2008 HSC Notes from the Marking Centre English Extension 2

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2008 HSC NOTES FROM THE MARKING CENTRE
ENGLISH EXTENSION 2

Introduction

This document has been produced for the teachers and candidates of the Stage 6 English Extension 2 course. It contains comments on the Major Works for the 2008 Higher School Certificate, indicating the quality of the Major Works and highlighting their relative strengths and weaknesses.

These notes should be read along with the relevant syllabus and the marking guidelines. Reference should also be made to the *2002 English Extension 2 Standards Package*.

General Comments

Approximately 2300 works were submitted. As in previous years more than half the works submitted were short stories, followed by critical responses, videos, poetry and speeches. The least popular options were radio drama, performance poetry and multimedia.

Identification of the parts of the project

Candidates are reminded to label the discrete sections of the Major Work and to ensure that all pages are printed. The Reflection Statement should be at the end of the Major Work.

The role of the Major Work journal

Candidates submit their journal with their Major Work. Journals are not marked. However, journals document the independent investigation and the composition process. Markers are required to access the journal if, for example, questions are raised about the authenticity of the work. Candidates should not identify themselves, their teachers or their schools in the journals. Annotated bibliographies should be in the journal, not attached to the Major Work. It is particularly important for candidates to remember that the journal should reflect the detailed process of their own research, investigation and development of the Major Work.

The role of the Reflection Statement

The Reflection Statement explains and evaluates both the process and the completed Major Work. The *English Stage 6 syllabus* (p 131) and the English Extension 2 marking guidelines outline the requirements for the Reflection Statement.

The quality of the Reflection Statement has a significant impact on the overall success of the Major Work. Audience and purpose are integrally related and candidates must explicitly explain how they have manipulated form, feature and structure of text in order to position audiences. It is imperative that candidates identify the relationship between the investigation and the Major Work. Specific texts should be cited and the direct influence on the Major Work must be highlighted. Candidates are reminded that there needs to be a meaningful explanation of how the skills and knowledge gained in the Stage 6 English courses underpinned the Major Work. Reflection Statements should be synthesised works of prose rather than written in report style with subheadings and bullet points.

The use of footnotes needs to be kept to a minimum and should be justified in the Reflection Statement.

Links with the English (Advanced) and English Extension 1 courses

Candidates compose a Major Work as an extension of the knowledge, understanding and skills developed in the English (Advanced) and English Extension 1 courses (p 92, *English Stage 6 Syllabus*). Candidates need to demonstrate that their work is an extension of their other English courses and not an imitation of the modules and electives studied.

Better Major Works were characterised by:

- a clear authentic voice
- detailed and apt observation expressed in deftly chosen language
- a diversity of genres within Short Stories which indicated an adventurous exploration. At times there was an innovative flexibility within the genre and its language features
- emotional engagement with the reader
- evidence of greater background reading; not just within the HSC confines
- original concepts explored with conviction
- clearly drawn characters – an empathetic understanding of human nature.

Weaker Major Works were characterised by:

- too many 'isms' – realism, modernism, postmodernism, dystopic realism – in constructing a 'clever' narrative
- a lack of sophistication and flair with language
- a struggle to create authentic voices for their characters
- unclear shifts in perspective/time
- uneven or careless editing
- inadequate investigation into concept or form, resulting in a lack of depth and credibility
- adoption of a 'postmodern' style in the belief that this would add sophistication, causing a disruption of textual integrity and limited engagement
- pretentious writing
- unconvincing cultural contexts from poor research.

PRINT MEDIUM

Short Story(ies)

General Comments

Successful short stories once again demonstrated a sophisticated control of language to deliberately and effectively engage an audience. The more successful Major Works were well informed by extensive independent and highly relevant investigation. A strong narrative thread was also evident and was reflected in the setting, characterisation and use of language.

Effective creation of voice was obvious in works where there had been substantial research into the form of a short story. Convincing dialogue often enhanced and advanced the focus of the narrative.

Candidates wrote single narratives as well as suites of short stories. The more successful of these were integrated thematically and consequently there was a cumulative effect in the exploration of the concept. Many 'postmodern' texts tended to include a variety of perspectives and voices which, if not handled effectively, resulted in a confused and confusing narrative with poorly differentiated voices and hard to follow non-linear plots. Students should not be afraid of writing a straightforward narrative with a clear chronological structure.

Poor editing of the short story was noted in many works. There should be no evidence that the work has not been thoroughly revised. Over-reliance on spell checkers resulted in American instead of Australian spelling.

This year candidates explored a wide variety of concepts including:

- cultural and generational conflict and/or understanding
- fantasy
- romance
- abusive relationships
- speculative and dystopian fiction
- mental and psychological issues, especially split personality disturbances
- appropriation of canonical texts
- crime fiction
- bush stories
- war stories and conflicts involving boy soldiers
- adolescence and rites of passage
- parent/child relationships.

Candidates are reminded that independent investigation into the concept, form and style of the Major Work should be evident throughout the work and should be detailed explicitly in the Reflection Statement. Candidates who indicated extensive reading within the short story genre generally showed the benefits of this through the shaping of their own voice and in the effectiveness of the stories they created.

Students are reminded that the short story should be substantially a prose work. The inclusion of other text types such as poetry, script, illustrations and pictures as a large percentage of the work is inappropriate in this context. Graphic novels are also problematic in that the time taken for illustrations is really time wasted.

Candidates are reminded of the importance of sourcing all material which they have appropriated, or that they have not composed themselves.

Candidates are reminded about several organisational matters:

- The word limit should be achieved and adhered to.
- It is important for candidates to maintain anonymity.
- Annotated bibliographies should be in the journal, not attached to the Major Work. Evidence of independent investigation should be detailed in the Reflection Statement.
- The use of footnotes needs to be kept to a minimum and should be justified in the Reflection Statement.

Strengths

- awareness of and adherence to project specifications
- suites of stories connected by central, well-developed concept or motif
- originality of concept and style
- extensive research and the ability to show how a range of sources helped to shape the work
- strong awareness of audience and the potential for the active role of the reader in constructing meaning, demonstrated and sustained throughout the work
- sustained nuances of characterisation to create believable personalities
- authenticity of character(s) developed, supported and enhanced by thorough and purposeful investigation
- insight into the human condition, depth of understanding of the emotional range of characters and how this shapes their development, actions and interactions
- well-crafted, functional and character-specific dialogue to enhance plot and characterisation
- strong evocation of place developed, supported and enhanced by thorough and purposeful investigation
- finely controlled imagery
- economy of language where the use of strong verbs and nouns eliminates the need for excessive use of qualifiers
- demonstration of emotional maturity
- a simple story well told continues to be an attractive and engaging option
- evidence of careful and thoughtful drafting and editing
- logically organised Reflection Statements with a clear explanation of intention, development and realisation of the Major Work
- a highly analytical evaluation of the process of composition.

Weaknesses

- some 'postmodernist' attempts indicated an inadequate or simplistic understanding of postmodernism
- poorly handled attempts to include postmodern / existentialist / absurdist perspectives in the pieces often causing confusion, especially when non-linear plots were used
- a lack of integration of the story and the Reflection Statement
- too many characters, unnamed characters, unmarked shifts in time and place, causing confusion
- the difficulty for some candidates in finding the balance between simple self-reflection and work that had resonance for a wider audience, although personal experiences were often the source of some outstanding work
- the over-dependence on *Young Writers Showcase* Major Works as a source of both investigation and inspiration.

'A' range

A' range short stories were assured in their control of language, structure and form. Their representations of people, places, events and ideas and their inter-relationship were highly skilled and imaginative. There was evidence of thorough and astute editing. All the requirements for the Reflection Statement (*English Stage 6 Syllabus*, p 131) were addressed. 'A' range Reflection Statements were authentic in their observations and elucidations, supported by appropriate references to the content of the Major Work.

'B' range

Works in the 'B' range were coherent and sustained and demonstrated clear links to the knowledge, understanding and skills of the Advanced and Extension 1 courses. These works were usually less sophisticated in their choice of concept and manipulation of form (than works in the 'A' range) but they were able to effectively engage their audience. 'B' range works often showed originality as well as a careful integration of an understanding of the short story form. Reflection Statements showed a good understanding of requirements but were not always sufficiently analytical.

'C' range

Short stories in this range were extensions of the knowledge, understanding and skills of the Advanced and Extension courses. 'C' range short stories were coherent and sustained, but were often simplistic conceptually. Lapses in tone and register were common and many short stories within this range were unable to sustain reader interest and engagement. Plots tended to be predictable and clichéd and/or demonstrated a superficial perspective on the chosen subject matter. Often, character development was limited or lacked credibility. Dialogue was frequently flat and failed to further the plot or characterisation. Editing in 'C' range short stories was often careless and an over-reliance on spell check was evident. While investigation was obvious in the Major Work and clearly stated within the Reflection Statement, the development and realisation of this research was often superficial and limited. Reflection Statements of candidates within this range were frequently explanatory, rather than critical and analytical.

'D' range

'D' range short stories were an extension of some of the knowledge, understanding and skills of Advanced and Extension courses. The stories were often derivative, characterised by the use of unoriginal or simplistic concepts. Characters, culture and contexts were often conveyed in a predictable or stereotypical way. Narratives in the 'D' range often focused on the depiction of action and did not allow the audience to engage with characters. Editing was sometimes careless, demonstrated by abrupt endings, lack of resolution of narrative threads, shortness or excessive length. Some errors suggested inadequate proof reading. The Reflection Statement did not address all the requirements and was not used to support or enhance the work.

'E' range

Short stories that fell in the 'E' range often did so because of a lack of depth of engagement with a concept to support and add interest to the narrative. They were sometimes significantly under the word limit; or, in other cases, lacked any originality in their approach. Many were also poorly edited and did not reflect competence in the use of language or awareness of the conventions of the form. The Reflection Statements that accompanied 'E' range scripts were often poorly expressed and failed to provide evidence of serious research into either content or form.

Poems

General Comments

Concepts explored by candidates

Candidates explored a wide range of concepts in their work. Better works had a clear, developed and sustained conceptual focus in the poetry as well as considerable skill in the purposeful manipulation of poetic form and language. Exploration of human experience(s), globalisation and environmental concerns and various stances on religious issues were popular choices of concepts this year. Most candidates submitted a suite of poems linked by a philosophical position, theme, issue or idea.

Comments on style and form

Some candidates submitted extended poems based on established forms like the epic, sonnet and ballad or in some form of extended narrative variants of free verse. Acrostic, haiku and shape poetry also featured. A common quality of the latter forms of poetry was that the constraints of the structure or format sometimes seemed to take precedence over poetic style, to the detriment of the overall effect. Suites of poetry that featured pictures, photographs, artworks, graphics and/or drawings were not as frequent this year, a positive development as these do not feature in the course specifications. While better works that use these have integrity and coherence without the visual element, many other suites and the individual poems in them were heavily reliant on the visual to make meaning. This was also the case with quotations used as epigraphs, structural or framing devices which were again popular. While the quotations from other texts may be integral to the candidate's work, the work should offer some new or developed insight or perspective that is linked to the quotation. Candidates should be aware of the importance of editing their work carefully. Those who elect not to use punctuation or lineation need to be able to justify that choice. The verse novel is a problematic form as many of the Major Works in this form struggle to sustain poetic qualities of a high standard throughout the work as a whole.

Recommendations

- Candidates who attempted to imitate older styles and forms of poetry, for instance writing in the style of the Romantics, epic narrative or appropriating forms from other cultures or countries, need to consider contemporary sensibilities when attempting pastiche, parody or homage and justify their choice when employing archaic language and other stylistic conventions of the specific form.
- Sophistication and complexity of ideas are important but candidates need to be aware that the work is marked on its success as poetry. Investigation into poetic form and techniques is, therefore, necessary to ensure ideas are transformed successfully into poetic language.
- Candidates should edit the entire collections carefully and be prepared to delete weaker poems from their suites. Varying font type and size and/or formatting of poetry on the page should not be substitutes for adept word choice and poignant imagery, and are outside the 'specifications' for the medium.
- Candidates should be encouraged to thoughtfully redraft and refine their work. Candidates need to be aware of the specifications for A4 pages and double spacing as some works did not adhere to these requirements.
- Bibliographies and annotations of them are not part of the Major Work or Reflection Statement. Connections between investigation and the work must be made clear in the Reflection Statement.

Strengths

- There were some original, powerful, inventive and thoroughly engaging works. Strengths included discerning and purposeful uses of imagery, rhythm, sound devices, form and structure to shape meaning and influence response.
- Poems were carefully arranged in the suite, demonstrating not only the development of concept but also the careful rearrangement or alignment of poems in the final stages of the composition process.
- In some works in the higher range, there was also evidence of structurally intelligent poetic resolution in the final poems in the collections, indicating a unity of design and affording the work integrity and a satisfying sense of completion.
- Works higher in the 'A' range were exceptional in their attention to rhythm, balance and lyricism in the suites as a whole, but equally so in the individual poems themselves which were often varied or individually distinctive in a way that sustained engagement.
- Reflection Statements supported the work, indicating how extensive, relevant independent investigation into poetic form and concept had informed the poetry and showing how their concepts/themes/ideas were clear extensions of other English courses.

Weaknesses

- Reflection Statements generally revealed a lack of investigation into the poetic form and an inability to reflect on the creative process. These works often did not show evidence of intensive reworking, rewriting and editing of the either the suite or individual poems.
- Some works explored intellectual subject matter (supported by extensive investigation into philosophical ideas) but students were unable to translate this into engaging poetic form.
- Too often 'free verse' was merely prose broken into lines. Stream of consciousness was often used as a justification for poorly considered, ineffective writing. Similarly, layout such as centring the poem on a page or shape poetry was not explained in the Reflection Statement and it was rarely found to be an effective method of engaging the reader. Works that experiment with form must have a reason for the experimentation and this should be addressed in the Reflection Statement.
- There is no lower word limit but brevity can be an issue when the poetry Major Work does not seem substantial enough to reflect the sustained development of concepts or techniques over the period of the course.
- Reflection Statements often displayed a greater sense of control and explanatory prowess than the actual Major Works in weaker candidates. The *Young Writers Showcase* series is a useful guide, but some candidates seem to use it as a substitute for wider investigation of poetry or to compose poetry that seems derivative or imitative of previously published Major Works.
- Overly sentimental, emotional and depressing material compromised many good ideas. Some candidates wrote about intensely powerful and personal experiences but this in itself did not always make the poetry successful. It is the quality of the poetry itself that is marked. Many poems using rhyme and rhythm did not use them in a sophisticated way that enhanced the effectiveness of the poetry, often working against the intent of the poem.

Candidates should be encouraged to redraft and refine their work thoughtfully. Candidates need to be aware of the specifications for layout, page size and spacing.

'A' range

Works in this range were characterised by:

- complex ideas expressed with flair
- strong overarching concepts or conceits that provided a framework and/or guided and developed the project; the poems worked individually and together to achieve coherence
- willingness to experiment with different forms in a successful, purposeful and engaging manner which consciously shaped meaning and reader response
- subtle/evocative/witty/poignant/dramatic use of language – appropriate for purpose
- flair and a fresh perspective on the original where the work appropriated the idea and/or form of another text
- poetry that engaged the responder throughout the entire work
- Reflection Statements that were sophisticated in their discussion of concept and investigation and critical in their discussion of process. In particular, they were able to show how a particular concept from the investigation was realised in the project itself
- Reflection Statements that were outstanding in their ability to elucidate and explicate the language and form of their Major Work
- clear evidence of how the independent investigation into poetic form helped to shape the work; this evidence was connected to the work in a closely self-referential way
- a clear purpose and risk-taking with language to communicate developed ideas
- a capacity to write figuratively with an economy of words
- consideration of audience and/or point of reception for poems; this was discussed explicitly and such consideration was evident in the work itself
- poems that were often new and inventive with an ability to see beyond the obvious.

'B' range

Works in this range were characterised by:

- attention to formulating insights and concepts throughout the work
- general focus on creating and maintaining a consistent conceptual foundation based on substantive investigation
- an ability to offer a fresh perspective that may have involved intertextuality or appropriation stemming from the independent investigation
- the ability to be fluent and sophisticated for the entire collection. This was less evident in 'B' range responses than 'A' range
- skilful and conscious choice of rhythmic devices, image, motif and symbol
- Reflection Statements that were clear in their exploration of concept, form and language.

'C' range

Works in this range were characterised by:

- some attempts at originality but these were not sustained by the quality of the work
- no experimentation and little effective manipulation of either language or form – most poems 'talk through' an experience or idea
- ideas which were not presented subtly or with refinement but tended to be obvious, predictable or reliant on stereotypes
- unfocused use of techniques such as punctuation; although this was often stated as a technique employed in the work, it was merely an excuse for no punctuation rather than a technique to effectively create meaning
- banal or forced rhyme or rhythm which undermined ideas
- Reflection Statements that were descriptive rather than critical. This revealed a lack of

awareness of the relationship between investigation and the work
- Reflection Statements that did not address all the criteria
- lack of awareness of potential intended audience
- links to only one or a small number of published poets, sometimes not extending beyond those studied in English course work. Often the influence of the investigated poetry was not apparent in the work or links were not made explicit.

'D'/'E' range

Works in this range were characterised by:

- no real understanding of poetic form – inappropriate use of techniques, eg rhyme and rhythm which trivialised rather than strengthened serious themes
- an inability to engage an audience in a sustained way
- derivative and imitative concepts that were predictable, clichéd, naïve and not fully realised
- minor, simplistic, often primary school forms such as acrostics and shape poems seen as 'experimental' or changing fonts seen as 'techniques'. There was a limited sense of poetry as a craft where one makes deliberate choices in terms of language and structure
- ideas not explored in any real depth – poetry often dealt with angst-ridden moments in the most banal way or was overly sentimental or maudlin poetry that was often over-written, too reliant on ill-chosen adverbs/modifiers
- Reflection Statements that revealed little or no investigation – mostly concerned with explaining the intention of the work or making claims about the work that could not be justified by the work itself
- Reflection Statements that were too brief or contained discussion not relevant to the criteria.

Critical Responses

General Comments

Critical responses undertaken in 2008 included:

- identification and examination of paradigms through textual exploration and analysis
- evaluation of texts drawn from different contexts, genres and media
- the critiquing of texts through applying critical theory and the examination of tensions between canonical texts and texts drawn from popular culture.

The critical response investigation of candidates must be 'an area of personal interest from their specialised study of English' *(English Stage 6 Syllabus* p 92). Candidates are urged to ensure that their critical responses satisfy this requirement. Candidates also need to ensure that their critical responses are an extension of the knowledge, understanding and skills developed in the other Stage 6 English courses. This will be demonstrated in the scope, complexity, depth and sophistication of the investigation undertaken.

The Reflection Statement needs to address all the criteria. It is important to reflect on process as well as product, to show strong evidence of consideration of independent investigation and of how an awareness of a specified audience has shaped their writing as well as to make clear how the investigation of form is evident in the Major Work.

Strengths

- Effective critical responses were well-integrated, concept-driven investigations of paradigms, genres and texts.
- The content, texts and methodology were clearly an extension of other Stage 6 English courses. These Major Works had a clear thesis, evident in the critical response as well as in the Reflection Statement.
- The thesis was elaborated systematically and supported by effective textual analysis.
- There was careful selection of texts and a well-judged balance in their treatment if more than one text was chosen.
- Form was manipulated skilfully, providing structural clarity which enhanced coherence.
- Footnotes and bibliographies were pertinent and economical.

Weaknesses

- Some were not an extension of the 'knowledge, skills and understanding of English (Advanced) and (Extension) courses'. Many others would have been more suited to History or HSIE. It is important that the work has a literary focus and that this focus is sustained throughout the response.
- Some works began with an exploration into a literary or language-based topic but moved into an examination of social issues.
- Some were overly ambitious in terms of the Extension 2 Critical Response specifications. Many failed to provide close textual support for their arguments, while others were weak in their critical methodology.
- In the Reflection Statement, weaker texts often failed to indicate how research shaped the realisation of the Major Work.
- Other weaknesses were:
  - a mismatch of investigation concept and chosen text
  - confused structure
  - overuse of footnotes
  - description rather than analysis
  - reference to literary theory without real understanding of the theory or its terminology and
  - failure to observe the word count requirements.

Popular issues, texts, themes and approaches in 2008 critical responses

- comparison of canonical and non-canonical texts
- Indian and Asian texts, including Anime
- the language of politics
- media manipulation
- Foucault, Baudrillard, Barthes and Said
- James Bond
- eTexts
- gender in texts
- Shakespeare
- Nineteenth-century texts
- postmodern texts.

'A' range

'A' Range Critical Responses were original in the refinement of the investigation, the chosen texts and the methodology. They could be analytical, evaluative, imaginative and speculative or

a combination of one or more of these. They were supported by appropriate extensive investigation which was clearly evident in the Major Work.

These responses were highly articulate and fluent, using terminology clearly and relevantly. They did not use difficult terminology for its own sake, but because of its suitability as a means of investigating particular paradigms and texts. They used the language of criticism with an awareness of nuance.

Arguments were well structured and economical in developing and sustaining the momentum of a thesis. They were well edited. All requirements for the Reflection Statement were addressed, supporting and enhancing the Major Work.

'B' range

'B' Range Critical Responses were original in one or more of the following: the subject of the investigation, the choice of texts and the approaches taken. Many were analytical and evaluative, but there were occasional lapses either in the shaping of a consistent thesis or in providing completely consistent textual support. Extensive investigation was clearly evident. These responses were well expressed and fluent, but at times transitions affected fluent integration of meaning and form. Arguments were well structured in sustaining a thesis.

Terminology was used appropriately but not always with complete assurance.

'C' range

'C' Range Critical Responses were sometimes original in the nature of the investigation, the choice of texts and the approaches taken, but lacked the integration of 'B' Range responses. They either attempted a strongly analytical, evaluative approach which often faltered or had a thesis which lacked enough scope for significant investigation. 'C' Range responses often lapsed into description. There was little evidence of insight in the investigation. Effective control of expression, structure and form was not always maintained. Some footnotes were superfluous and/or too extensive.

Requirements for the Reflection Statement were addressed but usually not fully developed. Evidence of independent investigation was not clear in the Major Work. The audience was usually identified simplistically, without a clear sense of how an awareness of audience shaped the work.

'D' range

'D' Range Critical Responses were extensions of the other Stage 6 English courses and attempted analysis of paradigms, issues and texts but few did justice to their intent. Many were purely descriptive, with no evidence of insight in the investigation. Control of expression, structure and form was poor and some footnotes were superfluous and/or too extensive.

Some of the requirements for the Reflection Statement were addressed.

'E' range

'E' Range Critical Responses attempted a Major Work. Many were superficial, purely descriptive, insubstantial or incomplete. There was little evidence of a concept behind the Major Work. Some were not appropriate English investigations, even if they showed other strengths not evident in other 'E' Range responses. Some of the requirements for the Reflection Statement were addressed.

Scripts – Radio, Film, Television and Drama

General Comments

Candidates are required to develop a script for an 'intended performance time of 20–30 minutes' (*English Stage 6 Syllabus*, p 133). Most students complied with the script conventions appropriate to their chosen form. While investigation into the longer and more readily available forms is important and useful, research into the form of short scripts is essential.

Candidates should not rely solely on their studies in the HSC Drama course. Extension 2 English requires extensive and detailed independent investigation, leading to insightful analysis of texts, concepts, language, dramatic style and form, evident in both the Major Work and the Reflection Statement.

Some scripts were too long, contained too many characters, or struggled to deal with too many issues or concepts. Some candidates showed limited understanding of the nature of short film, as opposed to the feature film, or the short play as opposed to the full-length drama. The one-act play seems to have been overlooked by candidates, in favour of miniature three or four act plays. A drama script should take into account the distance between the audience and the performers and avoid confusing the language of film with theatre conventions. Understanding the purpose and audience of a script is important, ie it is to be used by actors, director, designers and others involved in production.

Dialogue should shape character, reflect time and place and sustain rhythmic flow of the work. The more engaging film and television scripts were able to integrate the visual and the spoken. Video back projections in play scripts need to be well integrated and should not dominate the work.

There was a wide range of subjects, styles and approaches. Subjects included contemporary life, domestic tensions, abuse, mental illness, racial prejudice, history, religion and technology. These subjects were approached in a range of styles and forms including satire, parody, absurdism, realism, naturalism and expressionism. Musical and visual elements were used to varying effect. Candidates should note that if they choose to utilise relevant theorists and theories, they need to be referenced clearly. Many candidates attempted to utilise philosophical ideas without applying them to the particular demands of the medium.

Reflection Statements were generally insightful and appropriate; however some were not specific enough in the explanation of the intention or identification of audience. Others lacked an explanation of links between investigation and the realisation of the finished product and did not demonstrate meaningful links to the other English courses. Bibliographies should be placed in the journal, not in the Reflection Statement.

'A' range

'A' range scripts demonstrated a superior understanding of the script form, both as it reads on the page and as it is intended for stage, radio or screen performance. These scripts were highly original and sustained, demonstrating assured control of the medium. Visuals, dialogue, sound, camera angles and/or stage directions were expertly integrated throughout the script, creating highly engaging Major Works. Technical proficiency in film scripts was outstanding, particularly when constructing mise-en-scène, dialogue and shot composition. Effective dialogue captured the rhythm, energy and flow of speech, supporting mood, tension and characterisation. All major compositional decisions were acknowledged specifically in the Reflection Statement.

Candidates in the 'A' range had a clear sense of the importance of extensive investigation into both the concept and the script form. This investigation was substantial and rigorous and was clearly evident in the Major Work. Research was highly appropriate in relation to purpose, audience and medium.

The development of concepts was also clearly articulated. Links between the project and the Advanced and/or Extension 1 courses were clearly discernible.

'B' range

Scripts in this range were original and sustained with a clear focus and skilled integration of meaning(s), value(s) and form. The complexity and refinement of some scripts demonstrated some lapses but ideas were generally presented clearly. 'B' range candidates were able to demonstrate their understanding of purpose, audience and medium to shape their scripts. Structure, characterisation, development of conflict, staging, setting and editing, as appropriate to form, were used effectively with some minor lapses in sustaining voice or idiom.

Script conventions were appropriate for the chosen form, but were not always sustained. Concepts were typically supported by effective and clear vocabulary. Language choices often lacked the subtlety and refinement of the 'A' range responses.

Reflection Statements showed a critical understanding of process and explained the intention, development and realisation of the Work. There was an uneven balance between research of the concept and of the medium.

'C' range

Scripts in this range were substantial and coherent. There may have been lapses in the development of some characters and concepts. Investigation into concepts was often limited to personal experience without broader investigation.

For the most part, candidates demonstrated effective language use and the conventions of the form but were often unable to sustain the dramatic impetus. Stereotyped characters, clichéd situations and underdeveloped concepts marked the 'C' range scripts.

Reflection Statements in 'C' range Major Works addressed most areas but without thorough critical reflection or explanation of how aspects of the investigation were realised in the script. At times, aspects of the works in this range were derivative and superficial. A more insightful investigation of other scripts was often needed. Claims made in the Reflection Statement needed to be substantiated in the actual work.

'D' range

Scripts in this range made some connections between meaning(s), value(s) and form. Often the structure was confusing or there was a limited understanding of form. These scripts often suffered from weak characterisation, unconvincing dialogue and improbable situations. Insights and ideas were often predictable. Candidates demonstrated some control of language for their medium and intended audience. However, lapses in these areas interfered with audience engagement.

Reflection Statements explained some aspects of the work in a limited way, lacking critical reflection. Claims made in the Reflection Statement need to be substantiated and to be evident in the actual work.

'E' range

Scripts in this range were superficial and/or incomplete, or when complete, fell well short of the requirements for the work (*English Stage 6 Syllabus* p.133). They lacked focus, contained simplistic ideas that were usually undeveloped and demonstrated limited investigation. Language, technical skills and understanding of the conventions of the medium were often inappropriate for the purpose and intended audience. Confusing and/or contradictory plotlines were common.

Reflection Statements identified some aspects of these scripts. However there were significant inconsistencies between the work and the claims made in the Reflection Statement. Reflection Statements in this range were descriptive, often cataloguing what was included in the script rather than analysing the work critically.

SOUND MEDIUM

Speeches

General Comments

Speeches were generally engaging and thoughtfully structured and organised showing a development of student understanding of the concept(s) investigated. More candidates explored concepts closely aligned with the English syllabus; in particular literary texts and ways of responding to various texts. Additionally, most candidates successfully created personae and contexts; often having an imaginative component or recreation, re-enactment or re-contextualisation of aspects of literary or historical events.

Speeches were generally well contextualised and audiences were clearly delineated. Conference papers, court scenes or trials, eulogies, and political gatherings proved popular forums for delivering speeches. Better candidates married the language of the speakers to the audience and contexts adeptly whilst weaker candidates briefly alluded to an audience but did not satisfactorily adapt the language of the speakers to the contexts presented.

Multiple speeches allowed candidates the opportunity to represent a range of perspectives on a concept or conversely to sustain a single thesis across a range of historical, cultural, social or workplace contexts. Better candidates developed theses and antitheses or variations on a thesis whilst weaker ones simply rebutted or asserted opposing points of view rather than developing arguments. Very few candidates presented single speeches.

Concepts explored were diverse and included:
- extensions of modules, electives or paradigms studied in other English courses
- the nature and types of rhetoric and/or speechmaking
- contemporary issues and global challenges
- politics, media analyses and representations of gender, identity, characters and/or concepts in texts.

Responses engaged with a range of textual forms such as prose fiction, poetry, novel, film, non-fiction and media drama texts to underpin the speeches.

Sound was generally used well. Music was most apposite and sound bytes, interjections, SFX and music were seamlessly integrated in a professional manner. Use of software, including free public software, to vary voice (especially gender) must be documented in the Reflection Statement. Choice of accents should also be documented. There continues to be a proclivity to use North American accents for no obvious reason. It should be noted that CDs must be able to be read on CD players

rather than laptops and that dictaphones are not an acceptable format for presentation of speeches. All spoken text constitutes part of the time limit even if not presented by the primary speaker.

Strengths

- imaginative recreation of people, places, characters, events or stories
- well-developed arguments
- intellectual depth and rigour
- well-paced, audible and sometimes evocative delivery
- congruent and well-written Reflection Statements
- engaging content and delivery
- creating and experimenting with different personae.

Weaknesses

- uninventive or overused concepts or ideas
- not developing personae or contexts or using contexts inappropriate to speechmaking
- based on opinion not investigation
- repeated ideas rather than developing them
- melodramatic works
- research into form depended on *Great Speeches of the Twentieth Century*; candidates should seek out contemporary speeches to supplement their investigation
- over-reliance on political speeches, especially non-Australian ones, as research into form.

'A' range

'A' range responses used the speech form adeptly, imaginatively and in thought-provoking ways. They selected concepts that promoted deep intellectual discussion well supported by rigorous and systematic investigation. The material was presented in imaginative, analytical or interpretive ways, often in combination. Personae and audiences were deliberately constructed and the language of the speech(es) was highly appropriate to the chosen audience, purpose and context. The best responses were illuminations or extrapolations of characters or personae, recapturing moments in time and building contexts around them. 'A' range responses developed theses using substantial evidence and were neither didactic nor overly moralistic. Delivery of speeches was outstanding and all choices for auxiliary materials like music and SFX were apposite and substantiated critically in Reflection Statements. Reflection Statements were highly congruent with the Major Work, highly self-referential and demonstrated significant investigation. The impact of the investigation was clearly and critically explained as was the process of putting the work together. They articulated very clearly how the Major Work was an extension of both the Advanced and Extension courses without a reliance on the prescribed texts.

'B' range

'B' range responses were insightful, original and sustained. They often presented interesting and engaging speeches but were less sophisticated and lacked the intensity of investigation of 'A' range scripts or were uneven in complexity across a series of speeches. Candidates used language skilfully to argue a thesis and were often passionate about their topics. This passion was tempered with competence in using language to moderate views and to manipulate an audience. Contexts and audiences were very clear and deliberately chosen to highlight the arguments of the speaker(s). 'B' range responses could have made better use of time and editing. Investigation, processes, language, links, audience and purpose were all critically outlined in the Reflection Statements.

'C' range

'C' range responses were sustained and coherent and often presented a series of viewpoints about a single issue. Contexts were reasonably well established although the language of a presentation sometimes did not match the speaker (such as scholars or the historical period selected). Speakers were less well distinguished, sometimes relying on software to vary voice rather than using language creatively and effectively. Delivery was clear and coherent but there was a tendency to assert rather than prove a point. Different viewpoints tended to be rebuttal of other speakers rather than genuine counterarguments. Responses were often less analytical and more descriptive. In this range candidates presented a series of speeches around ideologies, ethics, moral dilemmas or espousing particular tolerances but these were not well researched or fully developed. Investigation did not include the plethora of material written by ethicists, philosophers or postmodern writers. As a result 'C' range responses presented arguments lacking complexity and asserted points rather than presenting solid arguments based on theoretical underpinning. In some cases the tolerances espoused by the speaker were ironically and unintentionally undermined by the stereotyped views presented. Reflection Statements were written clearly and thoughtfully showing the development of the Major Work and describing the impact of the investigation. These demonstrated an earnest attempt to reflect on both concept and form but lacked complexity and self-reflexivity.

'D' range

These speeches were not substantial and made some connections between meaning, values and form. The concepts, personae and audiences chosen sometimes limited the candidates' ability to present complex material or to be inventive. Candidates' speeches tended to be predictable and derivative and failed to offer any new insights. Assertions were commonplace and investigation was scant. The links to Advanced and Extension 1 courses were often tenuous, based on personal interest rather than academic pursuit. Variation of voice and delivery was limited, thereby disengaging the listener. There was a tendency to melodrama and exaggeration. Reflection Statements were based mostly on opinion and investigation into form was poor.

'E' range

There were no Speeches in this range.

Radio Drama

General Comments

Candidates compose a 10–15 minute complete radio drama presented on tape or CD. There was an increase in students undertaking this interesting and challenging medium but it did not necessarily translate into an increase in the quality of the submissions. Candidates presented works in a variety of ways and most of the works were competently completed. All candidates submitted works on CD and the quality of production was generally strong. The integration of music and sound effects was often seamless, demonstrating superior editing skills. Layering of sound and music was well done. Stronger Major Works validated their choices of special effects and/or music in their Reflection Statements.

Research into the ideas or concepts of the work is necessary and important, but in order to develop a sustained and original Radio Drama students must do intensive research into form. Concepts explored included satire, appropriating texts or famous characters, language, crime fiction, social and political commentary, comedy and science fiction. A number of crime fiction satires were neither experimental nor inventive. Forms appropriated included narrative, allegory, film noir and traditional dialogue-based radio drama.

Strengths

- effective use of humour and word play to engage the listener
- intellectually stimulating and thoughtfully developed concepts
- depth of research which was broad based, wide ranging and across media, including research into radio drama
- use of a variety of forms/structures or concepts within a piece
- effective and stimulating use of parody, satire and allegory
- effective use of intertextuality
- manipulation of individual voices (often their own) in a range of contexts
- well-rehearsed acting, seamless transitions
- sound effects that added to the impact of the work
- development of narrative through dialogue with little recourse to voice-over
- authentic vernacular or use of dialect.

Weaknesses

- poor recording quality
- extending beyond the time limit of 15 minutes
- pacing too slow or too fast
- dialogue that was flat and demonstrated little delineation between voices
- dialogue that sounded unrehearsed and unconvincing
- discrepancies between the print and aural versions of the text
- depth of research into the concept not evident
- disorganised and confusing sound effects
- little or no research into form
- hackneyed concepts or plots.

'A' range

- artistically integrated and suitable sound, music, voice(s)
- inventive use of the form incorporating factual, poetic, literary and other styles
- seamless integration of special effects and music often overlaying each other
- excellent choice of music to enhance the story
- justification for choices made validated and expanded upon in the reflection statement
- sustained focus on sophisticated concepts supported by appropriate vocabulary
- well-sustained and beautifully developed, well-edited pieces
- well-sustained and witty satirical pieces, clever word play
- good use of intertextuality
- smooth transitions between scenes
- thoughtful underpinning of conceptual material with extensive and rigorous independent investigation
- clear relationship between the Major Work and the Advanced and/or Extension 1 courses
- expert delineation of voices in duologue/dialogue
- consciously structured work explained in the Reflection Statement.
- intellectually engaging and emotionally evocative.

'B' range

- well-developed pieces with a sincere and explicit research base
- investigation less wide ranging
- point of view focused and sustained
- use of aural puns, some use of metaphor, satire and allegory to promote point of view
- somewhat politically astute understanding and social commentary on contemporary issues
- use of absurdist techniques to carry action
- less subtle than 'A' scripts but a sense of refinement still evident
- interesting concepts or structures but not always explored in depth
- characterisation well depicted but less sophisticated than 'A' range.

'C' range

- derivative scripts but nonetheless well structured and in the most part coherent
- focused rather too closely which limited the development of a concept
- investigation into concept was satisfactory but Reflection Statements and the works themselves indicated less investigation into the form
- characters defined but their voices at times not well delineated
- stereotypes and clichés used
- allegorical stories became didactic
- contexts of radio dramas not always authentic
- propensity to 'tell the listener' rather than reveal the themes through the dialogue
- transition between scenes often clumsy
- Reflection Statements did not indicate how work was an extension of other English courses
- audience less well defined
- conscious shaping of meaning, used conventions in a satisfactory manner, attempt to use emotion, dialogue, music in an engaging manner
- limited appropriate sound effects.

'D' range

- very limited use of music or sound effects; often repetitive and/or not well integrated
- choices of stylistic devices, music and form not justified in Reflection Statements
- works not displaying originality; works literal and concrete in matter, form and concept
- works tending to be very didactic and therefore less engaging
- attempts at humour often degenerated into confusion and silliness
- some works unintentionally melodramatic
- transition between scenes difficult to detect
- inappropriate and confusing sound effects. overuse of echo effect
- Reflection Statements descriptive and since the research base was very loose it was difficult for candidates to explain the relationship between investigation and the process of composition
- insufficient time allowed for the recording and editing of work, hence the work lacked polish
- limited research into the medium mentioned in Reflection Statements and/or evident in the composition itself
- discrepancy between the ideas expressed in the Reflection Statement and the work itself
- little thought given to structure of the work so momentum and plot structure static
- print scripts quite bare (lacking character lists, instructions to actors, etc) and sometimes discrepant with the aural text.

'E' range

- characterised by incomplete and often poorly edited formatting
- little evidence of investigation into the form of radio drama, and the resulting Major Work displays serious discrepancies between the script and the audio content
- Reflection Statements demonstrated a lack of engagement with a serious or interesting concept and very often displayed very low literacy levels
- the Major Work itself often devoid of any distinguishing features of the form (SFX, sound manipulation, drama, tension, etc).

Performance Poetry

General Comments

The number of Performance Poetry submissions decreased slightly this year but students have once more appreciated the possibilities offered by this dynamic medium. Candidates displayed a wide range of intention, skills and ability but must be aware that what reads well on the page does not always translate effectively to performance.

There was a diverse range of concepts this year such as war, heroism, historical events, Indigenous issues and consumerism, along with staples such as identity, conformity and individuality. Most projects had conceptual frameworks that unified the poetry and informed the performance. Candidates must endeavour to develop ideas and not be over reliant on repetition or strident delivery to make a point.

While most students have grasped the importance of voice manipulation in performance poetry, weaker projects presented poetry which did not allow for a range of expressive techniques. This often resulted in a lacklustre performance even if the poetry itself had merit. Generally speaking, there was a correlation between poor poetry and poor performance. Some candidates appear unaware of the difference between dramatic monologues, creative recitations, speeches and the form of performance poetry. The epic and the ballad and some appropriations of other poet's ideas and structures were attempted by some candidates.

Strengths

- Some candidates experimented with modern trends researched or experienced live or on the internet, while other students drew on older, more established performance styles such as the epic or the ballad poetry.
- The influence of cultural trends, such as free-style, was evident in some projects and generally worked well. The benefit of models is not to be underestimated. Some candidates presented their projects as complete performances demonstrating an awareness of the audience and the context for the performance and utilising the technology to engage the listener in meaningful and interesting ways.
- The production quality of most works was excellent, candidates having used sound accompaniment with discernment to enhance performance rather than to carry or compensate for the poor performance techniques.
- There was an obvious use of a variety of voice effects such as pace, rhythm, modulation, accent, and pitch to demonstrate a passionate and dramatically skilful use of voice to enhance characterisation, theme or effect.
- A high level of awareness of the conceptual framework of performance and research into concepts that enhanced the development and scope of ideas.
- The skilful manipulation of language and of lyrical imagery in this aural medium.
- Articulate and sophisticated Reflection Statements which demonstrated a depth and breadth of

research into the form of performance poetry and the students' chosen subject matter.

Weaknesses

- Students must demonstrate an awareness, understanding and knowledge of how important the use of voice is in the medium of Performance Poetry. Many students continue to simply recite their poetry in flat and monotonous voices. This lack of tonal variety is not effective in engaging an audience. Equally so, over-dramatisation – to the point of melodrama and/or shouting – can be ineffective for the poetry and alienating for the listener.
- An over-reliance on background music to convey meaning or sounds. At times, music was utilised for no apparent purpose: its use as segue between parts of the poetry or between poems within the suite was often ineffective, given that the music or sound chosen was preceded by silence and followed by silence and the music had no tonal or thematic connection to the work itself.
- Clichéd, undeveloped or unsophisticated concepts.
- Limited investigation into the form. Students must be aware that this is a performative genre and that to simply recite poems is not an effective and dramatic use of the form of Performance Poetry.

'A' range

- Original, sustained, coherent and intelligent Major Works that showed a complex and sophisticated creation of meaning.
- There was evidence of a great deal of research underpinning the intelligent and perceptive interpretation of their concept and this was sustained and developed in the work.
- There was innovative and creative use of voice apparent in the higher range scripts. Also evident was the incorporation of external elements such as music, sound effects used purposefully and with balance, fluency and intelligent integration. The poetry itself was of a high standard, demonstrating skill, perceptive insight and control.
- At this level, there is a deep and substantive understanding of the forms and features of performance and poetry, as well as an integrated and extensive research base. Reflection Statements are highly self-referential and articulate the intentions and realisation of the performance.

'B' range

- There were original and sustained Major Works which exhibited a structural coherence in their overall production of meaning and values.
- The insights and concepts of a Major Work in this range are often worthy, although usually lacking highly developed insights and flair. The communication of these concepts showed some complexity, subtlety and refinement through a sound engagement with extensive research.
- The performance aspects of the work may have been very strong, while the poetry was not as substantial or sustained. There was a strong engagement in the medium of production, demonstrating technical proficiency and a clear sense of audience and purpose. Responses in this category were often experimental in their use of voice, pace, rhythm and with the forms, structures and features of poetry.
- Reflection Statements demonstrated intelligent and extensive research that was connected to the features and structures of the medium and the conceptual framework of the poetry. They tended to be more explanatory in their approach, looking towards justifying the work on a conceptual level and not clearly delineating the performative aspects of the work, often evidenced through a lack of self-referencing.

'C' range

- The defining feature of a work in this category was a lapse in aspects of the performance: tone, register and voice.
- Major Works in this range were well organised but are not sophisticated in their development of their idea/concept.
- There was some ability shown to control the form in this range. However, candidates seemed to rely on technical aspects, such as laboured repetition, music or forced rhyme to improve their work, often with detracting or clumsy results. There was often a reliance on only one or two effects over the duration of the work, and as a result the work became superfluous and unengaging.
- Reflection Statements relied upon explaining the conceptual and philosophical underpinnings of the work, rarely seeking to critically examine the performance of their poetry.

'D' range

- The Major Work made some connections between meaning, value and form.
- The ideas communicated were predictable, relying upon unoriginal or poorly developed insights. There was an evident lack of research into the form, and the focus became unclear and muddled. The prevalence of personal insights – without extending these through research –was detrimental to the overall communication of ideas.
- There was some effective use of language, both in terms of the poetry and the performance. However, there was often a refusal to engage with the overtly performance-based nature of this genre. It must be delivered with a sense of the medium, audience and/or context and the student must utilise a variety of performance techniques appropriate to their work.
- Explanatory at best, Reflection Statements in this range did not completely elucidate or examine the main elements of their Major Work. Often there was an inconsistency between the project and the Reflection Statement, as well as the realisation of their aims.

'E' range

- The defining feature of Performance Poetry in the 'E' range was superficiality. The lack of focus, as well as an inability to control the form was characteristic of 'E' range Performance Poetry. Students must be aware that they should operate within the flexible boundaries of this genre in at least some capacity. Some students were unaware of the difference between dramatic monologues, creative recitations, speeches and the form of performance poetry.
- Reflection Statements in the 'E' range were distinguished by their lack of research into conceptual concerns, the form of Performance Poetry and how the manipulation of poetic language contributed to the work as a whole.

VISUAL MEDIUM

Video/DVD

DVD format is preferable to the VHS format, in terms of handling (only one VHS was submitted this year). Some projects could not be viewed on ordinary DVD players, which is highly problematic in terms of adhering to the specifications and parameters of the Major Work. It is cannot be stressed highly enough that teachers at school view the films on an ordinary DVD player before the due date, perhaps incorporating this as part of the certification process.

Overall, the composition, editing and post-production skills were impressive. Some video/DVD composers did not explore in depth the values evident in the project and how these were the result of a conscious and superior investigation process.

One of the distinguishing features of the better projects was the deliberate and purposeful shaping of values, recognising how film operates as a medium and a demonstration of how a filmmaker can manipulate the expectations and/or reactions of responders by the use of eclectic cinematic devices, techniques and conventions. These could include music, framing, CGI, animation, specific shots, camera angles, appropriate acting, use of genre, structuring a short film in an appropriate manner and, perhaps most importantly, the sparing use of dialogue (including voice-over). The best DVD films demonstrated an insightful use of music to underscore the emotions experienced by the characters and to create ambience. Some of the weaker DVDs relied so heavily on rock and pop songs that they were in danger of becoming music clips.

There was a tendency in some projects to let technical manipulation of film language and technical prowess take a central position in the work at the expense of a sophisticated concept that had been researched at length and in depth. An example of this is using a plethora of quotes and statistics as framing devices in the project. Quite often the effect of starting with facts and figures tends to stifle the progress of the work in terms of filmic language and injects the project with a degree of inflexibility.

There needs to be clear evidence, both within the work itself and the Reflection Statement, of how the independent investigation has shaped the development of the video/DVD project.

A predominant area of concern was the lack of investigation into the form of the short film itself. Most candidates chose to work with film because of their partiality for the medium. However, most failed to research the medium of the short feature, relying instead on full features as the major influence for their work. Some candidates were very inventive with their form and addressed this in term of visual literacy.

A number of candidates failed to include their final script along with their Reflection Statement. The absence of a storyboard, particularly in the journal, indicates a lack of methodical application in the production phase of the project, and in some cases may signal a problem as far as the authentication of the project is concerned.

It is important to include details about the technical aspects of the post-production phase. A lack of detail could indicate undue assistance.

Where the performance elicited by the student as director is not quite what they envisaged, this must be addressed in the Reflection Statement. The candidate should suggest some of the ways they tried to elicit the appropriate performance from the actors. If candidates are fortunate enough to secure the services of professional actors, this must also be fully outlined in the journal.

Diverse concepts were explored including religion, identity, journeys literal and metaphorical, sport, illness and family history. A number of videos/DVDs were subversive, idiosyncratic and highly entertaining. Some outstanding projects were highly cerebral and lyrical, often using landscape in a metaphorical sense. Some of the more successful films had a singular focus. Attempting to explore large philosophical concepts or issues is not feasible given the parameters of this medium.

Candidates should identify a relevant audience and show how the project was reshaped or developed to appeal to this targeted audience. This is especially crucial when working with film because films, and some other visually dependent multimedia products, are routinely classified into suitable age brackets: G, PG, M, MA and R. This is also the case with short films so candidates should consider this when trying to identify the targeted audience for their work.

Strengths

- technical proficiency/competency with both the camera and editing software that gave the projects a professional look
- a demonstrated and insightful appreciation and understanding of the elements of a short film feature, such as the focus on one single character, idea or event
- an outstanding control over technical video/film elements, and a fluent integration of the three processes of film production – pre, shooting and post; this tended to result in a consciously developed structure and careful manipulation of pace and tone.
- a willingness to experiment purposefully with concepts and technology resulting in works of high originality, eg a fully animated work, claymation, CGI
- the exploration of the development of concept and the impact that investigation into form had on shaping meaning and fulfilling purpose, as evident in the Reflection Statements
- the articulation of a clear relationship between the Advanced and Extension 1 courses, and the Extension 2 project that demonstrated the scope and breadth of the planning and investigative process.

Weaknesses

- the lack of investigation of the short film
- not referencing all images and sound (including music) that did not originate with the candidate
- not adhering to basic guidelines such as the provision of scripts. not observing the 6–8 minutes running time stipulated
- literal visual representations of what is being told through dialogue and/or voice-over, adding little to the engagement and success of short films
- although highly developed technical skills, editing skills and camera work were evident, these were not always used purposefully or deliberately to shape meaning; in some cases they were used gratuitously
- failing to successfully integrate all the elements of film, sound, image and shots to effectively shape meaning and pursue the development of the student's concept
- repeating images and segments of the film without purpose lessens the original impact; it is not engaging to watch a black screen for a prolonged period of time, or for longer than a fraction of a second – no matter how symbolic
- some Reflection Statements made claims that were not realised in the work itself
- inappropriate use of the form. for example, lengthy opening credits (that sometimes take up an entire minute) are more characteristic of the full feature film.

'A' range

Videos in this range were highly original and sustained and purposefully achieved a fluent integration of meaning, values and form. The majority of these were narrative driven and characterised by lyricism. There was a deliberate focus and awareness of how values are represented in video through the successful integration of all its elements: sound (diegetic and non-diegetic), mise-en-scène, motif, metaphor, lighting, colour, camera shots, and editing techniques.

The employment of the medium was conscious in terms of the realisation of the student's concept and purpose. There was a sophisticated understanding of audience and how to manipulate their expectations.

Videos in the 'A' range pursued concepts that were appropriate to the form. These could be investigated, developed and presented within the confines of the short video/DVD.

Candidates in this range clearly articulated the relationship between their independent investigation into both form and concept and the realisation of their Major Work. The relationship between their

study of Advanced and Extension 1 English and their Major Work was demonstrated in a precise and sophisticated manner.

Where concepts were not necessarily always complex, the techniques used to develop them were original, inventive, clever, refined and engaging. There was a highly conscious consideration of audience and how to manipulate it.

Candidates in this range articulated the connection between their investigation and the work in their Reflection Statements, often demonstrating a sophisticated understanding of film theory. These candidates were more likely to take risks not only with video and editing techniques but also with sound and lighting.

'B' range

Videos in this range were on the whole sustained, demonstrating coherence and a skilled integration of meanings and form. The importance of values was often ignored or simply not consciously explored within the project. Often films within this range did not manage to maintain their focus, either through structure or through a problem with one element of filmmaking. In most cases, this was allowing the spoken word to dominate the film to the detriment of the project.

Works within this category were ambitious, impressive and dealt with a variety of concepts and/or issues. One predominant area of concern was the inappropriate nature of the concept given the confines of the medium. For example, a number of candidates explored 'the universal human condition' or 'man's relationship with the natural world'. These two concepts, although clearly emanating from the candidates' work in Advanced and Extension 1, were too vast to be investigated with a degree of complexity in a 6–8 minute video.

Videos in this range demonstrated control over the medium and offered interesting ideas. Although the communication of the candidates' ideas was sound, it characteristically lacked refinement and/or complexity.

Where the acting performances of the cast were not complementary to the intent of the film, this was largely ignored in the Reflection Statement. Some lapses in elements of textual integrity may have affected fluency and/or weakened the development of the concept. This was particularly problematic when dialogue was not used sparingly. 'Over wordiness' of these works, when not used intentionally to shape meaning, limited some candidates.

Reflection Statements reflected on the intention, development and realisation of the Major Work. Links to the English Advanced and/or Extension courses needed to be more clearly defined and the audience more clearly articulated.

'C' range

Videos in this range demonstrated control in the integration of meaning and form and were generally substantial. Most were problematic in either the integration of the investigation into the form or some element of textual integrity. Some areas of concern in these scripts included:
- poor editing
- listing links to other Stage 6 English courses instead of showing a clear extension of Advanced and Extension 1
- heavy reliance on content that had been originated by other people and not acknowledged. This was most problematic in documentaries where one of historical archival footage usage was expected but this must be manipulated and must be cleverly integrated into the project in the most economical manner
- overuse of voice-over in that the responder was told what to think and feel rather than being

able to discover through the employment of other, more subtle or refined cinematic techniques
- pursued themes over concepts, uneven or inappropriate use of sound, both diegetic and non-diegetic. Use of non-diegetic music was not adequately addressed or evaluated in the Reflection Statement
- the more ambitious projects in this range suffered from a lack of planning in the pre-production stage.

'D' range

Video Major Works in this range were not substantial and/or suffered from significant technical difficulties that impacted on the process of making meaning. There was some connection displayed between meaning, values and form.

These Major Works often involved poor acting, editing or camera work that was unaccounted for. The critical role of the director was inadequately fulfilled in this range. While a student cannot guarantee the quality of acting, they must be able to evaluate this aspect of the video project in the Reflection Statement in order to fulfill their brief as a director. There was little evidence of investigation into either concept or medium and the discussion of process was descriptive rather than analytical. The Reflection Statement explained some aspects of the intention, development and realisation of the Major Work. One area of concern was the use of family histories as a vehicle to say something about contemporary living and contemporary values. These projects tended to rely too heavily on still photography, and the closeness of the composer to the material did not allow for a critical appraisal of the content.

'E' range

Video Major Works in this range did not show an integration of form, value and meaning. They were not developed coherently, were incomplete, or only showed a demonstrated ability to carry out one aspect of video/filmmaking (in most cases editing) or assembling a series of thematically connected images which, in some cases, were generated by other people without acknowledgment. The basic premise of the videos in this range was often simplistic, lacked subtlety and there was little attempt to use the medium dynamically and purposefully.

The Reflection Statements of 'E' range videos were on the whole explanatory or simple in nature, dealing with some of the obstacles faced by the composers, summarising the intention or, in most cases, the subject matter, of the video but not articulating the intention, the development or the realisation of the Major Work.

Multimedia

General Comments

The multimedia works presented were web sites, both informative and entertaining, and hypertext fiction. A number of concepts were explored with a general trend for web site material to reflect a critical issue. These often raised concern about the originality of the concept and the appropriate choice and use of the medium. Investigation into the concepts represented in the Major Works often lacked depth and rigour. Specific analysis of the visual elements, screen design, navigation and role of the reader also needed to be more fully addressed. While some works were adventurous in their concept and use of the form, the majority did not fully exploit the potential of the medium, giving the impression that it was viewed as a shorter alternative to the Critical Response. Candidates' reflections on the choice of multimedia need to be articulated and to move beyond the identification of the audience as a younger audience who are used to their information being digital. Reflections on the choice need to demonstrate the integral link between the text produced and the medium.

Candidates must cite their sources for all graphics used in their Multimedia Works and provide a hard copy of the logic map. The Reflection Statements were rarely self-reflexive or self-referential and generally omitted to identify and analyse the choice of this media.

Strengths

- Control of the media was effective in combining sound, movement, images, written text and video into a well-designed piece of multimedia that illustrated elegant screen design and intuitive navigation.
- The concepts were original, the work coherent and the insights formed through investigation were communicated with flair.
- The focus of the work was clearly articulated and sustained. There was a self-conscious exploration of the potential of the medium in the creation of the work.

Weaknesses

- There was a lack of independent investigation into the concept and the form. The works were fragmented or unfinished.
- There was a lack of interactivity with extensive screens of information being substituted for creative exploitation of the medium. There was a failure to include a logic map. There was no acknowledgement of material, especially graphics.

'A' range

An 'A' Range script demonstrated a highly original concept that was presented with flair. It also demonstrated a highly effective manipulation of technical skills, design skills, language and conventions of the medium for the intended audience. The Reflection Statement dealt with all aspects of the work and demonstrated the impact of significant investigative finds upon the works themselves. Links to the Stage 6 syllabus went beyond simple links to texts and dealt with conceptual issues or paradigms of thinking.

'B' range

In this range Major Works were focused and substantial and showed skilful control of the medium. Works in this range showed originality in concept, developed a distinctive 'voice' or 'voices'. There was a deliberate and conscious shaping of the features of the medium. These major works either did not use the full range of attributes of the form or were not thoroughly investigated, however, the multimedia form was thoughtfully chosen to suit the conceptual basis of the works and specified audience. The Reflection Statements did not critically treat the form, intention and development of the work.

'C' range

The Major Works were generally substantial and coherent. They presented a number of viewpoints on a variety of topics. They often contained large print sections of material which were generally derivative and descriptive rather than critical or analytical. A stronger focus on a creative way to use the medium in exploring the concept would have strengthened the works. Candidates are encouraged to move beyond the 'informative' web site that replicates and slightly extends information from the Advanced or Extension course in a way that is not original. Candidates should be encouraged to take the concept and explore it in a creative way that fulfils the potential of the medium, the conceptual bases of the works and the specified audiences.

Reflection Statements explained the intent, development and realisation of the work but lacked

critical evaluation or self-reflexivity of the process.

'D' range

Major Works in the 'D' range lacked any real conceptual basis for the work or based their works on simplistic or unoriginal ideas that were developed in a rudimentary manner. Some were unfinished. Multimedia works in this range did not make adequate use of the form and lacked some coherence. Extensive, rigorous investigation is crucial in this area.

Reflection Statements were descriptive and simplistic, did not address the process of composition and were not able to explain the impact of investigation.

'E' range

There were no Major Works in this range.