Stage 1 English

Subject Assessment Report

Overview

At Stage 1 the English and mathematics subjects and the Personal Learning Plan are moderated. For most schools, only the C and D grades are moderated, as the C grade represents the minimum grade required for SACE completion.

Stage 1 assessment reports give an overview of how students performed at the C and D grades in their school assessments, relative to the learning requirements, assessment design criteria, and performance standards set out in the relevant subject outlines. They provide information and advice on: teacher engagement and student engagement with the assessment types, including task design; the application of the performance standards in school assessments; and the quality of student performance.

Assessment Type 1: Responding to Texts

In this assessment type, students analyse the interrelationship of author, text, and audience, with an emphasis on how language and stylistic features shape ideas and make meaning in a range of contexts.

Students responded to a range of text types, such as: novels, short stories, films, poetry, and plays. A variety of contemporary and classic texts were studied, including: *Past the Shallows, The Book Thief, Jasper Jones, The White Tiger,* *The Greatest Showman, Inception, Of Mice and Men*, *The Turning*, *The Shawshank Redemption*, *Red Dog*, *The Scree, The Sapphires*, *The Great Gatsby, Animal Farm*,and *Macbeth*. Other popular choices for analysis were: short stories, slam poetry, film trailers, short films, documentaries, Gothic literature, Dystopian fiction, blogs, vlogs, advertising product-placement, reality television, and video games.

Successful achievement at the C grade:

* Moderators noted that successful responses were produced by students when the teacher’s task design was clear, detailed and concise, and provided a range of interesting options for students to choose from to demonstrate their knowledge, understanding and analysis.
* In learning the skills of analysis, explicit teaching of language features, stylistic features, and conventions of text types produced the most successful results.
* Teaching of the language and conventions of the text type for students’ written, multimodal, or oral responses through modelling and deconstruction also produced successful results. The majority of responses demonstrated students were engaged with carefully selected texts. The greatest challenge arose when students were given choice in their mode of response, but there was evidence of a lack of familiarity with the conventions of that mode. Some students were given opportunities to undertake a critical perspectives task or an e-exam in preparation for Stage 2, with the Introduction to Critical Perspectives/Literary theories task sheet found in the [Stage 1 English Subjects Implementation — Workshop Booklet](http://www.sace.sa.edu.au/web/english/stage-1/support-materials/implementation-workshop-materials) often used for this task.
* In some cases, students had limited opportunity to be successful in this assessment type, as they were being asked to write under supervision. In addition, there is still an overreliance on the essay format for students to demonstrate their achievement in this assessment type. Some other successful formats include paragraph answers, multimodal and oral presentations, blogs, podcasts, and interviews, for example, a film analysis in the style of an arts YouTube channel. Students should adhere to the maximum time limit, have a clear understanding of the difference between *film analysis* including, for example, the language features or stylistic devices being analysed, analysis of screen language, motifs, character, theme, and/or techniques, and of a film *review* (an evaluation of a film).
* Successful responses came from students who had been taught how to reference quotations and supporting evidence so that they could successfully demonstrate the specific feature Ap3 — ‘Use of evidence from texts to support conclusions, with textual references incorporated in responses’. Students should use ellipses where appropriate to avoid quotes which are too long — as all prose in the body contributes to the word-count. Students should be explicitly taught how to note and reference secondary sources, in order to avoid plagiarism.
* Some samples highlighted the need for students to draft and edit their work more thoroughly. Teachers are advised to refer to the *Supervision and Verification of Students’ Work* policy for guidance acceptable levels of intervention by teachers or others when drafting student work.

Application of the performance standards

Over 95% of school assessment decisions in Stage 1 English were confirmed, indicating that the vast majority of teachers have a clear understanding of applying the performance standards at the C and D grade levels. Misunderstanding was evident in *Application* 3 (Ap3) ‘Use of evidence from texts to support conclusions, with some textual references incorporated in responses’.

Task design

* Most teachers adapted the pre-approved plans available on the SACE website, and most were guided by, but not limited to, the suggested texts list, also on the website.
* Teachers should ensure that their selection of specific features of the criteria for assessment matches the nature of the task they have designed. In Responding to Texts the analysis criterion is of critical importance.
* The most successful responses were produced when assessment task design required students to analyse how the creators of texts used language choices to affect and position readers and viewers. The best designed assessment tasks explicitly required students to provide meaningful connections between An1 and An2 in their responses.
* In less successful assessment task design, students were restricted from demonstrating evidence at higher levels due to an under-emphasis of An2 (and often KU2 and KU3). While the design of these tasks required adequate in-depth analysis of ideas and/or themes, they overlooked or gave tacit attention to the equal importance of how authors/creators choose and use language to convey their ideas/intentions.
* Careful wording of tasks as well as explicit teaching of a wide range of language devices, techniques and terms should support students to better meet the performance standards in their responses. For example, the *Analysis* assessment design criterion at the A grade level asks students to show evidence of ‘perceptive evaluation’, which is a higher-order expectation than ‘effective analysis’ at the B grade level and ‘description with some analysis’ at the C grade level.
* While most teachers provided students with a range of linguistic terms to use in their text analysis, students produced successful responses when they understood the effect of language and stylistic choices in shaping meaning. If students simply ‘identified’ or ‘made reference to’ such devices as alliteration and onomatopoeia in poetry, for example, they could only achieve at the D grade level in the Knowledge and Understanding and the Analysis assessment design criteria.

Assessment Type 2: Creating Texts

Successful achievement at the C grade:

* In this assessment type, students create imaginative, interpretive, and/or persuasive texts for different purposes, audiences, and contexts, in written, oral, and/or multimodal forms. The text type and mode chosen for creating a text should be appropriate for the intended purpose, context, and audience, either real or implied.
* Well-designed tasks led students to create successful texts that had a clear *purpose* and *audience.* These tasksprovided students with valuable opportunities to experiment with and refine their use of appropriate chosen language and stylistic features in their created texts.
* Narratives and oral expositions were the popular text types chosen for this assessment type. Specific instructions to use particular devices such as flashback or multiple perspectives resulted in engaging narratives. These instructions encouraged students to move away from the familiar chronological narrative and experiment with more sophisticated techniques. Memoirs, rather than the generic recount, elicited selective detail that was subsequently more entertaining. Tasks that encouraged students to create blended texts resulted in innovative responses. For example, one task asked students to prepare a speech to chefs about creating a special meal. The responses were a blend of motivational, persuasive, and procedural texts.
* Creative tasks can engage students. For example, creating a Treasure Chest for a character from a studied text with students making the artifacts and explaining and justifying the meaning of the ‘treasure’ and its relevance to the character and the plot.
* Creating ‘pitch’ videos engaged many students. For example, one student made a product and then presented video footage justifying their choices, such as logo design, written copy, marketing, colouring, and framing — with reference to how they combine as a whole. Other innovative texts included travel itinerary pitches and scripts for documentaries. Moderators commented favourably on the transformative texts that a few students produced but cautioned that the accompanying writer’s statement is part of the maximum of 800 words, which may limit students. (Transformative tasks may be better included in Assessment Type 3: Intertextual Study, for which students have a maximum of 1000 words.)
* Many teachers adapted tasks from pre-approved LAPs to suit their own students’ contexts, including online vlog and blog entries, persuasive texts supporting charity organisations, and advocacy texts.
* Multimodal or oral presentations on contemporary issues and movements such as Black Lives Matter, globalisation and the environment were popular and give students the opportunity to develop argumentative and persuasive techniques on topics that stimulate social conscience.

Application of the performance standards

* The vast majority of samples demonstrated consistent application of the performance standards by teachers in this assessment type.
* Teachers are advised that text analysis is not required in this assessment type and instead the focus of task design and assessment should be on the *Application* and *Knowledge and Understanding* criteria.

Task Design

* Students were provided with a variety of stimulus material and had choice in topics and often in the mode of presentation. Speeches which creatively melded forms, eras or styles such as such as a ‘Big Brother’ style send-off speech for Banquo in Shakespeare’s *Macbeth,* or for special occasions, such asan 18th birthday or acceptance speech, elicited creative and successful responses because they simulated a relatable event with a clear purpose and audience.
* Moderators commented favourably on Creating Texts tasks in which students assumed the point-of-view and voice of a recognised or unpublished author ‘reinventing’ one of the author’s works in a different form or style.
* Frequently, free-choice narratives and recounts lacking a clear intention and context tended to lead to less successful and less structurally creative responses.

Assessment Type 3: Intertextual Study

Successful achievement at the C grade:

In this assessment type, students reflect on their understanding of intertextuality by analysing the relationships between texts, or by demonstrating how their knowledge of other texts has influenced the creation of their own texts. When analysing or creating texts to show their understanding of intertextuality, students may also consider intertextual references within texts (explicit or implied references to other texts) or ways in which they, as readers, make intertextual connections based on their previous experiences of texts or their own experiences and beliefs. This could include a study of:

* Non-creative texts:
* two or more texts by the same author
* two or more examples of the text type (e.g. two film trailers or three editorials)
* a text type and a mode of communication covering the same topic
* different text types about a similar idea, designed to meet the needs of a particular audience
* a text that is based on or makes reference to other texts
* hybrid texts, such as infotainment or product placement in film.
* Creative texts:
* a created text must be based on a published text and include a writer’s statement, in which students explain how the published text has influenced the created text. Teachers are reminded that the writer’s statement is included in the word count.

Task Design:

Most intertextual studies were comparisons of two texts. Successful students often compared and contrasted a shared class text with a well-chosen individual choice text in their responses. Popular text pairings included a comparison of *To Kill a Mocking Bird* and *Jasper Jones*, or a comparison of a film and novel of the same title, for example, *One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest*. Comparisons of video games were also popular, for example, Prince of Persia and Assassin’s Creed or Tomb Raider and Warcraft. Other successful students chose to create a text based on a published text with the accompanying writer’s statement. Some tasks gave students the option of looking at intertextuality within texts; an example in one pre-approved LAP focused on the literary allusions to Cool Hand Luke in Markus Zusak’s *The Messenger*.

One example of an opportunity to respond in an innovative way involved students presenting an interview script in which a film director is explaining to the author, Harper Lee, the choices he made in relation to her novel *To Kill a Mocking Bird.* Some students were also given opportunities to undertake a critical perspectives task as their intertextual task in preparation for Stage 2 English Literary Studies.

Application of the performance standards

Most teachers accurately applied the state standard for this assessment type. When designing tasks, teachers should judiciously select the number of specific features to be assessed, while ensuring they include An3.

When students negotiate their own topic or question, teachers should ensure that the topic provides sufficient scope to meet the specific features at the highest level.

Preparation and submission of student materials

* School assessment tasks are set and marked by teachers. Teacher grades/marks and annotations should be evident on all student work.
* Teachers are reminded to select and submit samples in accordance with the instructions outlined in the [Stage 1 moderation](https://www.sace.sa.edu.au/coordinating/admin/moderation/stage-1) section on the SACE website
* Teachers are reminded to include only final assessment pieces in the materials for moderation. Drafts or student notes should not be included.