

**Purpose**

To assess your ability to closely analyse the ideas and techniques in David Williamson's *Influence*.

**Description of assessment**

- Choose a key idea to analyse that is evident within the play.
- Be aware of how this idea is reinforced by the use of the conventions of the text type.
- Your essay should be in an appropriate form to the following question: Show how David Williamson in *Influence* uses the features of the text type to explore the dynamic of power in human relationships.

**Outline of the task**

- Particular aspects to consider:
  - Establish a thesis or contention that will provide the structure of an argument for your essay.
  - Move logically from one paragraph to the next and build your argument.
  - Weave your discussion of the poems throughout your paragraph, rather than discussing poems sequentially
  - Use appropriate nomenclature
  - Use evidence and quotations to support your claims
  - You may support your argument by exploring the interpretation as affected by critical perspectives

**Assessment conditions**

An essay of up to a maximum of 1000 words that are drafted and polished.

*Assessment Design Criteria***Knowledge and Understanding**

KU1 Knowledge and understanding of ways in which ideas, perspectives, and values are represented in texts.

KU2 Knowledge and understanding of ways in which authors use stylistic features to communicate ideas.

KU3 Knowledge and understanding of the stylistic features and conventions of different text types.

**Analysis**

An1 Analysis of ways in which texts represent ideas, perspectives, and values.

An2 Analysis and evaluation of ways in which stylistic features are used to influence the interpretation of texts.

An3 Analysis of similarities and differences between texts in comparative tasks.

An4 Analysis of ways in which different critical perspectives inform interpretation.

**Application**

Ap1 Use of conventions, and stylistic features to create coherent texts that address the meaning and intention of the task.

Ap2 Use of evidence from texts to develop, support and justify responses.

Ap3 Use of accurate, clear, and fluent expression appropriate for purpose and audience.

## Performance Standards for Assessment Type 1 (Responding to Texts): Poetry Comparison

	Knowledge and Understanding	Analysis	Application
<b>A</b>	<p>Detailed knowledge and understanding of ways in which ideas, perspectives, and values are represented in texts.</p> <p>Thorough knowledge and understanding of a range of ways in which authors use stylistic features to communicate ideas.</p> <p>Detailed knowledge and understanding of a range of stylistic features and conventions of different text types.</p>	<p>Perceptive analysis of the ways in which texts represent ideas, perspectives, and values.</p> <p>Perceptive analysis and evaluation of the complex ways in which stylistic features are used to influence the interpretation of texts.</p> <p>Perceptive analysis of similarities and differences between texts in comparative tasks.</p> <p><i>Perceptive analysis of ways in which different critical perspectives inform critical interpretation.</i></p>	<p>Sophisticated use of a wide range of conventions, and/or stylistic features to create coherent texts that address the meaning and intention of the task.</p> <p>Detailed and appropriate use of evidence from texts develop, support, and justify responses, with textual references incorporated fluently in discussion.</p> <p>Use of precise and fluent expression, which is appropriate for audience and purpose.</p>
<b>B</b>	<p>Knowledge and understanding of a range of ways in which ideas, perspectives, and values are represented in most texts.</p> <p>Knowledge and understanding of a range of ways in which authors use stylistic features to communicate ideas.</p> <p>Knowledge and understanding of a range of stylistic features and conventions of different text types.</p>	<p>Clear analysis of the ways in which texts represent ideas, perspectives, and values.</p> <p>Clear analysis and evaluation of the complex ways in which stylistic features are used to influence the reading of texts.</p> <p>Clear analysis of similarities and differences between texts in comparative tasks.</p> <p><i>Clear analysis of ways in which different critical perspectives inform critical interpretation.</i></p>	<p>Use of a range of conventions, and/or stylistic features to create coherent texts that address the meaning and intention of the task.</p> <p>Appropriate use of evidence from texts to develop, support, and justify responses, with textual references incorporated in discussion.</p> <p>Mostly accurate and fluent expression, which is appropriate for audience and purpose.</p>
<b>C</b>	<p>Knowledge and understanding of some ways in which ideas, perspectives, and values are represented in texts.</p> <p>Knowledge and understanding of some ways in which authors use stylistic features to communicate ideas.</p> <p>Knowledge and understanding of some of the stylistic features and conventions of different text types.</p>	<p>Some analysis of ways in which texts represent ideas, perspectives, and values.</p> <p>Description, with some analysis and evaluation, of ways in which stylistic features are used to influence the reading of texts.</p> <p>Description, with some analysis, of similarities and differences between texts in comparative tasks.</p> <p><i>Some analysis of ways in which different critical perspectives inform critical interpretation.</i></p>	<p>Competent use of conventions, and/or stylistic features to create texts that address the meaning and intention of the task.</p> <p>Competent use of evidence from texts to develop, support, and justify responses, with some use of textual references in discussion.</p> <p>Generally fluent and clear expression, which is mostly appropriate for audience and purpose.</p>
<b>D</b>	<p>Some knowledge and restricted understanding of a narrow range of ways in which ideas and values are represented in texts.</p> <p>Some knowledge and restricted understanding of a narrow range of ways in which authors use stylistic features to communicate ideas.</p> <p>Some knowledge and restricted understanding of a few of the stylistic features and conventions of different text types.</p>	<p>Description of the ideas and values represented in texts.</p> <p>Description of some ways in which stylistic features are used to influence the reading of texts.</p> <p>Some description of similarities and differences between texts in comparative tasks.</p> <p><i>Recognition of some ways in which different critical perspectives inform critical interpretation.</i></p>	<p>Use of some language features to create texts that address the meaning and intention of the task in a limited way.</p> <p>Some use of evidence from texts to develop, support, and attempt to justify responses, with use of a narrow range of textual references.</p> <p>Occasionally clear expression, which is appropriate for some audiences and purposes.</p>
<b>E</b>	<p>Simplistic knowledge and very restricted understanding of the way in which an idea or a value is represented in a text.</p> <p>Limited knowledge and restricted understanding of a restricted range of stylistic features used by authors.</p> <p>Limited knowledge and restricted understanding of different text types and conventions.</p>	<p>Reference to an idea or value represented in a text.</p> <p>Limited description of a way in which a stylistic feature is used to influence the reading of a text.</p> <p>Simplistic description of a connection between texts in a comparative task.</p> <p><i>Reference to a critical perspective.</i></p>	<p>Attempted use of some language features to create texts that attempt to address the meaning and intention of the task in a limited way.</p> <p>Restricted use of evidence from texts to develop and support a simple response, with minimal textual references.</p> <p>Emerging development of control of expression.</p>

characterisation

# Influence

## STAGE 2 ENGLISH STUDIES

RENEE BRENTSON

In his play *Influence*, David Williamson explores the concept of manipulation, fear and power and its many forms. Ziggi Blasko, William's main character, abuses his power through his radio station which is made clear through his characterization as a seeming civilised person who preaches his strong opinions to anyone who will listen. During the course of the play, those with power seem to lose it while the ones who are portrayed as having little to no power slowly gain their own, causing the characters who were once in power to lose it completely. Through foreshadowing Williamson effectively shows the dramatic irony of Ziggi's abuse of power and the consequences. Finally, the setting depicts the lifestyle the Blasko's lead, a stark contrast to that of their Muslim housekeeper, Zehra. Through these techniques Williamson is able to reveal that it is the seemingly civilised people who abuse their power through manipulation and fear.

Ideas only linked implicitly to essay q.

Through characterization, Williamson successfully shows that it is the seemingly civilised people who abuse the power they have. The play opens with Ziggi Blasko, radio 'shock-jock' host sitting in his studio 'tapping his fingers impatiently'. In the stage directions he is described as '... a man bursting with opinions he wants to share' and with which his listeners often agree, "Ziggi thank God you've got the guts to tell it like it is." Ziggi targets anyone who doesn't fit his ideals, whether it's the mentally unstable, Muslims, Indigenous Australians, gays, women and 'the working poor'. Ziggi's opinions become increasingly malicious; a fact that doesn't go unnoticed by his family, namely Connie "... He was an aggressive, opinionated little swine." Showing how Ziggi has always been very open about his opinions. Despite the fact the Ziggi speaks harshly, "...Ziggi is smart" and "knows the buttons to press" and talented at using fear tactics "If I had've told you on September the tenth 2001 that you could wake up with the Twin Towers gone and the Pentagon wrecked you would have said exactly the same thing."

often

avoid sweeping generalisation

Haven't established why he is supposedly civilised!

sister

especially his

Don't end paragraph with a quote

Carmela, Ziggi's much younger second wife, also holds power. Carmela's power seemingly comes from her selfish personality "... Mrs Blasko's focus is firmly on Mrs Blasko" and ability to control the housekeepers and chauffeurs, Zehra and Tony "... You're here to focus on my needs and Freda's needs". She switches off the radio when Marko is listening to Ziggi's station "... This is my house." In comparison to Ziggi and Carmela is Zehra who often apologises and at one point stops talking altogether "I think to be safe I just say nothing." Zehra gains power at two points of the play, the first when she quits working for Carmela "...If I've hurt you, I'm sorry, but I finally don't care anymore." And again when she is honest about how she feels on Ziggi's station, "Working for you was terrible." However she does not abuse power and instead uses it to explain to Ziggi why he's wrong. Through characterization, Williamson demonstrates how it is the seemingly civilised characters such as Ziggi and Carmela who are manipulative and abuse their power the most.

Through foreshadowing Williamson shows the ironic consequences of abusing power in his play, namely through Ziggi and his broadcasts. Arguments made at the beginning of the play foreshadow events that take place later, such as 'the working poor' and then hiring Zehra, or 'the mentally unstable' and then finding out his daughter Vivienne has been diagnosed as bi polar. The events come to a head when Marko admits to his crimes as a Nazi and one of his listeners argues "Old or

You don't plot retelling & haven't adequately addressed the question

Why does this make her civilised?

So? relevance to essay q

~ = poor/incorrect syntax

not, they should pay." And when Carmela leaves Ziggi after calming "She mightn't even be yours!" about their daughter just after Ziggi claimed his wife could be trusted on live radio. Williamson uses foreshadowing to show how Ziggi abuses his power and faces the ironic consequences.

Link to essay 9

Through his use of setting, Williamson shows who does and doesn't have power in his play as well as who abuses it. Ziggi has power in his studio, the place where he voices his opinions for all of Australia to hear and enjoys seeing the "switchboard light up". In his station, Ziggi is alone and the only place he can express his opinions without criticism from members of his family. Williamson's stage directions describe Ziggi and Carmela's living room as having 'oodles of space and great art on the walls', reflecting their wealth. Carmela is not happy with the house and would prefer something "...with grace and history", something Zehra, the Muslim housekeeper hired by Carmela to care for her baby daughter Freda, doesn't understand. Zehra's living situation contrasts against the wealthy Blasko's. She lives two hours away from the Blasko's by train and bus and can still barely afford rent let alone food "...When I was working out my spending, food came last". Through setting, Williamson is able to convey where each character has the most power as well as how it is abused.

This needs to be explicitly linked to essay 9

Through characterization, foreshadowing and setting, David Williamson explores the concepts of power, manipulation and fear and how it is often the seemingly civilised who abuse it. Williamson does this through characterization, mainly through Ziggi's shock-jock personality and Carmela's inconsiderate nature. Setting is used to show who has power and where, as seen through Ziggi at his station, Carmela at home and in comparison, Zehra and her apartment. The use of these techniques successfully shows how it is the seemingly civilised people in *Influence* that abuse their power.

922 WORDS

But you haven't made this explicit.

**Task: Influence essay (C+ grade)**  
*Knowledge and Understanding*

- KU1: While there is knowledge of a range of ways that themes can be explored, these themes are not really teased into ideas that can be argued other than showing who has power and who does not.
- KU2: There is some understanding of how characterisation, foreshadowing and setting can shed light on the themes.
- KU3: The student conveys some understanding of stylistic features, although the conventions of a drama text could have been more prominent.

*Analysis*

- An1: There is some analysis of the idea of so-called civilised people abusing power, but the case for such characters being apparently civilised is never made --it's more of an assumption for the reader to make.
- An2: The analysis of stylistic features is a little descriptive, but the student tries to make the link between devices and the theme of power.

*Application*

- Ap1: There is a clear foregrounding of paragraph topics that provides a sense of structure. The conclusion is more or less straight recount of what the student has written and does not leave the reader particularly engaged.
- Ap2: The use of quotations is generally competent although evidence is often not embedded succinctly within sentences.
- Ap3: The communication is generally satisfactory; however, repetitive paragraph beginnings and some clumsy phrasing detracted somewhat from the audience easily understanding the purpose.

*Overall*

There is evidence of a good understanding of the text and of aspects such as characterisation and foreshadowing. The focus remains on the abuse of power, but the argument needed to address more thoroughly the thesis statement that seemingly civilised people abuse their power through manipulation and fear. Because the argument is not really sustained, the essay becomes a little bit descriptive with only some analysis.