**Stage 2 English Literary Studies**

**Assessment Type 2: Creating Texts**

**Transformative Text**

**Purpose**

In this task you’ll develop your understanding of genre by considering how texts may be transformed into other forms of the same text type or into text types different from the original. The aim of transforming texts is for students to explore the complex ways in which the form and conventions of a text are significant in the making of meaning, both for original and transformed texts.

You’ll learn ways in which a completely new text can be created by converting, or reimagining, an aspect of *The Great Gatsby* to reflect a new social or cultural context.

Students evaluate some of the literary conventions of *The Great Gatsby* and the effectiveness of these in shaping audience response. To support their evaluation, students consider the ways in which meaning is altered when *The Great Gatsby* is transformed.

**Outline of the task**

The transformative text requires students to transform *The Great Gatsby*, or an aspect of it, into another form, which must be written. The accompanying writer’s statement should outline the choices the student has made in terms of the text type, audience, and purpose.

**Assessment conditions**

A written piece of up to a maximum of 1500 words, including a writer’s statement.

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| **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.  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.  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. |

**Transformative task: The Great Gatsby- Tom Buchanan’s monologue**

Using The Great Gatsby create a monologue spoken by a character other than the first person narrator of the novel, Nick Carraway.

The thing is we live in a world which is threatened. My family’s world is threatened, and so is yours. Only a fool would deny it, and you’d better believe it.

I can tell that you care about your family. Like me, you want to protect them and keep them safe. I see in your eyes you’d do whatever is required to, let’s say, remove these threats.

Mr. Gatsby was one such threat. Oh, I know he was charming and held immense parties last summer. In this age of superficial pursuits it’s easy for some to be seduced by this. He appeared to be many attractive things to the lazy eye. However, I must tell you, Mr. Gatsby was a criminal. (Tom takes a drink from his glass)

He received his money- I won’t say earned- by immoral means. He was a swindler moving in devious circles. Do you know that his associates stole the dreams from trusting Americans by fixing the 1919 World Series? This shows us that Gatsby was brazen, and unlike you and me, gave no consideration to the concerns of decency.

I made it my business to investigate the man, and I learned much that bothered me.

Do you think that those at these parties knew of his dealings? How many of his guests were aware of how their food and drink were purchased? Did they know the musicians hired to play that so-called *jazz* were paid with monies gotten by despicable methods? (Tom leans in towards his confidant)

Our world is much improved without the likes of Mr. Gatsby. For he represents a growing menace. That new breed of man who thinks only of himself, and will take every opportunity to line his pockets with wealth. If we want our world to stay pure, and focused on family, we must keep out this type of enemy by building an unassailable wall.

I’m sure that you agree with me on this. You want to shelter your wife and children too. My wife, Daisy, sweet thing she is, doesn’t see these things as clearly as we do. She’s an innocent, trusting girl. She sees the world as it should be, and not in the brutal light of actuality. Our wives deserve help in these practical matters, don’t they? And now Mr. Gatsby has been dispatched, just like we did those wretched Germans back in the Great War. And they’re not going to attempt that again, are they? We’re all better off now. (Tom takes another drink)

If Mr. Gatsby were permitted to continue spreading his influence over naive people like my Daisy then where might this end? What harm could he do? We must maintain the purity of things, in the same way that we must not allow marriage between our people and Negroes.

So, for the sake of my family, indeed for good people such as yourself, I told that madman Wilson the truth. I told him who owned the car that ran over Myrtle. I told him the name of the man who did not stop, who was so careless that he drove on, and left a dead woman on the road. I shall not forget her.

Daisy was overly excited by these unfortunate events so to clear her head I took her away to France for a month. She needed the benefits of my clarity, and my protective guidance. I talked to her about many things. I explained our future and how I’d be taking much better care of her, by being alert to her requirements. Isn’t this the prime responsibility of every husband? I’m here to tell you that this what a man must do.

Now, if you’ll excuse me I have other business that demands my attention. Good day to you.(Tom stands quickly and strides off)

**Writer’s statement**

I chose *The Great Gatsby* for my transformative text task, and decided to select a character other than Nick Carraway, and write a piece in which this person gives their perspective on an aspect of Fitzgerald’s story.

I then had to pick a particular character. I dismissed Gatsby himself, partly because he dies and I wanted to have my character tell their version of events after the novel’s conclusion. I didn’t want to select a character for whom Nick had sympathy as this might limit the scope of my writing, so I decided on Tom Buchanan, Daisy’s arrogant and selfish husband. I knew there’d be sufficient moral and affective social distance between Tom and Nick’s versions, and this would give my transformative piece space to develop.

This famous extract from the novel’s denouement contains Nick’s final estimation of his cousin and her husband, “They were careless people, Tom and Daisy- they smashed up things and creatures and then retreated back into their money or their vast carelessness or whatever it was that kept them together, and let other people clean up the mess they had made.”

Having re-read the chapters which feature him I intended to reproduce his perspectives, and began writing in what I hoped was Tom’s voice. In attempting to invest my monologue with authenticity I needed to refresh my understanding of him, and offer an explanation consistent with his privileged and absurd world view. On the punishingly hot afternoon of the confrontation between Tom and Gatsby the repulsion of Buchanan’s confession captures his perverse perceptions, and was a key resource for me, “He nodded sagely. ‘And what's more, I love Daisy too. Once in a while I go off on a spree and make a fool of myself, but I always come back, and in my heart I love her all the time.’”

A key challenge was anchoring the monologue within a social purpose. Tom’s arrogance means that he wouldn’t tolerate a situation in which he had to justify his actions and decision-making, unless there was a legal obligation. Ultimately, his speech is delivered to an anonymous confidant, someone approaching equal social standing. I find the best monologues keep reminding the audience of their context and implied purpose so I used sentences like these to open some of the paragraphs, “I’m sure that you agree with me on this. You want to shelter your wife and children too. My wife, Daisy, sweet thing that she is, doesn’t see these things as clearly as we do. She’s an innocent, trusting girl.” But ultimately it’s a dramatic device that requires us to suspend our disbelief because Tom wouldn’t think he needs the approval or reassurance, and clearly retreats into his money and lifestyle if the moral gaze of others becomes too hot.

In the transformed text I tried to maintain constancy with the original character of Fitzgerald’s novel by incorporating feigned moral outrage too. Tom does view himself as a guardian against corruption and declining values, and his duplicity presents itself often. I aimed to show this and his offensive outlook in Tom’s ironic declaration that, “…. Mr. Gatsby has been dispatched, just like we did those wretched Germans back in the Great War. And they’re not going to attempt that again, are they? We’re better off now.”

With reference to a historical example I wanted to highlight that Tom is unjustifiably certain in his beliefs, curiously naïve and wrong. Here the irony amplifies Tom’s unlikable character, and being placed towards the end of my monologue, confirms our shared view of Buchanan. It is a vital strategy in my deliberate positioning of the reader.

In considering how to conclude the speech I decided to end it with Tom seemingly becoming bored and impatient with the conversation which has somehow become a confessional; a process of self-justification. He invents a meeting so he can abruptly escape. After all, he is Tom Buchanan, and need not explain himself to anybody. “Now, if you’ll excuse me I have other business that demands my attention. Good day to you.”

I was mindful of the first description of Tom in *The Great Gatsby*, supplied of course, through the filter of Nick’s first person narrative, “Now he was a sturdy, straw haired man of thirty with a rather hard mouth and a supercilious manner. Two shining, arrogant eyes had established dominance over his face and gave him the appearance of always leaning aggressively forward.”

For me a key word in this is *supercilious* with its connotations of conceitedness and haughtiness, which is fundamental to our reading of Tom. Whether the person he is addressing in his monologue- perhaps delivered in a private corner of an upmarket New York bar, or the drawing room of a wealthy contemporary- is a friend or a stranger, our protagonist visibly feels superior.

So, in giving Tom a sustained, dramatic voice I wanted to write him in ways that are familiar to Fitzgerald’s character. I tried to assign him a vocabulary, rhythms of speech and a superior view of his own standing which expressed itself in his relationship with his anonymous, implied audience. After listening to Tom’s monologue I wanted readers of *The Great Gatsby* to have an appropriate reaction to his self-importance and moral bankruptcy. (1,490 words)

This task is assessed as A-.

Performance Standards for Stage 2 English Literary Studies

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