed. Chief squanderer of food, money, rations, all that is good in the world - gone. Second, money. It would ease the tensions in Ma's purse stitches I'm sure. I force myself to care, but my mind wanders to Danny and the shilling for the umpteenth time today. I'd have enough to gamble and lose a shilling every day, without a care in the world.

My life's got to be like this. It's got to keep going on. Puffing Tom's running out of steam, and fairly soon there'll be a couple stale coal crumbs left. Taking life one day at a time, the scenic route through the Blue Mountains day in, day out is the worst possible way to rot the vigorous soul. I need something to throw a spanner in the works. I need something to keep the fire burning, even if it's out quick. I want the Egyptian sands to run through my toes and fill my boots and I want to train with bayonets under the hot African sun a mile from the sparkling Nile whilst the ladies fawn and giggle over me. I want, I want, I want.

But anything I want, Ma doesn't. She says it's on account of our religion but I reckon she just enjoys a verbal spar.

'You're awfully late. Ration queues that long?'

Shit. I was out for hours with nothing to show for it except pockets a shilling lighter. She sees. She knows.

Cassidy pitches in from the armchair, her face all painted up so as to hide anything that mightn't suit her potential suitors' palates. Especially that Irish complexion that tells all. 'He's gone and wasted it again, Ma. We'll have nothing to eat again this week, Ma.'

The dirty rat.

But Ma says nothing. It's the silence that's worrying. Anger shoots out like a gas and is up and out in a jiffy but disappointment sinks like a rock in a pond. It doesn't go anywhere. It stays. Forever. Accumulating moss and sea-scum.

'What's that?' She points to my lapel, but her voice has no inquisitive tempo. She knows what it is.

Hesitation. 'I want to enlist.' Man the battle stations!

'No.' Is that it? No shell explosions? No machine gun fire from her?

'But I could make six shillings a day! You and Cassidy could do so well back here! Think about it!'

'No. Your starving cousins and aunts and uncles back home are fighting against the bloody Poms, and you want to *help* them? They're killing *us*, by the dozens! Absolutely not, not over my dead body and not your father's! He would be turning over in his grave, God rest his soul. He'd want you to get a respectable job at The Argus as intended, not blasting heads off poor young men! I can't even bear to look at you! Just - just, go.'

There's a finality in her voice that doesn't let me get another word in, Motherian for '*don't bother talking back because I'm always right*'. I want to grab her face with both hands and scream that we're Australian, not Irish. I want the screams to rise up from my breast into little spatters of spit. I want to tell her my loyalty lies with the King and the Empire and the Union Jack flying up in the sky at Parliament, far away and unsullied from all the death and disease and diarrhea crawling in and around Diphtheria Street.

'His opinion don't matter when he's six feet under.'

She recoils like I've taken my glove off and slapped her across the face with it. The end of a battle marked by a war declaration.

I fill up Dad's flask to the brim with Melbourne Bitter and a drizzle of absinthe, strike it down on the counter, make a big show and dance of it and return to my room. The white flag. There's a ravine where Dad used to be, but the house feels more suffocating now than ever before. I never felt the jerry-can and shanty shingle roof closing in on me like it is now. Lips to glass. Malt to throat. The bubbles rise up and up and up with a fizz and a crackle and then they're out and gone. I'm not in Cubitt Street anymore. I'm at the Pyramids of Giza. Fizzle. Pop.

## **'NINE DAYS' WRITTEN STATEMENT**

### **PURPOSE:**

I have chosen to write a day from Tom's perspective in 1917 - in the midst of the Great War, where Tom considers enlisting. I have chosen to write from Tom's perspective as it allows me to incorporate elements of Connie, Kip and Francis into one character, as well as allowing me to write from the perspective of a character who shaped the characters of his children.

Anti-war sentiments expressed by Toni Jordan doesn't take into consideration the actual perspectives of many young men in this period who were genuinely interested in enlisting. I've decided to fill in a gap in the novel where Jordan seems to omit the puerile marvel and connotations of courage and valour associated with fighting, as it was the chief propagator of the war which is so heavily condemned in her piece.

### **CONTEXT:**

Whilst the setting is similar to Kip's, 1910's Richmond differs slightly in that the Catholic-Protestant divide was much more prevalent and damaging than in the 40's on account of the Irish Civil War. Jordan explores the themes of sectarianism particularly in the 40's through the social ostracising of the Westaway family, but writing in the 1910's allows for much more conspicuous ramifications. Particularly in attitudes to war, the Irish-Catholics were much more opposed than in the 1940's, and religion was much more restricting.

### **AUDIENCE:**

Much like the intended audience of Toni Jordan's 'Nine Days', the audience for this piece is a chiefly Australian readership or those with interest in the cultural contexts of the twentieth century with regards to war and its ramifications. It is intended to appeal to a much wider readership so as to convey anti-war sentiments more readily.

Language Choices:

### **LITERARY DEVICES:**

#### **Symbolism:**

The main symbol that unites all the characters in Nine Days across generations is indubitably the shilling, which Kip obtains and then passes down to his descendants to symbolise the ubiquity of family and love. The shilling is present in my creative as well, but Tom's shilling is lost to his vices (gambling) before Kip can inherit it, to challenge the notion that family is always able to withstand adversity, which Jordan conveys in her novel. I've instead chosen to utilise the social context of the twentieth century slums in Richmond which is prevalent in Jordan's novel to provide a barrier to human connection, which it does to some extent in Nine Days - despite not impeding familial ties to the same extent.