

**2007 HSC Notes from
the Marking Centre
English Extension 1**

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Published by Board of Studies NSW
GPO Box 5300
Sydney 2001
Australia

Tel: (02) 9367 8111
Fax: (02) 9367 8484
Internet: <http://www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au>

ISBN 978 174147 8846

2007749

Contents

Introduction	4
Module A: Genre	7
Module B: Texts and Ways of Thinking.....	12
Module C: Language and Values.....	17

2007 HSC NOTES FROM THE MARKING CENTRE

ENGLISH EXTENSION 1

Introduction

This document has been produced for the teachers and candidates of the Stage 6 course in English Extension 1. It contains comments on candidate responses to the 2007 Higher School Certificate examination, indicating the quality of the responses and highlighting their relative strengths and weaknesses.

This document should be read along with the relevant syllabus, the 2007 Higher School Certificate examination, the marking guidelines and other support documents which have been developed by the Board of Studies to assist in the teaching and learning of English Extension 1.

General Comments

In 2007, approximately 6000 candidates attempted the English Extension 1 examination.

More than half of the candidates attempted Module A, with the vast majority doing the Crime Fiction elective. Just under half of the candidates did Module B, where the Individual and Society was the most popular elective. Module C attracted only a very small number of candidates (less than 150).

The examination paper this year included two unique questions for each elective, one requiring an imaginative response and the other a critical response. This approach encouraged candidates to focus on particular aspects of the elective they had studied.

Most candidates wrote well-considered and detailed responses that demonstrated a genuine attempt to answer the question. Responses continue to be very lengthy. While most long responses were of high quality, some lacked discernment in the selection of information and could have attracted more marks if candidates had composed more succinct, coherent and well-argued/developed responses.

Questions requiring an imaginative response provided candidates with a photograph and a caption identifying a particular object in the photograph as 'prized'. Candidates were asked to write an original short story 'featuring' this object, suggesting the need to give the object special prominence and not just refer to it in a superficial way. Indeed, the way in which candidates vested significance in the object became a means by which they could demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the elective, another requirement of the question. Most candidates chose to use the object literally, while some explored its metaphoric significance.

The requirement to feature the prized object lent a specificity to these questions which greatly hindered candidates in simply using a rote-learned, pre-prepared response. In fact, the determination of some candidates to use a pre-prepared response and not apply themselves to the question at hand probably prevented them from achieving their best. Of course, all candidates should prepare for the examination, and this preparation might involve practising the composition of a range of written pieces suitable for the elective, but candidates must ultimately answer the examination question, and a response which is relevant and fresh is the best way to do this.

Candidates were asked to write an 'original' short story. Some responses derived from other sources, such as films and television shows, or used unacknowledged stories. These candidates were

rewarded only when they demonstrated original ideas, language or other features in their imaginative responses.

Some candidates wrote effective short stories in the form of a traditional, classically structured narrative, but others demonstrated originality by varying the narrative method, by adopting an authentic voice or by using an unusual but effective structure or stylistic feature.

Candidates were expected to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the relevant elective in their imaginative response question. By showing rather than telling, successful responses conveyed a profound grasp of the elective but managed to do this with subtlety, without compromising the integrity of the narrative.

In the questions requiring critical responses, candidates were provided with a statement and asked to ‘evaluate’ the extent to which it was true in relation to ‘TWO prescribed texts AND at least TWO texts’ of their ‘own choosing’. Better responses clearly focused on evaluating the ‘extent’ to which the provided statement reflected the texts they had studied. They also critically examined and evaluated the importance of the ideas and concepts suggested by the given statement. Typically, better responses reflected complex thinking and a sophisticated knowledge and understanding of the elective and module.

Candidates were asked to discuss a given statement which contained two concepts. Generally the first of these concepts was one very familiar to candidates, indeed at the ‘heart’ of the elective, as the statement indicated. The second was generally less familiar or obvious, yet still relevant. Better responses discussed and evaluated the significance of both concepts to the elective in a thoughtful, balanced and comprehensive fashion. However, weaker responses focused on just one of the concepts, mostly the first; or, worse, they paid lip service to both concepts.

In their preparation for the examination, candidates should study a variety of texts to give them enough scope for developing an in-depth critical response and evaluation. They should be discouraged from having only two ‘other texts’ to choose from as those texts may not be useful for the specific focus of the question. It was evident in the more sophisticated responses that candidates had individually and carefully selected ‘other texts’ that would develop their argument in an effective manner. These responses displayed diversity and freshness in their originality and a truly personal engagement with the elective. Some candidates referred to ‘other texts’ that had only a tenuous connection to their elective or were simply not substantial enough to support a complex critical response. Weaker responses also tended to treat ‘other texts’ superficially, relying on fleeting references to a text in support of their argument.

In all electives the stronger and more insightful responses showed evidence of research, investigation and wide reading/listening/viewing. This resulted in a personal, confident tone and individual voice used to articulate the response and interpretation of texts and elective.

Many responses addressed the specificity of the questions comprehensively, imaginatively and insightfully. Better responses demonstrated detailed and complex knowledge and understanding of the elective and a capacity to adapt this knowledge and understanding to the specifics of the question. Responses relying on prepared, rote-learned material ignored the possibilities in the question and tended to be dull and predictable.

It is expected that candidates sitting the English Extension 1 examination will display a skilful control of language, including correct and effective spelling, punctuation, grammar and expression. Such skills are essential to ensure that candidates are able to communicate ideas precisely and convincingly. However, markers recognise that the responses they are marking are first drafts

composed under examination conditions, so perfection is not requisite to attaining a very good mark.

Better responses demonstrated:

- a detailed and sophisticated knowledge and understanding of the texts and their relationship to the module and elective rubric
- an insightful grasp of the concepts implicit in the rubric and echoed in the texts
- agility and perception in their thinking about the elective and module
- a high level of personal and intellectual engagement with texts
- insightful awareness and discussion of how ideas, concepts and meaning are shaped in texts
- original and perceptive interpretations of texts and concepts and a strong awareness of context and values
- independent investigation and wide reading/listening/viewing in their selection and discussion of texts, especially ‘texts of own choosing’
- evidence of prudent choice of appropriate and substantial ‘texts of own choosing’, well integrated to advance the overall thesis of the response
- ability to be evaluative and critical and to adapt knowledge and understanding to new contexts
- individual and original responses to the questions
- engagement with all aspects of a question
- a high standard of writing and literacy skills, clarity of expression and a sophisticated structure supporting the complexity and depth of ideas
- well-integrated textual references and quotes in support of arguments
- a clear sense of the candidate’s own voice and individual response, and evident ‘ownership’ of their work
- relevant understanding of literary theory, historical background and context
- obvious enjoyment of the texts and enthusiasm for their experiences in this course.

Weaker responses demonstrated:

- a failure to engage with all aspects of a particular question and a tendency to neglect or ignore the provided text
- a lack of a cohesive response to a specific question; the use of prepared, rote-learned responses; poor adaptation of memorised responses to fit the specific question; mechanical reliance on prepared material; and formulaic responses
- inadequate or inappropriate selection and/or integration of ‘texts of own choosing’ and no identification of bibliographical details or sources of such texts when relevant or needed
- a tendency to recount, summarise and describe rather than evaluate, analyse and interpret; some inappropriate storytelling; little demonstration of detailed and specific knowledge of the set texts
- limited understanding of appropriate literary or critical theories to support their responses, or over-analysis of theorists at the expense of detailed textual reference
- problems with written expression, organisation of ideas and structure of responses; poor control of paragraphing; incorrect spelling and syntax
- misinterpretation or poor understanding of the rubrics and their relation to the texts studied
- a sense of having studied texts separately and not having integrated their study of texts within the elective/module
- poor development of issues raised and poor integration or use of evidence in support
- lack of independent thinking or reflection about the elective studied
- poor understanding of how meaning is shaped and inability to integrate analysis of a composer’s techniques with analysis of ideas.

Module A: Genre

Imaginative Response: Questions 1, 3, 5

The better responses to these three questions were engaging to read and clearly demonstrated a highly developed understanding of many aspects of the genre. They tended to be original, entertaining, insightful or provocative pieces of writing.

Better responses were able to demonstrate their understanding of the conventions and values associated with the specific generic form studied. Many responses with a strong understanding of the genre were playful in their subversions of conventions. Better responses were able to ‘show’ rather than ‘tell’ the values of the genre and/or the contexts in which the stories were set.

The instruction, ‘featuring this object’, allowed a broad range of uses for the image in each elective. Some students used the object as a conventional feature of the genre highlighted in their elective thereby demonstrating an understanding of the importance of conventions. Some responses used the object metaphorically to comment on their own narrative or the ideas, values or conventions of the genre. Some responses wove the object in and out of the narrative, while others featured the object more subtly. Better responses integrated the object and its status as ‘prized’ appropriately in their short stories. In weaker responses, the object was often nominated as prized and no attempt was made to convey the value of the object to the generic conventions and values. In other weak responses, clumsy attempts were made to insert the object into prepared plots.

The infatuation with split narrative structures continues across all mark ranges, and while reflecting experimentation in the spirit of the syllabus such innovation can only be evaluated by the clarity of the language. Many split narratives were, in fact, two short stories, some of which did not allow sufficient exploration of conventions. Better split narratives tended to be two perspectives of the one situation, where the split narrative was used to demonstrate an understanding or exploration or challenge of conventions or values. Some of the better responses used a simpler, more workable narrative structure in order to allow the composition to explore, challenge or subvert the ideas, conventions and values of the genre. Better responses were characterised by a strong sense of purpose for which narrative techniques had been chosen.

The authentic voice of characters and the convincing descriptions of settings characterised better responses which were thereby demonstrating a sophisticated ability to consider the conventions, ideas and values of their genres. The sophistication of better responses suggested that candidates were well read in a range of sub-genres suggesting active engagement in independent reading and learning. This evidence of research was also apparent in the broad range of exotic settings and situations in which the prized objects were used.

Weaker responses showed an inability to combine the requirements of the question and the featuring of the prized object with a demonstration of an understanding of the ideas, conventions and values of the genre. Some of these responses were characterised by overuse of dialogue. Other responses in these ranges showed evidence of the over-reliance on prepared answers with little reference to the examination question and specifically the prized object. Still others contained evidence of preparation using previous examination questions. Some weaker responses fulfilled the requirements of the question to ‘feature’ the prized object, but failed to demonstrate the ways in which the object could be prized, even as generic convention.

Elective 1: Revenge Tragedy

A significant proportion of responses featured the key metaphorically as the desire to be free of the need to take revenge or the desire to be free of the burdens of revenge either prior to or after the act of vengeance. The key was also viewed literally as the exit strategy from a physical prison or entry to a locked place where the act of vengeance was planned to occur. Many responses also referred to the hand, either as the hand of the avenger or, metaphorically, as an extension of the key as the means to enact revenge either directly or indirectly.

Better responses contextualised the act of revenge within a moral or social context against which the act of revenge took on tragic proportions, thereby revealing the values of the elective. Weaker responses tended to concentrate on two aspects of the revenge tragedy: the act of revenge and the motivation for this act. Weaker responses failed to move beyond the personal motivation and the act of revenge itself, with no reference to power structures against which the protagonist feels powerless. Better responses demonstrated an imaginative merging of modern or ancient contexts with universal concepts of justice and the use and abuse of power. Weaker responses demonstrated an over-reliance on depictions of psychotic characters and/or gore.

Many responses in this elective showed evidence of diverse exploration of ideas and conventions of revenge tragedy in elaborate and exotic settings. These were also experimental attempts to transpose the ideas of the genre to a modern context accessible for general readers. There remains a noticeable trend to recount instances of child abuse and domestic violence as the motivating factor for the act of revenge. Such stories were more convincing when the candidate established a context in which abuse might realistically occur.

Many students established a strong voice, often, but not exclusively, through the use of first person narrative. Better responses used this voice to explore the duality of the moral situation in which the protagonist finds himself or herself. Better responses moved beyond the act of revenge and the motivation to the moral dilemma of the avenger. These responses were characterised by the development of complex narratives which accounted for the protagonist's procrastination and the consequent development of feelings of hurt, isolation and grief. These complex narratives also described details significant for the protagonist to achieve satisfaction through the act of revenge. Such responses demonstrated the values, ideas and conventions of the genre.

Elective 2: Crime Fiction

The broad range of responses suggested that candidates were well read in a range of sub-genres, indicating active engagement in independent reading and learning. Some responses relied on television series featuring forensic investigation only which may not encourage the development of a context complex enough to explore values of justice and literary conventions. Many narratives used plots which were clichéd, predictable or poorly developed appropriations of either the prescribed texts or canonical-related texts.

Most responses tended towards the hard-boiled and the police procedural forensic sub-genres, with a significant number of candidates using the traditional country manor house detective story. Better responses depicted the detective using a variety of techniques, including description and realistic dialogue. Better responses also explored contextual issues and values such as justice, resolution for both victim and society and the nature of justice and morality.

Better responses created convincing voices for their hard-boiled or intellectual sleuths. They frequently used the voice of a female protagonist in sophisticated ways often to subvert reader expectations and thereby challenge the conventions, ideas and values of the genre. Weaker

responses demonstrated an over-reliance on clichéd narratives with hackneyed situations and characterisation. Thus, while demonstrating some of the conventions, they were unable to make a substantial exploration of the more complex values.

Most candidates used the letter as a clue within the convention of the accretion of evidence or as the cause of the investigation and, in some cases, as a vehicle for the denouement. In many responses, the hand in the image became the narrator, detective or criminal. Some responses, however, demonstrated the preparation and use of pre-planned responses within which the letter, the prized object, was inserted in a clumsy manner. Context remained a discriminator by which better responses were able to display the sophistication of their understanding of the genre. A significant proportion of the responses showed evidence of experimentation with postmodern techniques to challenge the conventions of the genre.

Elective 3: Speculative Fiction

The responses in this elective were diverse, reflecting the varied nature of the prescribed texts. The science fiction genre remained the most popular, although some students developed fantasy narratives or experimented with a blending of the two.

Most candidates demonstrated a sound knowledge of the conventions of their chosen genre and were proficient in establishing an alternative world. Some candidates developed coined language and responded to the syllabus challenges of ‘what may be’ and/or ‘what might have been’ in interesting and provocative ways. Many responses focused too heavily on the individual’s experience of the alternative world as a means of demonstrating a broader ‘different’ social context. The clarity of the writing determined whether this method of demonstrating the context was successful. Weaker responses seemed unable to demonstrate ideas, values and philosophies suggested by the syllabus and instead concentrated on the narrative with greater or lesser complexity.

Some better responses used contemporary issues as a springboard to speculate about possible consequences. Popular issues included bio-ethics, totalitarianism, the nature of progress, the value of science and technology, and the tension between scientific endeavour and cultural concerns. The provided image was used imaginatively either as a laboratory tool in science fiction responses or as an icon or precious object or object of interest in fantasy responses. The gloved hand became the hand of the narrator or a scientist, priest or some other character within the narrative.

Better responses to Questions 1, 3 and 5 demonstrated:

- the ability to use the specific prized object seamlessly within their narrative
- comprehensive and sophisticated knowledge and understanding of the conventions, ideas and values of the genre
- a conscious exploration of the ideas and values of the genre
- an ability to address the question requirements, specifically the use of the object, either literally or metaphorically, and the development of an original short story
- a thoughtful or provocative or challenging attitude, especially in relation to the values of the genre
- the development of characters, settings, dialogue and narrative progressions appropriate to the genre
- playful subversions of the genre and the conventions
- an ability to ‘show’ conventions, ideas and values, rather than ‘tell’ about them
- an ability to write an original short story with clarity of expression and an authentic voice
- evidence of independent investigation beyond the prescribed texts.

Weaker responses to Questions 1, 3 and 5:

- failed to use or demonstrate the nature of the value of the prized object either to the narrative or to the genre
- inserted the object clumsily into a pre-planned narrative with little or no relationship developed between the object and the narrative
- presented stories which were thinly disguised copies of prescribed texts or other popular related texts
- tended to overuse dialogue as a means to progress the narrative
- demonstrated limited understanding of the conventions, ideas and values of the genre
- were confusing and poorly structured
- contained mechanical errors which prevented students from conveying meaning clearly and effectively.

Critical Response: Questions 2, 4, 6

In better responses, candidates maintained a strong engagement with the question, fortifying their arguments with detailed textual evidence. Sophisticated analysis was the hallmark of these pieces. The scripts were coherent and well-structured, closely linking concerns of the genre to the questions and its statement. The use of genre theory was widespread and capably interwoven. In particular, links which were both relevant and sophisticated were constructed between texts.

Questions required students to address two key terms. The best responses dealt with both of these and capably discerned the metaphorical depths of the question. They were distinguished by analysis which was clearly original. This personal engagement served to distinguish better responses from those which read as pre-planned and mechanical.

Weaker responses did not genuinely engage with the two key terms of the given statement. Some paid ‘lip service’ to these terms; some ignored them altogether. At times, essays lacked balance, dealing disproportionately with one of the key terms only. In the place of thorough analysis, weaker responses were confined to the conventions of the genre.

Candidates were required to ‘evaluate’ the given statement, necessitating the use of judgement and appropriate evidence. Many responses had a clear ‘voice’ and provided comprehensive scrutiny of the issues. Better responses showed how conclusions had been reached. Some weaker answers tended to adopt an inappropriate chronological approach which reviewed the history of the genre they had studied. Others chose to focus too much on genre theory. Either of these approaches detracted from the purposes of the question.

In English Extension 1, synthesis is greatly valued. In some responses texts and arguments were woven seamlessly. Superior answers integrated the treatment of values with analysis of the texts. Conversely, some responses consisted of four mini essays on four different texts, rather than an amalgamated ‘whole’. Others resorted to storytelling and laboured to express arguments. At times, arguments became repetitive, characterised by superficial contentions and generalised observations. It was evident that students needed to make their arguments their own, avoiding the use of jargon and prepared phrases. Regurgitation of previously written essays should be avoided.

In many responses, additional appropriate material was selected and discussed. Many responses explored the complexity of the texts to support suppositions. In general, most responses referred to the requisite number of texts. Whole classes using the same additional texts often presented theses which were formulaic and failed to engage with the terms of the question.

Elective 1: Revenge Tragedy

There was some imbalance in the level of engagement with the ‘psychological tragedy’ aspect of the given statement. Many responses demonstrated a solid understanding of the genre and the values being expressed through it and used their texts, especially *High Noon*, meaningfully.

Weaker responses tended to summarise the plots of their texts without offering any real insight into their complexity. This was especially true of *Medea*. There was not much use of *The Cid*. Both *V for Vendetta* and *Hamlet* were widely and effectively used as supplementary texts, while *Sin City* and *Kill Bill* were often less effectively used. Where candidates had evidently sought and researched their own supplementary texts, responses were interesting and original.

Elective 2: Crime Fiction

Better responses were characterised by a feisty engagement with the question, thus creating an original and enjoyable discussion. Many responses, however, were still formulaic and pre-prepared, failing to engage with the question. A number were too literal, discussing ‘mystery’ and ‘discovery’ only superficially.

Weaker responses tended to rely on recount and description of conventions, values and context, rather than attempting to evaluate their use. A proportion of responses relied too heavily on crime fiction jargon such as ‘Cosy School’ and ‘Film Noir’, often giving the impression of not really understanding the nature of such sub-genres.

The prescribed texts were generally used well. This year, interpretations of *The Big Sleep* were less predictable and in *The Skull beneath the Skin* candidates focused more closely on values than has been evident before. Reference to *The Real Inspector Hound* was less consistent in terms of depth of discussion and analysis.

There is still evidence of a lack of independent research into supplementary texts. However, where candidates obviously have selected and researched their own texts, a refreshing approach to the elective is apparent. *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* and *The Life and Crimes of Harry Lavender* were generally not used as effectively this year, while more effective use was made of *Kiss Kiss Bang Bang*. Crime franchise programs (such as *CSI*) were often considered in a limited fashion and candidates’ comments tended to be fairly generic. Many were preoccupied with issues of technology and hence did not engage with such texts in the fullest sense.

Elective 3: Speculative Fiction

Responses demonstrated a variety of successful approaches to the question. Candidates made appropriate links between the texts and their values. Better responses generally tended to be conceptual and sophisticated.

Candidates used a wide variety of supplementary material from a wide range of media.

Analysis of both *The Handmaid’s Tale* and *Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring* was of variable quality, while *Cyteen* and *Dune* were generally used effectively.

Better responses to Questions 2, 4 and 6 demonstrated:

- engagement with the question
- sophisticated analysis of texts
- the ability to synthesise texts to formulate a uniform, cogent argument
- sophisticated control of language
- balanced treatment of texts
- an ability to sustain high quality analysis across the treatment of all texts
- an ability to compose detailed, comprehensive responses that cited clear textual references in support of arguments and integrated elements of the question
- an ability to synthesise material with sophistication and to discuss a range of texts in an integrated manner, blending matters of text, context, genre, and relevant aspects of the question seamlessly
- an awareness of how meaning is shaped in texts and ability to discuss features of texts
- appropriate and independent selection and effective use of texts of own choosing
- an ability to synthesise and apply conventions to a range of texts of own choosing and sophisticated analysis of those chosen texts
- the evaluation of the conventions, values and ideas of the genre.

Weaker responses to Questions 2, 4 and 6:

- demonstrated little evaluation of the conventions, values and ideas of the genre
- used textual examples which did not relate to the question
- opened with definitions and theory rather than engaging with the question early in the essay
- were more descriptive, simplistic, generalised, narrated responses rather than evaluative
- tried to adapt prepared answers to fit the question or consisted of prepared answers, thereby failing to respond to unique elements of the examination question
- lacked sophisticated expression and complexity of thought, struggled with synthesis of argument and material and were poorly structured
- struggled to address the genre's conventions, ideas and values
- lacked detailed analysis, showed an inability to demonstrate through close and detailed textual analysis a deep and broad knowledge and understanding of the genre, and showed an inability to refer to scenes/sections of texts in depth or integrate evidence and quotes
- had little evidence of personal response to the study of a genre
- were stronger on the prescribed texts than the texts of own choosing.

Module B: Texts and Ways of Thinking

Imaginative Response: Questions 7, 9, 11

Many candidates effectively integrated the ways of thinking with creative and interesting stories which made effective and often sophisticated use of the prized object both metaphorically and literally. Most responses demonstrated competent and controlled use of language, and a strong sense of character, setting and plot.

Better responses established a strong and credible authorial voice (or voices), were sustained and original and quickly established and maintained a strong sense of the ways of thinking of the module and elective. A number of candidates wrote complex plots which were tightly controlled and often quite entertaining. Better responses used the prized object as a springboard for imaginative and original stories, incorporating descriptive and figurative language to feature the

prized object in insightful and meaningful ways. Better responses were characterised by playful and compelling stories using time lapses, flashbacks, fragmented narratives and different points of view.

Weaker responses demonstrated little engagement with the ways of thinking and tended to rely on recount with little or no reference to the prized object. The prized object was sometimes referred to in a simplistic, often cursory manner and was not integrated into the story in a meaningful way. Weaker scripts tended to ‘top and tail’ their responses with the prized object and were marred by clichéd incorporation of the ways of thinking. Some weaker responses tended to include ways of thinking in a cumbersome way and tended to let the concepts overwhelm the story giving an impression of a ‘shopping list’ of features or concepts. Some of these stories were convoluted and disjointed, demonstrating a simplistic understanding of the paradigms of the module and elective.

Elective 1: The Individual and Society

Better responses demonstrated a highly developed understanding of the social and historical context of the 19th century, effectively integrating a broad range of concepts and key issues into coherent and engaging narratives which related personal, often moving stories with pertinent and insightful observations of social change and resistance. Better responses were characterised by confident, sustained narration which invoked the period and seamlessly wove social issues into complex and interesting stories. Authentic characters, plots and settings were features of the better responses, which demonstrated sophisticated and informed understanding of the historical period. Some of the better responses effectively evoked the Gothic in complex stories of individual resistance where gender roles and societal expectations were challenged.

Weaker responses were characteristically simple stories demonstrating a narrow understanding of the elective and with a preponderance of stories of thwarted love crossing class barriers. Weaker responses tended to demonstrate only a superficial understanding of the 19th century and the social upheavals occurring at the time. Sometimes references to social change and influential thinkers were made in very obvious and artificial ways which tended to undermine the cohesiveness of the narrative. Some of the weaker responses were sensationalised or consisted of 21st century individualism in a nominally 19th century setting. Weaker responses were sometimes anachronistic.

Elective 2: Postmodernism

Better responses were clever and entertaining, demonstrating extensive knowledge of postmodern theory and cleverly using postmodern techniques to write stories that were sustained and focused. Better responses were characterised by a strong sense of control and cohesion and integrated complex plots, multiple or non-linear narratives, and the prized object into a sophisticated and relevant story. Better responses incorporated theorists and characters in playful and unexpected ways, writing stories that were interesting for their own sake as well as for their illustration of postmodern ways of thinking.

Weaker responses tended to ignore postmodern techniques or ‘ticked off’ techniques such as authorial intrusion and self-reflexivity in pedestrian and cumbersome ways. This was detrimental to the realisation of an interesting story line. Some candidates relied too heavily on homage responses by extending the narratives in the set texts. Some weaker responses were overly reliant on postmodern techniques and did not engage with key concepts or ideas.

Elective 3: Retreat from the Global

Better responses evoked the local in surprising, often lyrical ways, demonstrating a strong engagement with the dichotomy of the global and local. Better responses tended to incorporate

various cultural perspectives in highly evocative and sustained stories, with strong original voices, demonstrating sophisticated and insightful understanding of the concepts. Better responses incorporated insightful commentary on global political and economic imperatives and the resilience of the local to maintain a strong sense of self. Better responses incorporated multiple narratives and points of view to create sophisticated and interesting stories.

Weaker responses were simplistic and predictable, demonstrating a very narrow understanding of the global and local in linear or disconnected narratives. Some candidates seemed to be confused about the ways of thinking underpinning this elective, ignoring the contemporary time frame or writing speculative pieces which had only tenuous links to the present. Weaker responses tended to list attributes of global life without articulating any conflict between the local and global.

Overall, better responses to Questions 7, 9 and 11 demonstrated:

- strong engagement with the provided image, incorporating the object in a significant way and demonstrating, explicitly or implicitly, how it is ‘prized’
- effective and imaginative use of language and structure
- an ability to compose a meaningful and engaging short story
- sophisticated knowledge and understanding of the ways of thinking of the elective, conveyed through the story with skill and subtlety
- originality of both concepts and expression.

Weaker responses to Questions 7, 9 and 11:

- made superficial reference to the object in the provided image, with little indication of how it might be ‘prized’
- were characterised by lapses in control of language and ineffective structure
- consisted of narratives which were simplistic, disorganised or not sustained
- conveyed little insight into the elective or presented ideas in a clumsy and obvious way
- lacked originality.

Critical Response: Questions 8, 10, 12

Better responses demonstrated a strong, sustained and balanced engagement with the key terms of each question, developing a lucid thesis which was supported by detailed and insightful textual analysis. These stronger responses displayed a sophisticated grasp of the conceptual framework underpinning relevant ways of thinking, synthesising references to text, context and values in a relevant manner and frequently integrating valuable theoretical references.

Stronger responses revealed higher order skills of evaluation, addressing the level to which the statement could be validly applied to relevant value systems and frequently exploring the relationship between the two key terms (freedom/intimidation; pleasure/anxiety; preservation/rejection) in a manner that transcended any simplistic representation of binaries.

In better responses, candidates tended to employ balanced textual analysis in the course of their essays, displaying an ability to analyse both prescribed texts and additional texts in a specific and detailed manner, incorporating direct quotations and sophisticated technique identification. They applied their understanding of the relevant ways of thinking in their independent investigation, clearly relishing the opportunity to add depth and breadth to their argument. The quality of such responses reflects the way in which students have been encouraged to bring fresh and original thinking to the texts of their own choosing.

Weaker responses used the key words of the question in a loose, simplistic or tokenistic manner, occasionally bypassing them altogether. Some of these responses actually provided a reasonable argumentative framework but proved deficient in supporting detail. Some responses resorted to descriptive recount or were full of assertions unsubstantiated by specific textual reference. Other responses revealed a substantial knowledge and skill in the analysis of prescribed texts but proved deficient in the analysis of related texts.

Elective 1: The Individual and Society

The stronger responses in this elective displayed a highly developed understanding of the ways of thinking in the 19th century, revealing a grasp of the multifaceted nature of relevant value systems through the exploration of a range of issues. Better responses acknowledged the social dimensions of the individual and were careful to qualify their assertions about the attainment of freedom, revealing a grasp of the complex way in which individuals negotiated social constraints and tensions. Stronger responses evaluated the extent to which freedom was sought or attained, and intimidation constrained or limited the individual's aspirations. In contrast, weaker responses frequently presented arguments that simplified the notion of freedom, revealing a naïve view of the achievements of individuals in particular scenarios.

Better responses revealed the candidates' understanding of the complex relationship between freedom and intimidation. Rather than confining the response to an exploration of the binary opposition between freedom and intimidation, students demonstrated notions of influence: intimidation, for example, might fuel the desire for freedom.

Stronger responses displayed the candidates' familiarity with a range of contextual issues, as opposed to the preoccupation with a singular concern (such as patriarchy). Superior responses were also strongly grounded in value systems relevant to the period, as opposed to the restriction of argument to a textual analysis largely isolated from contextual specificity and relevant theory.

Stronger responses covered the analysis of prescribed and related texts in a balanced fashion.

Elective 2: Postmodernism

The stronger responses in this elective displayed a highly developed understanding of postmodernism, revealing a grasp of the complex, multifaceted nature of this way of thinking. Again, in better responses, candidates avoided resorting to an argumentative framework that implied a necessarily antithetical relationship between the two central terms; instead, they appeared to delight in exploring the paradoxical linkage between the concepts of anxiety and pleasure. They also gave equal weight to these terms. Stronger responses covered the analysis of prescribed and related texts in a balanced fashion.

The stronger responses used theory well, revealing a sophisticated understanding of the relationship between the ideological and the technical aspects of the text, as well as the relationship between the text and the larger philosophical and political paradigms that constitute some of the thinking relevant to postmodernism.

Weaker responses tended to omit references to theory or confine their ideological focus to the feminist contestation of the patriarchal metanarrative. These responses tended to be poorly or patchily developed, a limited range of postmodern techniques was identified (particularly in candidates' additional texts) and candidates struggled, in some cases, to link the concerns of a particular text to the question or the overarching way of thinking.

Elective 3: Retreat from the Global

Stronger responses revealed an understanding of relevant theoretical frameworks such as postcolonial theory, producing tightly structured responses which sustained their focus on a thesis in response to the specifics of the question. Students' avoidance of a simplistic dichotomisation between the local and the global, in terms of positive and negative valuation, was a feature of higher range responses. In addition, the development of an argument acknowledging the complex interrelationship between the key terms preservation/rejection, and the local and the global, was a characteristic of a more sophisticated approach to the question.

Stronger candidates incorporated sophisticated and balanced textual analysis, displaying an impressive control of language and an awareness of the conceptual impact of particular techniques. They were also mindful of the historic periodisation relevant to the ways of thinking.

Weaker responses were poorly developed in terms of specific textual reference and technique identification. They sometimes engaged in marginally relevant historical contextualisation, as a result of poor text choice, and did not adequately address the specifics of the question. In some cases, the additional texts selected were entirely irrelevant, to the extreme detriment of the overall response.

In summary, better responses to Questions 8, 10 and 12 demonstrated:

- evaluation, making appropriate judgements about the extent to which the provided statement was true in relation to particular texts
- close and balanced engagement with the two key terms in the given statement
- sophisticated integration of textual analysis with relevant theoretical understanding, judiciously used
- close analysis of texts and of how particular ways of thinking have shaped and are reflected in texts
- ability to sustain the quality of analysis across the whole range of their texts
- relevant knowledge of the context/text relationship
- appropriateness, independence and originality in selection, as well as effective use and sophisticated analysis, of texts of own choosing
- an ability to compose detailed, comprehensive responses that cited clear textual references in support of arguments and that integrated elements of the question
- an awareness of how meaning is shaped in texts and ability to discuss features of texts
- an ability to synthesise material with sophistication, to discuss a range of texts in an integrated manner and to seamlessly blend discussion of text, context, theory, ways of thinking, and relevant aspects of the question
- an ability to present a developed and balanced response in which prescribed and additional texts are given equal weight
- high literacy levels and sophisticated control of language.

Weaker responses to Questions 8, 10 and 12:

- were descriptive, simplistic, generalised or narrative, rather than evaluative
- neglected to use the given statement or did so in a cursory fashion and did not engage with the requirements of the question or had difficulty synthesising all the parts of the question
- relied on planned, prepared responses
- included inappropriate or irrelevant texts of the candidate's own choosing and limited the scope of the response with reference to an inadequate number of texts
- demonstrated little evidence of individual research and personal interpretation and response

- had difficulty relating their knowledge and understanding of their elective to related texts; tended to treat them in isolation, considered a limited number of aspects of texts with a narrow focus
- experienced difficulty with structuring an integrated response
- revealed a poor grasp of the ways of thinking and their textual representations
- mentioned theorists in a tokenistic and/or confused way
- failed to centre their response on the appropriate historical context or resorted to oversimplification, focusing on reductive notions
- relied on storytelling and recounting the plot or narrow textual study without connection to context or the specifics of the question
- lacked sophisticated expression and complexity of thought; had difficulties with synthesis of argument and material; were poorly structured
- lacked detailed analysis; showed an inability to demonstrate through close and detailed textual analysis a deep and broad knowledge and understanding of the relevant historical period and ways of thinking, and how they are shaped in texts; and an inability to refer to scenes/sections of texts in depth or integrate evidence and quotes
- dealt with texts of own choosing more superficially than prescribed texts; tended not to examine techniques in the texts of own choosing.

Module C: Language and Values

Imaginative Response: Questions 13, 15, 17

No candidates in 2007 studied the elective ‘The Language of Sport’, so these comments refer only to ‘Acts of Reading and Writing’ and ‘Gendered Language’.

The better responses made a clear and unambiguous link between the object and their narrative. Some candidates were able to successfully imply the presence of the object or incorporate it into their response in a subtle but effective way.

Stronger responses to this question occasionally experimented with the form of their writing and this was more evident in ‘Acts of Reading and Writing’. In some stronger responses, there was an understanding and appreciation of the prescribed texts in the composing section.

Weaker responses made scant use of the prized object and at times the use of the image was almost an afterthought. Some stories were clichéd and very brief with no demonstrated knowledge of the elective’s theoretical underpinnings. As has been the case in recent years the weaker responses in ‘Gendered Language’ dealt far too much with gendered roles and sexuality issues rather than language and values.

Elective 1: Acts of Reading and Writing

Stronger responses engaged in a complex and sophisticated exploration of how language shapes and reflects culture and values. Many candidates wrote non-linear narratives that engaged the reader and took some risks.

Weaker responses used the image as a springboard into predictable diary entries that failed to use the journal/diary as a prized object. Such responses failed to adequately grapple with the theoretical concerns of this elective.

Elective 3: Gendered Language

The provided image of the pen was a less obvious link to this elective than the journal was to ‘Acts of Reading and Writing’ but nonetheless many candidates were able to compose an engaging narrative that more than adequately demonstrated their knowledge of the elective. Weaker candidates used sexuality and gender roles as the subject of their narrative without saying anything original about language and values. Most of these stories merely dealt in stereotypes and hackneyed storylines. Few candidates incorporated the crossings out in the image into their story and most just focused on the pen.

Better responses to Questions 13 and 17 demonstrated:

- higher order thinking about the elective and its underpinnings
- clever use of ‘the prized object’ in an original way
- occasional experimentation with form and structure
- an authentic and appropriate voice that was sustained throughout
- thoughtful openings and fitting closures
- an ability to sustain the intention throughout a lengthy response and hence engage and entertain the reader
- ability to write with flair, imagination and creativity.

Weaker responses to Questions 13 and 17:

- showed a tenuous connection with the image
- were clichéd, not at all insightful and failed to engage the reader
- were poorly written, brief and inconclusive
- showed no understanding or demonstration of the theories behind the elective
- displayed poor grammar, syntax and spelling
- used a pre-prepared response that failed to adequately answer the question.

Critical Response: Questions 14, 16, 18

Candidates wrote sustained responses that displayed a thorough knowledge of the prescribed texts. Candidates did not ignore the second half of the question and were able to treat the ‘Yet’ aspect with thoughtfulness and balance.

Elective 1: Acts of Reading and Writing

The candidates generally demonstrated an excellent grasp of the elective and were able to write sustained and engaging essays. The choice of texts, both prescribed and self-selected, was judicious and close knowledge of these texts and their theories was evident.

By far the most popular text was Manguel, followed by Woolf. A considerable number of students studied Shelley Jackson’s multimedia text and its analysis was acute and insightful. Many stronger responses had a solid grasp of critical theories related to their elective.

Elective 3: Gendered Language

Most candidates were able to write a balanced essay dealing with ‘authority’ and ‘restlessness’. Similarly, candidates’ knowledge of the prescribed texts was sound and the choice of their own texts was pleasing. The discussion of filmic techniques in *Elizabeth* was particularly sophisticated

and relevant. When analysing *Twelfth Night*, candidates still need to do far more with Shakespeare's language.

Stronger responses to Questions 14 and 18:

- engaged with the wording of the question and dealt with the two concepts in a balanced way
- made judicious use of the prescribed texts and discussed their own well-chosen texts
- demonstrated an insightful knowledge of the elective's theories and extended this knowledge to their own texts
- were sustained essays that engaged the reader
- said something new and original about the elective.

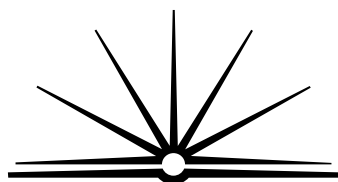
Weaker responses to Questions 14 and 18:

- failed to adequately answer the question
- showed minimal knowledge of the elective and its prescribed texts
- struggled to write a structured essay that informed the reader
- discussed poorly texts of own choosing
- struggled with literacy and the conventions of essays
- were poorly balanced essays that made only superficial reference to self-selected texts
- tended to be pre-prepared responses that ignored or paid lip service to the question.

English Extension 1

2007 HSC Examination Mapping Grid

Question	Marks	Content	Syllabus outcomes
Module A: Genre			
1	25	Genre	H1, H2, H3, H4
2	25	Revenge Tragedy	H1, H2, H3, H4
3	25	Crime Fiction	H1, H2, H3, H4
4	25	Speculative Fiction	H1, H2, H3, H4
Module B: Texts and Ways of Thinking			
5	25	Texts and Ways of Thinking	H1, H2, H3, H4
6	25	The Individual and Society	H1, H2, H3, H4
7	25	Postmodernism	H1, H2, H3, H4
8	25	Retreat from the Global	H1, H2, H3, H4
Module C: Language and Values			
9	25	Language and Values	H1, H2, H3, H4
10	25	Acts of Reading and Writing	H1, H2, H3, H4
11	25	The Language of Sport	H1, H2, H3, H4
12	25	Gendered Language	H1, H2, H3, H4



B O A R D O F S T U D I E S
NEW SOUTH WALES

2007 HSC English Extension 1 — Module A Marking Guidelines

Module A: Genre

Questions 1, 3 and 5

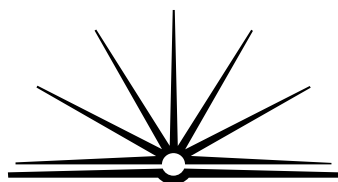
Outcomes assessed: H1, H2, H3, H4

MARKING GUIDELINES

Criteria	Marks
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Shows sophisticated ability to compose an original short story that demonstrates a highly developed understanding of the conventions, ideas and values of the genre and features the prized object in an effective mannerDemonstrates with flair and insight the ways ideas, values and conventions associated with the prescribed genre can be expressedDisplays highly developed control of language to express complex ideas with clarity and originality	21–25
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Shows substantial ability to compose an original short story that demonstrates well-developed understanding of the conventions, ideas and values of the genre and features the prized object in an effective mannerDemonstrates with insight the ways ideas, values and conventions associated with the prescribed genre can be expressedDisplays effective control of language to express complex ideas with clarity	16–20
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Shows sound ability to compose an original short story that demonstrates a developed understanding of the conventions, ideas and values of the genre and features the prized object in a sound mannerDemonstrates sound understanding of the ways ideas, values and conventions associated with the prescribed genre can be expressedDisplays competent control of language to express some complex ideas	11–15
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Shows limited ability to compose an original short story that demonstrates an understanding of the conventions, ideas and values of the genre and incorporates the prized object in a limited mannerDemonstrates limited understanding of the ways ideas, values and conventions associated with the prescribed genre can be expressedDisplays limited control of language to express ideas	6–10
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Shows minimal ability to compose an original short story that demonstrates an understanding of the conventions, ideas and values of the genre and may involve some reference to the prized objectDemonstrates minimal understanding of the ways ideas, values and conventions associated with the prescribed genre can be expressedDisplays minimal control of language to express ideas	1–5

Questions 2, 4 and 6
Outcomes assessed: H1,H2,H3H4
MARKING GUIDELINES

Criteria	Marks
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates sophisticated ability to compose an essay that makes insightful use of prescribed and own texts • Demonstrates a sophisticated ability to evaluate the conventions, ideas and values of the genre through engagement with the given statement • Demonstrates highly developed control of language to express complex ideas with clarity 	21–25
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates substantial ability to compose an essay making skilful use of prescribed and own texts • Demonstrates a well-developed ability to evaluate the conventions, ideas and values of the genre through engagement with the given statement • Demonstrates effective control of language to express complex ideas with clarity 	16–20
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates sound ability to compose an essay making appropriate use of prescribed and own texts • Provides a sound response that attempts to evaluate the conventions, ideas and values of the genre through some engagement with the given statement • Demonstrates competent control of language to express some complex ideas 	11–15
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates limited ability to compose an essay making use of prescribed and own texts • Provides a limited response that describes the conventions, ideas and values of the genre through attempts to engage with the given statement • Demonstrates limited control of language to express ideas 	6–10
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates minimal ability to compose an essay making use of prescribed and own texts • Provides a minimal response that describes some of the conventions, ideas and values of the genre and that may refer to the given statement • Demonstrates minimal control of language to express ideas 	1–5



B O A R D O F S T U D I E S
NEW SOUTH WALES

2007 HSC English Extension 1 — Module B Marking Guidelines

Module B: Texts and Ways of Thinking

Questions 7, 9 and 11

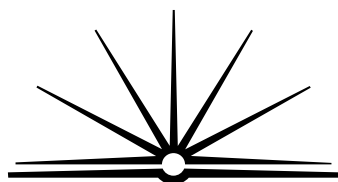
Outcomes assessed: H1, H2, H3, H4

MARKING GUIDELINES

Criteria	Marks
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Shows sophisticated ability to compose an original short story that demonstrates a highly developed understanding of ways of thinking in the elective and features the prized object in an effective mannerDemonstrates with flair and insight the ways in which ideas have shaped and are reflected in textsDisplays highly developed control of language to express complex ideas with clarity and originality	21–25
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Shows substantial ability to compose an original short story that demonstrates a well-developed understanding of ways of thinking in the elective and features the prized object in an effective mannerDemonstrates with insight the ways in which ideas have shaped and are reflected in textsDisplays effective control of language to express complex ideas with clarity	16–20
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Shows sound ability to compose an original short story that demonstrates a developed understanding of ways of thinking in the elective and features the prized object in a sound mannerDemonstrates sound understanding of the ways in which ideas have shaped and are reflected in textsDisplays competent control of language to express some complex ideas	11–15
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Shows limited ability to compose an original short story that demonstrates an understanding of ways of thinking in the elective and features the prized object in a limited mannerDemonstrates limited understanding of the ways in which ideas have shaped and are reflected in textsDisplays limited control of language to express ideas	6–10
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Shows minimal ability to compose an original short story that demonstrates an understanding of ways of thinking in the elective and may involve some reference to the prized objectDemonstrates minimal understanding of the ways in which ideas have shaped and are reflected in textsDisplays minimal control of language to express ideas	1–5

Questions 8, 10 and 12*Outcomes assessed: H1, H2, H3, H4* _____**MARKING GUIDELINES**

Criteria	Marks
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Demonstrates sophisticated ability to compose an essay that makes insightful use of prescribed and own texts• Demonstrates a sophisticated ability to evaluate ways of thinking in the elective through engagement with the given statement• Demonstrates highly developed control of language to express complex ideas with clarity	21–25
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Demonstrates substantial ability to compose an essay making skilful use of prescribed and own texts• Demonstrates a well-developed ability to evaluate ways of thinking in the elective through engagement with the given statement• Demonstrates effective control of language to express complex ideas with clarity	16–20
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Demonstrates sound ability to compose an essay making appropriate use of prescribed and own texts• Provides a sound response that attempts to evaluate ways of thinking in the elective through some engagement with the given statement• Demonstrates competent control of language to express some complex ideas	11–15
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Demonstrates limited ability to compose an essay making use of prescribed and own texts• Provides a limited response that describes ways of thinking in the elective through attempts to engage with the given statement• Demonstrates limited control of language to express ideas	6–10
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Demonstrates minimal ability to compose an essay making use of prescribed and own texts• Provides a minimal response that describes ways of thinking in the elective and that may refer to the given statement• Demonstrates minimal control of language to express ideas	1–5



B O A R D O F S T U D I E S
NEW SOUTH WALES

2007 HSC English Extension 1 — Module C Marking Guidelines

Module C: Language and Values

Questions 13, 15 and 17

Outcomes assessed: H1, H2, H3, H4

MARKING GUIDELINES

Criteria	Marks
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Shows sophisticated ability to compose an original story that demonstrates a highly developed understanding of the complex nature of language and features the prized object in an effective mannerDemonstrates with flair and insight the ways in which language shapes and reflects culture and valuesDisplays highly developed control of language to express complex ideas with clarity and originality	21–25
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Shows substantial ability to compose an original story that demonstrates a well-developed understanding of the complex nature of language and features the prized object in an effective mannerDemonstrates with insight the ways in which language shapes and reflects culture and valuesDisplays effective control of language to express complex ideas with clarity	16–20
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Shows sound ability to compose an original story that demonstrates a developed understanding of the complex nature of language and features the prized object in a sound mannerDemonstrates sound understanding of the ways in which language shapes and reflects culture and valuesDisplays competent control of language to express some complex ideas	11–15
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Shows limited ability to compose an original story that demonstrates an understanding of the complex nature of language and features the prized object in a limited mannerDemonstrates limited understanding of the ways in which language shapes and reflects culture and valuesDisplays limited control of language to express ideas	6–10
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Shows minimal ability to compose an original story that demonstrates an understanding of the complex nature of language and may involve some reference to the prized objectDemonstrates minimal understanding of the ways in which language shapes and reflects culture and valuesDisplays minimal control of language to express ideas	1–5

Questions 14, 16 and 18
Outcomes assessed: H1, H2, H3, H4 _____

MARKING GUIDELINES

Criteria	Marks
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates sophisticated ability to compose an essay that makes insightful use of prescribed and own texts • Demonstrates a sophisticated ability to evaluate the relationship between language, culture and values through engagement with the given statement • Demonstrates highly developed control of language to express complex ideas with clarity 	21–25
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates substantial ability to compose an essay making skilful use of prescribed and own texts • Demonstrates a well-developed ability to evaluate the relationship between language, culture and values through engagement with the given statement • Demonstrates effective control of language to express complex ideas with clarity 	16–20
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates sound ability to compose an essay making appropriate use of prescribed and own texts • Provides a sound response that attempts to evaluate the relationship between language, culture and values through some engagement with the given statement • Demonstrates competent control of language to express some complex ideas 	11–15
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates limited ability to compose an essay making use of prescribed and own texts • Provides a limited response that describes the relationship between language, culture and values through attempts to engage with the given statement • Demonstrates limited control of language to express ideas 	6–10
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates minimal ability to compose an essay making use of prescribed and own texts • Provides a minimal response that describes the relationship between language, culture and values and that may refer to the given statement • Demonstrates minimal control of language to express ideas 	1–5