# Government of South Australia LogoSACE Board Logo2023 English Subject Assessment Advice

Overview

Subject assessment advice, based on the 2023 assessment cycle, gives an overview of how students performed in their school and external assessments in relation to the learning requirements, assessment design criteria, and performance standards set out in the relevant subject outline. They provide information and advice regarding the assessment types, the application of the performance standards in school and external assessments, and the quality of student performance.

Teachers should refer to the subject outline for specifications on content and learning requirements, and to the subject operational information for operational matters and key dates.

School Assessment

Teachers can improve the moderation process and the online process by:

* ensuring the PSR matches the LAP, if a criteria isn’t being assessed in the assessment type, leave it blank on the relevant PSR
* ensuring the task sheets include the criteria for assessment, and that this matches the LAP
* ensuring the uploaded tasks are audible/playable if they are multimodal- poor sound quality makes it difficult. Supplying transcripts to support recorded pieces is helpful- it is difficult to confirm results for an oral presentation if there is no recording or transcript- teacher notes on presentation are not sufficient
* ensuring the LAP and coversheets are uploaded
* completing the VMM as needed.

Assessment Type 1: Responding to Texts (30%)

Within this component of the subject, students produce three responses to texts. Two of the responses must be written, and one must be oral. Either the oral response or one of the written pieces may be replaced by a multimodal response. One of the responses could be a comparison of two or more texts. A maximum of 2000 words for written responses is allocated and the oral response is up to a maximum of 6 minutes. A multimodal response is of equivalent length.

Teachers can elicit more successful responses by:

* providing variety and flexibility in task design to allow students to show their skills rather than rely solely on essay writing which may limit some students in their ability to demonstrate the full scope of their understanding. It was pleasing to see that more teachers were adopting a wider range of ways that a student could respond to the texts. These included multimedia, short answer options and oral reports (pre-recorded)
* ensuring the school-based component of the course addresses all performance standards. An3 can be addressed in either AT1 or AT2 and is useful in scaffolding and building students' confidence before they complete the AT3 external
* utilising a good range of texts - traditional and modern- and use a range of text types that deviate from solely relying on traditional novels and films
* developing tasks which allow students to meet the performance standards at the highest level
* by providing three distinct text types for students to study across the AT1 pieces (if allowing for student agency and choice, ensure you are not giving them options where they end up doing multiple tasks on film. E.g. film study, then a comparison where they can choose to compare a film with a free choice text, and the students chose another film)
* by having a clear focus for students’ analysis in the task, rather than a broad “write a response to” or “analyse this text”- write a well worded task that pushes them to analyse with depth.

The more successful responses commonly:

* embedded and integrated short pithy quotes for evidence
* contained evidence that was strong and clearly substantiated interpretations of the text
* clearly organised their ideas and evidence
* demonstrated strong analysis by taking on the role of the creator, such as an interview with the director
* ensured language and stylistic features were analysed rather than identified and discussed
* focused on specific features, rather than making generalisations
* focused on analysing audience positioning in response to central ideas
* analysed features against the core concepts of audience, purpose and context
* engaged with the ideas/themes of a text, i.e., the stronger responses expressed ideas as a phrase such as 'the impact of racism on individuals' rather than simply writing 'the author explores racism.'
* produced speeches for a specific, often unfamiliar audience (e.g. award acceptance speech) to demonstrate more sophisticated and versatile texts
* allowed the innovative use of ICT skills
* chose texts that clearly focused on a cultural aspect to allow An1to be addressed specifically
* considered and analysed the context of texts in order to fully address KU1 and An1
* included images/footage and music to create tone in oral presentations by including multiple layers of textual knowledge
* were in response to challenging and engaging texts
* provided an element of independence for the student through options that included text and task choice
* enabled students to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of a ‘range of texts’
* included comparative responses that were useful preparation for the external assessment
* comparative pieces contained a balanced discussion and clearly signposted the connections between the texts
* enabled students to express their own unique voice through their written and oral expression
* revealed a depth of analysis using metalanguage appropriate to the text type analysed
* demonstrated consistent and sophisticated use of accurate, clear, and fluent expression
* referred specifically to cinematic techniques when discussing film.

The less successful responses commonly:

* did not embed evidence but rather used large chunks of text as evidence
* were over-scaffolded with overt similarities across samples including the same evidence used in responses and similar structure or content
* were structurally incoherent with poorly sequenced discussion
* discussed texts separately when An3 was being addressed, limiting the depth of connections between the texts
* did not explicitly address KU2 and An2 to analyse stylistic features and language techniques (e.g. a personal essay about the student’s values, or a creative response to the text, does not allow for in-depth analysis of the author’s craft)
* relied on outside sources or critics in the style of a hybrid Research Project in English
* tended to revert to plot description without any discussion of techniques
* were weak in the use of metalanguage and identification of techniques, particularly in responses to visual texts
* provided author biography to address context with little or no connection to the purpose or ideas of the text
* sometimes identified language and stylistic features, but recounted their appearance rather than providing analysis
* divorced technique from purpose
* had a tendency to devote the final paragraph of the task to the analysis of stylistic features, but this tended to limit the depth of analysis and students may have benefitted from addressing stylistic features throughout the task(s)
* focused on characterisation as a stylistic feature, but did/could not identify the techniques employed to create the characterisation
* did not identify or address the audience in their discussion and analysis
* lacked evidence of analysis regarding the way an audience has been positioned to respond to a text(s)
* ignored the author’s role in creating the text and making stylistic choices
* did not consider mise en scène when recording orals (e.g. if filming at home consider the background of the shots and if filming at school make sure classmates are not distractors in the shot)
* did not use the conventions of the chosen form appropriately e.g. used sub-headings inappropriately in an essay
* did not include at least one oral presentation or multimodal text
* identified key ideas or themes without expanding on them or analysing how the idea is expressed.
* used "sophisticated" language at the expense of clarity
* contained errors in expression or generally lacked fluency
* were well over or well under the word limit.

Assessment Type 2: Creating Texts (40%)

Within this assessment type, students are expected to create three texts, at least one of which is written, to demonstrate variety in text type, purpose, and audience. Students are required to create one writer’s statement. A maximum of 3000 words is allocated to the creation of texts and a maximum of 1000 words is allocated to the writer’s statement. An oral or multimodal text or writer’s statement is of equivalent length.

Teachers can elicit more successful responses by:

* asking students to do things that are outside of the standard narrative/exposition type tasks. Students who created short films and You Tube clips were working with mediums that were relevant to their age group and were therefore far more accessible for all students in the class. They also tended to be a way the students who didn't write well could demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of how to apply the techniques they had learned over their years at school
* considering the importance of task design- the creation of text types that have similar purposes, audiences, stylistic and language features limits students’ ability to achieve against the performance standards
* assessing only one writer’s statement in AT2 rather than including “writer’s statement” elements as part of the three creating texts activities (e.g. write a 700 word narrative with a 300 word writer’s statement- this eats into students’ word count on the creative pieces and is not part of their separate writer’s statement assignment).

The more successful responses commonly:

* presented a wide variety of tasks for different audiences, purposes and contexts
* had a clear vision for context, purpose, and audience (and this helped facilitate a successful writer’s statement)
* demonstrated high level skills in applying the conventions and features of their chosen text types
* included innovative text creation such as a vlog paired with a feature article on a similar topic, but for a different audience allowing clear comparisons in the writer’s statement
* wrote for authentic contexts such as a feminist article response in Womankind, and double spread real estate advertisement for expensive properties
* included creative texts from fascinating and unusual perspectives such as an obituary for an inanimate, defunct object (e.g. a phone book)
* applied a wide range of textual conventions, language features and stylistic features to achieve the intended effect on the target audience with consideration to the form, language, context and purpose
* demonstrated knowledge of a wide range of text conventions and stylistic features both across the Creating Texts folio and within individual AT2 pieces. For example, a highly successful persuasive article displayed the student's ability to employ a range of persuasive devices, rather than relying upon and repeatedly using a smaller number of devices throughout the composition
* had sophisticated use of language and stylistic features
* included using a multimodal approach to informing about a topic, particularly with use of a video so students could show their use of film techniques to meet the purpose of the text (e.g. a documentary) and its audience. Blogs and podcasts were often successful choices
* demonstrated appropriate consideration of mise en scene in multimodal pieces, e.g. students who enunciated well throughout the oral, with minimal background sounds, and consideration of what was included in the visuals of a recording (especially if recorded at home)
* carefully addressed the assessment criteria for the writer’s statement e.g. if An3 was being assessed it was covered in the statement
* presented writer’s statements that explained and justified language features, stylistic features and conventions as well as the creative decisions made in the process of writing
* addressed complex ideas, meaning, and/or aspects of cultural context when completing the Writer's Statement. More successful responses frequently went beyond general comment regarding a text being relatable or engaging, displaying the student's ability to articulate more complex or specific dynamics present in their creative text(s)
* presented writer’s statements that, when comparative, were well structured and analysed each created text equally. Moderators also commented favourably upon examples of comparative writer’s statements that analysed created texts that were connected by a common topic or theme
* used clear evidence to support their analysis in the writer’s statement
* demonstrated sound engagement on the part of the student due to choice associated with the task
* carefully edited their work to ensure highly accurate work.

The less successful responses commonly:

* produced texts in a similar format (e.g. a recount and a narrative, or a feature article and an editorial) limiting opportunities to display versatility in their writing (Ap1)—this was particularly common when students were given a “free choice” option
* possessed a singular voice throughout their writing
* were overly scaffolded and lacked originality
* did not demonstrate an awareness of audience and purpose, i.e., did not modify language to suit audience and purpose, e.g., a text which targeted an “elderly” audience interested in gardening, but utilised colloquial terminology commonly understood by teens engaged in social media and meme culture
* lacked focus, structure, or had no clear intention/purpose for creating the text; this often impacted the quality of the writer’s statement as these students couldn't explain why they had made the stylistic decisions they did
* lacked sophistication and employed a limited range of stylistic features and conventions for the text type they were creating (there was a lot of feedback on narratives which contained a limited number of techniques, limiting their sophistication, originality, and overall result)
* created texts that limited opportunities such as a poster with only a couple of words
* were formatted responses across classes that did not allow for independent thinking or creativity
* demonstrated repetition of the recount form, regardless of the individual purpose of the creating texts task
* addressed a narrow audience range, while the purposes were different, they used a limited range of language features and conventions
* emphasised visual information at the expense of spoken or written language
* did not accurately use the features of the text type (e.g. the incorrect format for dialogue in a narrative, providing a text only version of an article rather than formatting for the magazine, blog, newspaper it was intended to be)
* produced recordings with distracting mise en scenes; interrupted by yawning, forgetting lines, speaking without any script or structure, casual ensemble, lack of awareness of where it is being filmed and protective practices (e.g. bedrooms)
* clearly spent a great deal of time on the appearance of a creative text (e.g. a newspaper/magazine article) at the expense of the content
* produced writer’s statements which tended to recount the process of creating texts rather than analyse the features to show how they suit the context, audience, and purpose. A number of students wrote their writer’s statement as a journal entry, which tended to exacerbate the issue of recounting what they did, rather than analysis and justification
* spoke too generally about their choices in the writer’s statement without providing examples or awareness of intended audience
* revealed little or no evidence of designated performance standards. For example, where An3 was identified for assessment and yet the writer’s statement either did not contain the analysis of two or more texts or the response revealed analysis of the texts individually
* did not reveal adequate consideration of accurate, clear and fluent expression
* were poorly drafted, containing errors in sentence structure (such as run on sentences, comma splice errors, fragments, adjective order, or verb conjugation), spelling, and vocabulary errors
* were well over the word limit.

External Assessment

Assessment Type 3: Investigation

Text selection

* Many students demonstrated sound understanding of the ideas and themes in texts; they wrote detailed, clear analyses of a range of manifestations of the ideas and/or themes. The precise use of specific terms related to the conventions of the text type enhanced student analysis.
* This year there was a strong increase on two film comparisons with students achieving successful results. It is clear that students feel safe with this text type.
* Some films were too similar (same story line, same kind of protagonist) and this did not allow for the depth required at an A Band level. Students need to be mindful that there is enough range within the film and that the film allows for perceptive analysis. Students and teachers need to ensure that films are not too similar.
* Markers noted that there was an increase in films that were not age specific and ‘too young’ for the level of sophistication required in the A Band. For example, texts like *Tangled or Sonic did not allow for the complexity required for this task.*
* There was a decrease in the amount of poetry and drama comparisons. However, markers identified comprehensive analysis and sophisticated response when these texts were used. Drama texts allowed students to demonstrate variety within their analysis.
* This year there was an increase in students comparing the original audience of a text to modern day audiences for example a film such as The Truman Show with a video game, Firewatch (Campo Santa, 2016) with questions ranging from surveillance, control, and isolation.
* There were a lot of traditional texts but the use of modern text selections made by students was warmly received by markers. Markers found modern texts allowed for original comparisons and thought which resulted in a more perceptive analysis by students. Where students developed fresh, individual pairings with diverse contemporary texts, often a more authentic voice and analysis was produced. This also served to negate the impact of a reliance on AI.
* Several students based their choices on dystopic texts and appeared to be familiar with this genre. This is a genuine area of interest for students and overall, a successful choice for students.
* Exploring novels was a challenge for many students in terms of generating complex and perceptive analysis of ideas, perspectives, and stylistic features.
* Shorter texts such as speeches, articles, vignettes, episodes of television shows rather than a series, short plays, opinion pieces, a chapter of a novel, an excerpt of a text, a newspaper article, a documentary, were again more successful as students demonstrated confidence in their knowledge and understanding about the texts and conventions. Furthermore, the shorter texts allowed students to demonstrate in-depth understanding of the texts, their features, ideas, and perspectives.
* Speeches seemed popular but there was an increase of the varying text types that students selected to compare to their speech. A speech was compared to a plays, films, novels, and this allowed for complexity within their comparison.
* Analysis of non-fiction texts such as autobiography, documentaries and short films were generally well received by markers and allowed students to demonstrate depth, detail, and development within their comparison.
* Less successful responses chose texts that were either too similar or did not offer significant 'depth.' The more common issue was the similarity (e.g. the comparison of a film/book where the film is an adaption of the book). A number of less successful responses also chose entire TV series' without clearly defining an episode or point of comparison within the series.
* Some students used the report structure effectively, with clear subheadings guiding their analysis.
* Some students created guiding questions as subheadings, which worked well too. However, this structure needs to ensure that there is insightful understanding about purpose, audience, context and language and stylistic features within the response.

The more successful responses commonly:

* chose to write a well thought out question. A thoughtful and insightful question allowed for a clear, focused and considered response. For example ‘In what ways do Kazuo Ishiguro’s Never Let Me Go (2005) and Christopher Nolan’s Interstellar (2014) employ stylistic features to explore the complexities of survival in a dystopian reality?’
* a clear and refined question and/or focus for the analysis and made this clear to the audience through the introduction of the analysis piece, ensuring the reader was clear on where the student was headed. These clear, refined foci supported students deep analysis of the texts and to demonstrate strong knowledge and understanding of the textual features and ideas. These responses also provided consistent comparisons and links between similarities and differences within and between texts. Some very successful responses also focused in detail on smaller portions of a larger text (e.g. key scenes or an episode vs the exploration of an entire film/series), again allowing responses to be very ‘in-depth.’
* had responses that were well-structured with an introduction that clearly stated what the essay would address. This allowed the marker to see the direction of the intended comparison
* structured paragraphs focusing on a single, complex argument that had a basis for comparison between both texts. This maintained and allowed for arguments through discussion and analysis of examples. Students who framed the argument around an idea, message or perspective and then sought to analyse techniques and features to support the arguments about these ideas allowed for perceptive responses
* responses that focused on techniques rather than plot or character development which allowed for a sophisticate response
* seamless alternation from one text to another. This showed in-depth understanding of theme and stylistic decisions made by the creator
* language that intelligently transposed ideas
* optimum textual evidence links to literary and visual techniques to support their response
* fluently embedded quotations to support the main ideas
* analysis broken down by the examples followed by an explanation of the examples to support the arguments established. This helped to create an insightful response
* comparison of texts that allowed for strong comparisons - two texts with similar themes and a different context: two texts with significantly different stylistic features (prose and film, poetry, television episodes etc.)
* strong comparative paragraphs rather than a paragraph on one text followed by a paragraph on the other
* strong analysis, incorporating well-chosen quotations which were integrated into the broader argument. These students demonstrated an ability to not only quote accurately, but to also explain the significance of the textual evidence
* focused on comparisons within creative responses. It was good to see a variety of responses such as - interview, reviews etc. The stronger creative responses focused on the comparative element of the task. For example, if students used interview style, questions they allowed for comparison which is one of the purposes of this assessment task. The successful responses-maintained consistency in clarity and style of writing (particularly when composing responses like interviews with the author, or 'film/novel reviews'
* accurate identification of specific techniques and use of appropriate metalanguage
* exclusion of plot retelling and history of the author or director
* formal essay structure with cohesion across and between paragraphs. Alternatively, some students created cohesive mock interviews, faux podcasts or alternate text types that allowed for sophisticated analysis and comparison between texts
* a balanced discussion between both texts, including balance between the identification and analysis of specific stylistic features relevant to the two different text types (where applicable). There were some instances where students' strength of film knowledge dominated the discussion, at the expense of demonstrating awareness of other textual features (KU2 and KU3.)
* strong knowledge of genre and contextual knowledge when considering a particular ‘lens’ for analysis i.e. dystopian texts, representations of mental illness in society, Feminist perspectives
* integrated contextual awareness throughout their response, rather than as a standalone paragraph, or tokenistically acknowledged in the introduction. Furthermore, context was discussed when relevant and should not be forced if not relevant to the question.

The less successful responses commonly:

* opted for texts with limited depth or excessive similarity. Noteworthy issues emerged when comparing a film to its book adaptation, hindering meaningful analysis and there were differentiation issues when unpacking the texts
* had a focus on an entire TV series without episode focus. This posed a challenge for students. These responses tended to be general and the analysis lacked depth and focus
* comparing 'Text A' with a music artist without specifying a particular album or song. This proved difficult for students to clearly approach and reflect AN3
* a focus on plot
* responses that added many quotes but did not identify the language techniques used in quotes. and did not focus on the role and impact of these techniques within the response
* a more general discussion regarding film techniques without identifying them in specific scenes and then proceeded to recount the plot rather than engaging in deep analysis
* greater familiarisation with one of their texts, referring to specific details, while the second text was more superficially discussed
* identifying techniques incorrectly, for example, “chaotic rebellion” was identified as alliteration
* separate discussions about texts in the Q & A format. The Q & A format is fine but there needs to be a comparative discussion happening in the response to each question. Students need to write comparative questions when using this format to ensure constant comparison of the texts
* responses to questions that were general/vague (e.g. how do the texts explore themes and ideas). A question that has a clear focus will help set the focus of the essay in the introduction and generally help the student to maintain this focus throughout the essay
* descriptions rather than analysis. This demonstrated students’ skills in recounting a text instead of the skills required for effective analysis
* discussed texts separately, making vague points regarding comparison either with the use of ‘comparative language’ used superficially or discussing the two texts separately then writing a short comparison paragraph or series of sentences
* demonstrated a variety of expression and structural issues (e.g. a lack of clear introduction/topic sentences in essays; poorly constructed sentences etc.) They also tended to also use less ‘complex’ vocabulary for the chosen text type produced (e.g. using colloquial contractions in formal essays; using ‘sound words’ vs ‘onomatopoeia’ etc)
* responses that contained errors in the spelling/punctuation of language/film devices and/or names (e.g. that of the author and/or text) in addition to punctuation errors such as a lack of capitals for proper nouns
* minimal evidence. At times, evidence was often large chunks of text or vague references to particular moments, without specific links to ‘how’ this scene/moment supported the point being made. Responses that did incorporate evidence often did so in a more ‘step by step’/scaffolded manner e.g. using a structure/terminology such as “this is shown in the following quote/scene…” “This shows how…”

General

* Word limits matter- in all assessment types there were a large number of students who went well over the word limit, and this ultimately disadvantages them as markers/moderators need to stop reading at the limit. Additionally, some moderators commented on the negative impact that being well below the limit had, as students who were well below the limit (particularly in AT1) struggled to show enough depth and insight to meet the performance standards at a higher level.
* Over assessing Performance Standards can make it difficult for students to achieve; teachers should consider how many Performance Standards are being assessed in an individual task, and whether they are over assessing particular standards, particularly K&U and An (for example, a school that uses the comparative An3 for two tasks in AT1, for one task in AT2, and then it is assessed again for AT3, or a school that is assessing An criteria beyond the Writer’s Statement in AT2).
* Where Ap1 and Ap3 were not assessed, responses tended to be weakened as there was less emphasis placed on developing well-worded and coherent responses and this could impede the insight students were able to convey.
* Task design matters- some students’ results were limited by poor task design which did not allow for students to achieve in the high B or A band- for example in AT1 teachers who set “what” questions rather than “how’ questions limited students’ level of achievement in the An criteria, or questions/tasks that were too broad (eg. “write a response to the text” or “analyse the text”) or, in AT2, where students undertake two tasks that appear to be different (eg a TED talk and a persuasive essay which both rely heavily on rhetorical devices) but limit the range of K&U and Ap a student is able to show as they are ultimately too similar in either style, content, or purpose.
* Avoid over scaffolding- pieces where students across the sample all made the same points and used the same evidence showed that there was too much teacher intervention and limited the knowledge they could show.
* Scripts provided with multimodal presentations were valuable for times when the student was difficult to hear in the recording, but a recording is preferred to show that an oral has taken place in line with the Subject Outline- only providing teacher notes or PowerPoint slides (with visuals and no notes) does not provide sufficient evidence of student achievement for moderation.
* Subject Adjustments were there to support staff- not to remove the requirements of the subject outline. The opportunity to remove one task from the school-based pieces (excluding the writer’s statement) was taken by many schools. Most schools applied the adjustments well. However, some schools not only removed a piece, but adjusted their content. While addendums allow for this, changes should remain in line with the subject outline. Some schools changed their text choices (allowed), but only taught one text type across their AT1 pieces (e.g. film for each task), and this limited students’ ability to meet the standards at a high level and was not in line with the Subject Outline or Subject Adjustment provisions. Additionally, some schools chose to remove the oral presentation from AT1 and provided no evidence of a multimodal piece where the Subject Adjustments specified that AT1 must include one written piece and one Oral/Multimodal if a task is removed.