

**2007 HSC Notes from
the Marking Centre
English Extension 2**

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2007 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 2007 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 2500 Major Works were submitted in the English Extension 2 course. More than half the candidature submitted short stories. The next most popular options were critical response (approximately 300), video and poetry. The least popular options were radio drama, performance poetry and multimedia. No students submitted films.

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. Most candidates carefully recorded the development of the work, maintaining drafts of work with their reflections. A small number of candidates submitted journals that were incomplete, brief or unconvincing. 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.

The role of the Reflection Statement

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

The quality of Reflection Statements is improving. However, the quality of the discussion of audience remains variable. 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. This was done particularly well where there was an authentic purpose for the Major Work. 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 report style using subheadings and bullet points.

A continuing concern is lack of editing of the final product, both Major Work and Reflection Statement. Candidates should allow adequate time to thoroughly proofread their work.

Stronger candidates produced sophisticated Reflection Statements that explained the intention, development and realisation of the Major Work and adhered to the word limit. These Reflection Statements were thorough, logical, coherent, engaging and sustained an appropriate register. All components of the Reflection Statement were treated in a sophisticated manner.

In weaker Reflection Statements, candidates explained some aspects of the intention, development and realisation of the Major Work. The components of the Reflection Statements of these candidates were inconsistent in quality or did not reflect their Major Works. In some cases, there was a significant difference between the quality of the Major Work and the Reflection Statement.

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:

- Reflection Statements that were logically organised with a clear explanation of intention, development and realisation of the Major Work
- evidence of extensive research
- originality and inventiveness
- figurative and aesthetic writing with an authentic, engaging and controlled voice
- a form that was manipulated skilfully, providing structural clarity that enhanced coherence.
- intellectually stimulating and thoughtfully developed concepts
- articulate and sophisticated Reflection Statements that demonstrated a depth and breadth of research
- the articulation of a clear relationship between the Major Work and the Advanced and Extension 1 courses.

Weaker Major Works were characterised by:

- an inability to conform to the Major Work specifications
- variable quality of the discussion of audience
- uneven editing of the final product
- a misunderstanding of postmodernism that resulted in stories that were incoherent and consequently ineffective
- a lack of understanding of the importance of engaging the audience
- Reflection Statements that often failed to indicate how research shaped the realisation of the Major Work.

PRINT MEDIUM

Short Story(ies)

General Comments

Successful short stories demonstrated finely tuned control of language to deliberately engage an audience. Candidates explored a wide variety of concepts and their Major Works were well informed by extensive independent investigation. Strong compositions, regardless of their experimentation had an underpinning thread that held the narrative together through its setting, characterisation and use of language.

Candidates who were able to develop an authentic voice augmented by carefully controlled pace successfully engaged their audiences. 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. Consequently there was a cumulative effect in terms of the exploration of the concept.

There were strong and explicit links to the Advanced and Extension courses. This was clearly signposted in the Reflection Statements.

This year candidates explored a wide variety of concepts including:

- cultural and generational conflict and/or understanding
- World War II and the Holocaust
- mythology and allegory
- romance
- abusive relationships
- speculative and dystopian fiction
- mental and psychological issues
- appropriation of canonical texts.

Candidates are reminded that investigation into form is as significant as investigation into concept, although this does appear to be improving. Candidates should read extensively within the short story genre in order to extend their understanding of its possibilities in shaping their own voice. This should be explicitly discussed as part of their independent investigation that many candidates simply take to mean research into a topic: research must be undertaken into concept, form and style.

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

- Strong awareness of audience throughout the work
- Sustained nuances of characterisation to create believable personalities
- Strong evocation of place
- Finely controlled imagery
- Showing as opposed to telling
- Economy of language where the use of strong verbs and nouns eliminates the need for excessive use of qualifiers
- An acute awareness of the involvement of the reader in constructing meaning that showed intellectual maturity
- Where candidates chose to use a variety of text types, these were used with evident purpose in terms of manipulating audience and developing concept
- Concepts explored demonstrated clear personal insight and showed evidence of sophistication
- Major Works were characterised by emotional maturity
- A simple story well told continues to be an attractive and engaging option
- Careful and thoughtful rewriting and editing were evident
- Reflection Statements were logically organised with a clear explanation of intention, development and realisation of the Major Work
- Research was extensive and candidates were able to show how a range of sources, including form and published authors, helped to shape their work
- There was a highly analytical evaluation of the process of composition.

Weaknesses

- Links to other courses made in the Reflection Statement must go beyond simplistic connections with the Area of Study Journeys
- A misunderstanding of postmodernism resulted in stories that were incoherent and consequently ineffective
- Inadequate and inaccurate investigation is evident in inconsistent relationships between Major Works and Reflection Statements
- Investigation needs to be relevant and purposeful
- Unconvincing voice and a reliance on dialogue inhibit engagement
- There was an over reliance on Showcase Major Works as a source of both investigation and inspiration. This resulted in works that were derivative and were limited in the marks they could receive
- A number of candidates who are technically competent find it difficult to vary language according to a particular register.

Recommendations

- Where candidates use personal experience as background for their stories they should realise this does not preclude them from researching form, genre and concepts. Importantly, candidates need to demonstrate emotional maturity in their work. They are creating a work of fiction.
- Candidates need to ensure they can sustain voice across the entire work, regardless of whether they submit one story or a collection. Within parallel narratives it is particularly important to have clearly delineated and sustained voices.
- Candidates should not deviate from the prescribed font styles and sizes. These do not substitute for delineation of voice, character or persona.
- Spelling errors should be edited using English standard rather than an American spell-check.
- Reflection Statements must address investigation into the short story form as well as concepts.
- Language and structural choices should be validated in the Reflection Statement.

‘A’ range

‘A’ range short stories addressed all the requirements for the Reflection Statement (*English Stage 6 Syllabus*, p 131). They commented on the independent research undertaken, explaining in a thorough, sophisticated way how research shaped the Major Work. They also explained and evaluated the ways in which considerations of purpose and audience led to decisions regarding the process of development. A skilful integration of links to Stage 6 English courses was a feature of ‘A’ range works.

‘B’ range

‘B’ range short stories were also clearly an extension of the knowledge, understanding and skills of the Advanced and Extension courses. While they may have lacked the flair and sophistication evident in the ‘A’ range short stories they were nonetheless coherent and sustained. Investigation, although skilfully integrated, did not have the imaginative synthesis of concept, perspective and form of the ‘A’ range. Control of form was skilful in crafting and constructing the stories. Reflection Statements commented on links between the investigation and the Major Work.

‘C’ range

‘C’ range short stories were an extension of the knowledge, understanding and skills of the Advanced and Extension courses. Claims made regarding this extension were at times undeveloped and largely reliant on ‘Journey’ and ‘Representations of Truth’. These Major Works were substantial and coherent, but investigation was not fully integrated. In the ‘C’ range, stories were sometimes unable to sustain a high level of interest. These stories may have been inconsistent in their development of character and tone. In particular, use of dialogue was flat and character development was limited. Editing in ‘C’ range short stories was sometimes careless. The Reflection Statement tended to explain the intention and development of the project rather than critically comment on the impact of investigation on these areas. This was particularly evident in relation to investigation into form.

‘D’ range

‘D’ range short stories were an extension of some of the knowledge, understanding and skills of the Advanced and Extension courses. They were literal and at times simplistic in their exploration of concept. These stories were characterised by a failure to sustain integration of concept and form. These projects were often derivative and consequently candidates were unable to demonstrate originality. Editing in the ‘D’ range was sometimes careless or non-existent. The Reflection Statement did not address all the requirements and explained the intention in a superficial manner.

‘E’ range

‘E’ range short stories were superficial, lacking in substance or incomplete. Simplistic concepts were the basis for these Major Works. Additionally, limited investigation was evident with inconsistencies within the work. The work therefore lacked focus and connections between aspects of the work. ‘E’ range responses demonstrated poor control of textual features, editing and language. The Reflection Statement showed inconsistencies between intention and realisation of the final product.

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) was a popular choice of concept. Most candidates submitted a suite of poems linked by a philosophical position, theme, issue or idea.

Comments on style and form

A few 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. Narrative verse/verse novel/verse novella featured this year. A common quality of this form of poetry was that the development of plot, character or idea seemed to take precedence over style, to the detriment of the overall effect. Suites of poetry that featured pictures, photographs, artworks, graphics and/or drawings were frequent. While better works had 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 epigrams, structural or framing devices. While they may be integral to the 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 need to be able to justify that choice.

Recommendations

- Candidates who attempted to imitate older styles and forms of poetry, for instance writing in the style of the Romantics or epic poetry, need to consider contemporary sensibilities when appropriating the form or justify their choice when employing archaic language and stylistic features and forms.
- 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. Investigation into free verse was again poor in many instances.
- Candidates should edit the entire collections carefully and be prepared to delete weaker poems from their suites. Varying font type and size 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.

Strengths

- There were some original, powerful, inventive and thoroughly engaging works. Strengths included conscious, well-informed and purposeful uses of imagery, rhythm, sound devices, form and structure.
- 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 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 had informed the work and showing how 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. Some candidates seemed to have chosen poetry thinking it was an ‘easy’ option.
- Some works, while quite intellectual in subject matter (supported by extensive investigation into quite philosophical ideas), 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 discussed 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.
- Identification of audience is generally problematic, but candidates who elected to compose children’s verse were often left in a position where they were unable to satisfy the marking guidelines pertaining to complex and/or subtle insights and concepts, communicated and developed with flair.
- 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/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 Writer’s Showcase* is a useful guide for candidates, 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. Some works employed ‘auras’ or colours in a simplistic way as a substitute for effective imagery. 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 within 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 often took risks 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. This was evident, with variable consistency, application and integration
- 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 risk-taking – 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 didactic
- unfocused use of techniques such as enjambment – 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 which 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 class.

'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 limericks, acrostics and shape poems seen as 'experimental' or changing fonts seen as 'techniques'
- 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 2007 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
- the examination of relationships and 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 how an awareness of a specified audience has shaped their writing and 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 intertextuality
- 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 that 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’. Others would have been more suited to History or HSIE.
- Over-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
- Mismatch of investigation concept and chosen text
- Confused structure
- Over-use of footnotes
- Description rather than analysis
- Reference to literary theory without real understanding of the theory or its terminology
- Failure to observe the word count requirements
- In the Reflection Statement weaker texts often failed to indicate how research shaped the realisation of the Major Work.

Popular issues, texts, themes and approaches in 2007 critical responses

- Comparison of canonical and non-canonical texts
- Indian and Asian texts, including Bollywood and Anime
- The language of politics
- The media
- Critical theorists: Foucault, Baudrillard, Barthes and Said
- The Harry Potter phenomenon
- 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 that 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 consistent shaping of a thesis or in providing full textual support. These Major Works were supported by extensive investigation, but some aspects of the investigation were more thorough than others. ‘B’ range responses were well expressed and fluent. They were well structured but at times transitions were not seamless. Critical terms were used appropriately but not always confidently.

Not all Reflection Statements addressed all requirements.

‘C’ range

‘C’ range critical responses were sometimes original in the intention of the investigation, the choice of texts and the proposed method of investigation, but lacked the rigour of ‘B’ range responses. They either attempted an ambitious analytical, evaluative approach that often faltered or had a thesis that had already been investigated and debated. They were often descriptive rather than analytical. There was little evidence of monitoring the progress of the investigation. Language could be sophisticated and fluent, but sometimes style masked paucity of ideas. Some footnotes were intrusive.

Most requirements for the Reflection Statement were addressed but they were not fully developed. Independent investigation was cited but it was not clear how this was evident in the Major Work. When audience was identified it was usually done simplistically, with no indication of how the Major Work might have been shaped by an awareness of this audience. Connections to the other English courses were generally tokenistic.

‘D’ range

‘D’ range critical responses may have been extensions of the other Stage 6 English courses in subject matter and their proposed method of investigation but they failed to do justice to their intent. They promised analysis and evaluation of paradigms, issues and texts but were unable to achieve what they proposed. Too many were purely descriptive, lacking evidence of insight in the investigation. Some lacked balance in the treatment of texts. Others overlooked important aspects of the investigation. Footnotes were frequently 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 shaping 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 of a complete work for an ‘intended performance time of 20–30 minutes’ (*English Stage 6 Syllabus*, p 133). Most candidates complied with the script conventions appropriate to the particular form chosen. Candidates need to ensure they investigate the conventions for formatting. A drama script should take into account the

distance between the audience and the performers and avoid confusing the language of film with dramatic conventions.

Some scripts were too long or contained too many characters, or attempted to include too broad a range of ideas, thus demonstrating limited research into the ‘nature’ of short film (as opposed to feature film) or short plays (as opposed to full-length dramas). The stated performance time must be honoured. Understanding the purpose of a scripted piece is important, ie it will be used by actors in a rehearsed performance.

Extensive research into the short forms of script is an essential part of the investigation and script development process. In particular, candidates should not rely solely on their experiences and investigations in the HSC Drama course, rather strengthening their evidence of independent investigation through broader and deeper reading, research and reasoning. Extensive independent investigation should be undertaken into concept(s), relevant medium (theatre script, film script, etc) and dramatic style (absurdism, naturalism, etc). This should be clearly evident in the Reflection Statement.

Candidates engaged with a diverse variety of styles. Many candidates produced scripts satirising aspects of contemporary life. Appropriation of both literary texts (including canonical texts) and such forms as television shows were popular. Contemporary concerns, such as refugees and cultural clash were also popular. While experimentation is to be encouraged, candidates should be aware that postmodern or absurd scripts must be carefully constructed to ensure the intention is clear. Dramas, which rely on archetypal characters must ensure that they are not overly didactic as this detracts from the dramatic impact.

Once again, there were many lengthy scripts (some up to twice as long as the required time). This made it difficult to perform well against the marking criteria when candidates demonstrated an inability to meet this basic course requirement. The ability to sustain their script was often compromised through this choice.

Dialogue, an inherently important feature of this format, must be shaped and manipulated in an effective and sophisticated manner. There is a tendency in some candidates’ responses for dialogue to be too long and confused. ‘Americanised’ dialogue often sounds inauthentic, especially when spoken by specifically Australian characters. The more engaging film and television scripts were able to integrate visual images with well-edited dialogue. Similarly, the more engaging drama scripts integrated appropriate stage directions. Candidates completing radio scripts should be aware of the auditory cues required to engage the responder.

Many stage scripts incorporated video back projections. While these may be effectively integrated into the scripts they should not dominate. Candidates should not rely on describing the content of back projections rather than using the stage and script effectively. Similarly, although montage is a very effective technique in film scripts, it should not be the main technique for driving the plot.

While many candidates wrote insightful and critical Reflection Statements that fulfilled the marking criteria, others were not specific enough in their identification of audience or in explaining the links between independent investigation and the realisation of the finished product. The intention of the work should be well justified.

Some candidates provided additional material (such as audio material, bibliographies, annotated bibliographies, extensive prefaces, epigraphs) as part of the script. In many instances a bibliography was included but this is not within the specifications. All information which markers read must be in the Reflection Statement. The correct place for all other material is in the journal. Candidates are reminded of the importance of the journal and that substantial independent investigation is required in this course.

Candidates should note that if they choose to utilise theorists and theories, they need to be represented with clarity and insight. Many candidates attempted to represent philosophical ideas and concepts without explicitly conveying their relevance or applying this investigation to the theatrical demands of the medium.

‘A’ range

Scripts in this range were highly original and sustained, demonstrating textual integrity. Visuals, dialogue, sound, camera angles and/or stage directions were expertly integrated throughout the script, creating highly visual and engaging Major Works. The level of technical proficiency in film scripts was outstanding, particularly when constructing the *mise-en-scène*, dialogue and shot composition. Other sophisticated methods of manipulating techniques included being able to use the rhythms and cadences of speech effectively to create elements such as mood, tension and characterisation. These elements were thoroughly supported by the Reflection Statement. The ‘A’ range scripts demonstrated a superior understanding of the script form, both as it reads on the page and as it is intended on stage, radio or screen.

Candidates in the ‘A’ range had a clear sense of the importance of extensive investigation into both the concept and particular script form. This investigation was broad and deep, and was clearly evident in the work via authenticity of setting, voice, tone, and other contextual elements, as well as being documented and analysed in the Reflection Statement. Insights and concepts were developed in the Major Works through careful composition and fluent integration (conscious shaping) of script elements such as tension, conflict, characterisation, plot development, sound, lighting, visual design, camera angles and shot composition, where appropriate. These elements were highly appropriate in relation to purpose, audience and medium.

Reflection Statements presented a sophisticated, critical and analytical evaluation of the process and the Major Work. The extensive investigation of the medium and the concepts was clearly articulated, as were the purpose and audience. 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 with clarity. The scripts were shaped by an understanding of purpose, audience and medium. Structure, characterisation, development of conflict, staging, setting and editing, as appropriate to form, were used effectively with some minor lapses. These minor lapses may be such things as sustaining the authenticity of the chosen idiom. Script conventions were appropriate to the style. Interesting concepts were typically supported by effective and clear vocabulary and language choices.

Reflection Statements showed a critical understanding of process and explained the intention, development and realisation of the work. Candidates demonstrated thorough research of the concept but often presented a weaker investigation 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, and ideas were not well developed. Often investigation into concepts was limited, sometimes to personal experience without broader investigation against which to compare, contrast or elaborate on personal experiences. For the most part, candidates demonstrated effective use of language and conventions of the form (drama, radio or film). There were some lapses in some of these elements, indicating limited investigation

into the particular script form. In particular, candidates were often unable to sustain their *mise-en-scène* or stage directions. Also, stereotyped characters and clichéd situations demonstrated organisation, but not development of insights or concepts. Candidates in this range often used their characters as a vehicle for expounding a particular philosophical or moral position in a forced and unconvincing manner. Audience engagement was evident in most parts of the script.

Reflection Statements in ‘C’ range Major Works addressed most required areas but without thorough critical reflection or explanation of how aspects of investigation were realised in the script. At times, aspects of the works in this range were derivative, presenting as substantial but were not original and were not acknowledged in the Reflection Statement.

‘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 theatricality (in stage plays) and unclear *mise-en-scène* in film or television scripts. Radio scripts were often characterised by poor delineation of characters and an absence of engaging sound effects. The focus of the script was often unclear or not sustained. Insights and ideas were often predictable. Candidates demonstrated some effective control of language, skills and conventions 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. There were often inconsistencies between the Reflection Statement and the work, usually in the form of the work failing to meet with the intent outlined in the Reflection Statement. Reflection Statements were often descriptive or simple recounts of the process.

‘E’ range

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

Reflection Statements identified some aspects of the script. 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 critically analysing the work. Some candidates presented derivative scripts or mirrored familiar characters or plotlines without retaining any originality, acknowledging their source(s) or offering explanation for this in their Reflection Statement.

SOUND MEDIUM

Speeches

General Comments

Overall, speeches were engaging and competently delivered. The best responses were lyrical, deeply intellectual and demonstrated astute understanding of their concepts, audience(s) and the subtleties of the form.

There were very few single speeches, candidates preferring to submit a series of 2–4 speeches. Delivering a series of speeches allowed candidates to present a range of perspectives, contexts,

theories and personas and thus demonstrate extensive independent investigation successfully. In the best responses, this approach facilitated a combination of analytical, interpretive and imaginative speeches. Speeches were carefully structured progressively developing ideas presented in the first speech. Thoughtful structuring of the series of speeches meant the works were generally coherent and integrated.

Candidates should note that ‘the audience for the speech(es) must be specified’. Candidates should not assume that the audience(s) for their work is self-evident. Speeches that carefully and clearly set out their context(s) at the beginning of their speech or separate speeches were more engaging, showing conscious and successful shaping of the form. Better speech(es) used language authentic to the context of the Major Work, distinctive voices and varying perspectives. Changing one’s delivery style, accent or gender is not considered sufficient for this purpose.

Use of technology to manipulate voices, especially gender, is to be documented in the Reflection Statement. This includes use of specific recording equipment, programs or professional recording studios. Decisions for technological choices should be explained. The use of technology should not be at the expense of clarity, coherence and subtlety.

Candidates should note that they are to be the ‘principal performer, sole writer and sole director/producer’. Whenever additional readers are used, the decision-making and reasoning must be documented in the Reflection Statement. Use of other speakers must be kept to a minimum.

Concepts explored in the Major Works in 2007 were broad ranging, with a clear preference for global issues such as HIV/AIDS, poverty, religious tolerance, peace, terrorism and democracy. Sometimes the links with the Advanced and Extension courses in these works were tenuous. Better responses included imaginative and interpretive components. Speeches that were wholly analytical or informative were sometimes tedious or limited. Some concepts presented as speech(es) would have been better realised as multimedia or video/DVD works so as to include visual components and large amounts of information in an easy-to-view format.

The time limits of 15–20 minutes should be strictly adhered to. Candidates should edit their work carefully, using time more purposefully and judiciously.

Strengths

- Demonstrated effective research into the form with a clear development of the concept(s)
- Used vocal manipulation varying modulation, pace, pause and expression
- Created and experimented with different personas
- Developed rapport with the audience, balancing evidence of research with ability to engage
- Presented sustained, clear and cohesive theses
- Exuded a sense of passion, commitment and interest in chosen concepts
- Had congruent and critically composed Reflection Statements.

Weaknesses

- Went overtime
- Included speeches that could have been more tightly edited
- Did not show sufficient evidence of research into concept
- Did not show sufficient evidence of research into form (over reliance on prescribed texts in the Advanced course, heavy reliance on Martin Luther King as a model text)
- Were swept away by their own rhetoric, providing little content, asserting rather than proving. Conversely, some speeches were so full of content that they did not engage the audience(s)

- Were derivative, or superficial, only tenuously linked to the English syllabus, used monotonous voices, were unrehearsed in recording and repeated ideas rather than developing them. Candidates should allow ample rehearsal and performance time before submission of their work
- Some weak responses chose to vary the form and use radio-based texts as the foundation for all or part of their works which limited their ability to demonstrate control of the speech form.

‘A’ range

‘A’ range responses underpinned their speech(es) with concepts that were thoughtfully supported by intellectually rigorous investigation. They engaged with analytical, interpretive and imaginative aspects of the concepts in their speech(es). By creating personas and characters they offered highly original, refreshing and inventive insights. Candidates were highly successful in engaging and sustaining audience interest. The works had clearly defined audiences and the language of the speech(es) was authentic and appropriate to the audiences. Investigation into chosen audiences was apparent in the best responses. The Reflection Statements were sophisticated and critical. They were highly self-referential and showed a significant understanding of the chosen concepts and the theories or paradigms of thinking underlying their work. They articulated the relationship between the concept and the study of Advanced and/or Extension 1 English adeptly and were able to explain the process of composition in detail.

‘B’ range

Speeches in this range were original and sustained, but less well integrated in terms of form, values and meaning, demonstrating skill rather than sophisticated execution and expertise. They were less artistic or lyrical than ‘A’ range scripts.

Candidates effectively manipulated the various elements of speech to shape meaning and engage audiences. Major Works in this range were well investigated but investigation was restricted to the analytical or interpretive. Insights were thoughtful and complex based on sound research into concepts and forms. Using a range of perspectives on a concept, ‘B’ range responses showed a depth of understanding and some inventiveness in the form.

‘B’ range scripts showed evidence of thorough investigation and developed concepts with complexity. However, this complexity was not always sustained across the speech or speeches. While speeches in this range showed evidence of conscious shaping of meaning, there was a less consistent focus on audience and/or context. Rhetorical devices were used purposefully and skilfully but there was a more limited range.

Major Works in the ‘B’ range were not sufficiently tightly edited, and candidates should be made aware that they do not need to use the whole 20 minutes. The candidates’ Reflection Statements clearly represented the scope of the independent investigation and the relationship the work had to the candidates’ study of Advanced and/or Extension 1 English. However, there was less evidence of evaluation and conscious shaping of meaning to communicate developed ideas.

‘C’ range

Speeches in this range were substantial but sometimes more problematic in terms of establishing genuine contexts. As a result, there were lapses in tone, voice, register and pace, and that impacted negatively on the integration of meaning, value and form. In this range, candidates tended to be less conscious of how values are explored in texts and the manipulation of techniques to achieve this representation was uneven. ‘C’ range speeches were coherent and substantial. They tended to be factually based or information driven. This limited their ability to present a range of perspectives or to create an imaginative component or focus. Works tended to be descriptive and did not readily

engage with values, theory or analysis. Weaker ‘C’ scripts were didactic and assertive rather than being well developed.

Manipulation of voice was uneven, although there was a conscious shaping of meaning throughout the works. Speeches needed to reflect more enthusiasm about the subject matter or show choice of more inventive and varied personas so as to engage the listener more fully. Works were generally well structured with some progression of ideas across the speech(es). Reflection Statements in this range covered most of the elements of development, realisation and intention of the Major Work. They communicated relatively effectively the impact that the independent investigation had on the realisation of the work as a whole. These Reflection Statements articulated to some extent the relationship between the student’s study of Advanced and/or Extension 1 and the Major Work but this needed to be more explicit. Candidates were less able to articulate investigation into form beyond a small repeated group of model speeches.

‘D’ range

Speeches in this range were not substantial and made only some connections between meaning, values and forms. These speeches demonstrated limited investigation into form resulting in works indicating misunderstanding of the limitations, characteristics and conventions of speech. ‘D’ range speeches tended to be simply personal, derivative or underdeveloped. The exploration into concept tended to be simply an assertion about an idea or issue rather than a genuine and thoughtful development. Sometimes the ideas and issues explored in these Major Works were better suited to another form, particularly multimedia or DVD. ‘D’ range speeches usually showed very tenuous links to Advanced and/or English Extension 1.

There was limited deliberate engagement of audience through the manipulation of structural elements or other techniques such as variation of voice, use of motif, sound effects and so on. There was misuse or overuse of rhetorical devices, particularly triads, repetition and rhetorical devices. There was no evidence of subtlety in delivery of the speech(es). Major Works in this range sometimes did not recognise and purposefully engage the audience, including the examiner, in order to realise their purpose and manipulate response. Reflection Statements in this range were descriptive and at times superficial. There was limited evidence of extensive independent investigation in both the work itself and the Reflection Statement. Investigation into both form and concept, and consideration of how this shaped the work as a whole, was underdeveloped.

‘E’ range

These speeches were characterised by lack of preparation, simplistic delivery and lack of research. They were padded rather than developed. Reflection Statements were very simplistic and limited. There was only superficial research into concepts and little into form.

Radio Drama

General Comments

Candidates compose a 10–15 minute complete radio drama presented on tape or CD. In 2007, 16 candidates presented a radio drama for their Major Work. Candidates presented works in a variety of ways and most of the works were competently completed. All candidates submitted works on CD. The quality of production was generally strong. The integration of music and sound effects was often seamless. Layering of sound and music was well done. Stronger Major Works validated their choices of special effects and/or music in their Reflection Statements. Candidates need to be reminded that investigation into the form, radio drama, is needed to develop the work.

Concepts explored included satire, ways of reading texts, 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
- Good use of 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 was 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 was 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 that was explained in the Reflection Statement.
- Intellectually engaging and emotionally evocative.

'B' range

- Well-developed pieces with a sincere and explicit research base
- Investigation was less wide ranging
- Point of view was 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 were defined but their voices at times were not well delineated
- Stereotypes and clichés were used
- Allegorical stories became didactic
- Contexts of radio dramas were 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 was 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 were not justified in Reflection Statements
- Works did not display originality. Works were literal and concrete in matter, form and concept
- Works tended to be very didactic and therefore less engaging
- Attempts at humour often degenerated into confusion and silliness
- Some works were unintentionally melodramatic
- Transition between scenes difficult to detect
- Inappropriate and confusing sound effects. Overuse of echo effect
- Reflection Statements were 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
- Not enough time was allowed for the recording and editing of work, hence the work lacked polish
- Limited research into the medium was 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 were static
- Print scripts were quite bare (lacking character lists, instructions to actors, etc) and were sometimes discrepant with the aural text.

'E' range

There were no 'E' range scripts in 2007.

Performance Poetry

General Comments

Despite a small candidature, candidates completing projects in 2007 displayed a wide range of skill and ability. Candidates must be aware that what reads well on the page does not always translate effectively to performance.

There was a diverse range of concepts dealt with this year such as globalisation, capitalism and consumerism, along with staples such as the nature of self, conformity and individuality. Most projects were concept-driven and these tended to work well except when ideas weren't developed and the student relied on repetition or strident delivery to make a point.

While most candidates have grasped the importance of voice manipulation in performance poetry, weaker projects presented poetry that 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.

Strengths

- An inventiveness in terms of the research into the form(s) of performance poetry. Modern trends (as listed below) were thoroughly engaged with, as were older more established performance styles such as beat poetry
- The influence of cultural trends such as lo-fi, free-style and slamming was evident in many projects and generally worked well. The benefit of models is not to be underestimated. Some candidates presented their projects as complete performances, using the technology at their disposal 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 compensate for its absence
- 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
- A high level of awareness of the conceptual framework of performance was noticeable
- The skilful use of lyrical imagery in this aural medium was demonstrated
- Articulate and sophisticated Reflection Statements that demonstrated a depth and breadth of research into the form of performance poetry and the candidates' chosen subject matter was always a feature of the stronger performances. Thorough and detailed investigation into form and concept (along with a heightened sense of self-referentiality) is essential for a Reflection Statement to be both sophisticated and critical.

Weaknesses

- Many candidates 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, overdramatisation – 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 did not significantly add to the quality of the work
- A choice of clichéd or unsophisticated subject matter was evident

- Limited investigation into the form was demonstrated. Candidates 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 that underpinned the intelligent and perceptive interpretation of their concept, which dealt with a range of concepts and insights, particularly the nature of literature.
- There was an outstanding use of voice apparent in the higher range scripts. The ability to utilise and manipulate voice was a key discriminating factor in this range. Incorporating external elements such as music, sound effects did so purposefully and with balance, fluency and intelligent integration. The poetry itself was of a high standard, demonstrating skill, perceptive insight and control.
- There was a deep and substantive understanding of the forms and features of performance and poetry, as well as an integrated and extensive research base.

'B' range

- 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 in perception and flair. The communication of these concepts showed some complexity, subtlety and refinement through a sound engagement with the extensive research.
- The performative aspects of the work may have been very strong, while the poetry itself may not have delivered. There was a strong engagement in the medium of production, demonstrating technical proficiency and a clear sense of audience and purpose. Often Major Works in this category were experimental in their use of voice, pace, rhythm and poetry.
- Reflection Statements demonstrated intelligent and extensive research. 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 is a lapse in tone, register and voice.
- Concepts such as teen angst and world peace, while not inherently poor choices, must be clearly and extensively developed through substantial research and a fresh or novel interpretation that is engaging. Major Works in this range were well organised but were not sophisticated enough to develop the idea/concept.
- There was certainly some ability shown to control the form in this range. However, candidates seemed to rely on technical aspects to improve their work, often with annoying or clumsy results. All too often they relied on only one or two effects over the duration of the work, and as a result the work became repetitive and lacked consistent audience engagement. There was a lack of variety in the use of voice.
- Reflection Statements relied on explaining the conceptual and philosophical underpinnings of the work, rarely seeking to critically examine the performance of their poetry. There was often a reliance on listing and/or explaining the issues surrounding choice of hardware and software.

'D' range

- The Major Work made some connections between meaning, value and form.
- The ideas that were communicated were predictable, relying on clichéd and unoriginal insights. There was an all too evident lack of research into the form, and the focus then 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. Poetry must be delivered with a sense of the medium and use 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 inconsistency between the project and the Reflection Statement, as well as the realisation of their aims.

'E' range

- There were very few candidates in this category.
- The defining feature of performance poetry in the 'E' range was the superficiality of the Major Work. The lack of focus, as well as an inability to control the form, was characteristic of performance poetry in this range.
- There was often an attempt to control language and a desire to manipulate the poetic form. However, candidates must be aware that they should operate within the flexible boundaries of this genre in at least some capacity or another.
- 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

There were 148 DVDs submitted for marking in 2007. DVD format is preferable to the VHS format, in terms of handling. A small number of the 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 strongly recommended that teachers at school view the films before the submission date when they have to certify them.

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 film-maker can manipulate the expectations and/or reactions of responders by the use of eclectic cinematic devices/techniques/conventions. These could include music, framing, 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/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, by their own admission, 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 influences for their work. Some candidates were very inventive with their form and addressed this in terms of visual literacy.

A substantial number of candidates failed to include their final script along with their Reflection Statement. In all cases, the journal was consulted in an attempt to find a shooting script and to trace the development of the Major Work.

The absence of a storyboard, particularly in the journal, does indicate a lack of methodical application in the production phase of the project, and in some cases it might signal a problem as far as the authentication of the project is concerned.

A significant discrepancy between the finished film and the script is one of the main reasons senior markers access the journal and systematically appraise its contents to trace the development of the work.

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

Another area that must be considered by candidates is the role acting plays in the finished product. 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 during 2007. 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 were ones whose focus was singular. Since candidates only have 6–8 minutes, trying to explore large philosophical concepts/issues is not feasible given the parameters of the medium.

It is important for candidates to identify a relevant audience and to show how the project was reshaped/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 and a musical.

- 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 was not originated by 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 add 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 which lessens the original impact. For example, 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.
- A small number of videos did not involve any 'moving pictures' at all and in most cases would have scored better had they been submitted as multimedia projects.
- 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. They demonstrated in a precise and sophisticated manner the relationship between their study of Advanced and Extension 1 English and their Major Work.

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 their chosen audience.

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 film-making. 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 'the contemporary global phenomenon of isolation and alienation'. 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. In fact, the 'over wordiness' of the 'B' range works, which was not used intentionally to shape meaning, is what kept them out of the 'A' range.

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 expects a certain amount of usage of historical archival footage but this must be manipulated to an extent 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. These Major Works did display some connection between meaning, values and form. However, at least one of these elements was extremely problematic.

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 fulfil 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 on the whole not developed coherently, were incomplete, or only showed a demonstrated ability to carry out one aspect of video/film-making (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.

Films

No candidates presented a film as their Major Work in the 2007 English Extension 2 Higher School Certificate.

Multimedia

General Comments

There were 23 multimedia works presented in 2007. A number of concepts were explored, some with a literary base and some imbued with imaginative compositions. Investigation into the concepts represented in the Major Works often lacked depth and rigour. While investigation into form has improved from 2006 it was rarely extensive. Specific reference to aspects of the visual language and structure of the multimedia texts was strong but candidates failed to explain other language choices of their texts.

There continues to be some difficulty in accessing the works. Some works required internet access to accompany the material despite syllabus requirements that all of the work must be included on the disk. Reflection Statements were rarely self-referential or self-reflexive.

Strengths

- Control of the media was effective in combining sound, movement, images and written text, and was appropriate to purpose.
- Design elements were manipulated effectively, were well linked to subject matter and were discussed clearly in Reflection Statements.
- Thorough and detailed hard copy logic maps accompanied the work.
- Candidates effectively demonstrated the work as an extension of Stage 6 English.
- Video clips were well integrated.

Weaknesses

- A lack of independent investigation informed the subject matter. Sometimes the Major Works seemed to be a default position of composition rather than active choices made by candidates.
- There was a lack of interactivity and sound in some of the works. Some works were difficult to access and some were difficult to navigate.
- Simple links back to the home page were often missing.
- In some cases, elements of the work required internet access. Candidates are reminded that the entire work must be included on disk.
- Failure to include a hard copy logic map.

'A' range

These works were sophisticated, highly original multimedia works, which synthesised a range of perspectives, ideas or concepts fluently. There was some playful hybridity in the manipulation of the form. There were clear links between the design elements of the works and the intellectual material. Reflection Statements dealt with all aspects of the work and demonstrated the impact of significant investigative finds upon the works themselves. They used language in a sophisticated and critical manner. Links to Stage 6 often went beyond simple links to texts and dealt with conceptual issues or paradigms of thinking. The multimedia forms were actively and thoughtfully chosen to suit the conceptual bases of the works and the specified audiences.

'B' range

In this range Major Works were focused and substantial and showed skilful control of the medium. 'B' range works showed depth by layering the conceptual bases of their subject matter and/or by experimenting with the form itself. Works were thus original and thoughtfully prepared. There was a deliberate and conscious shaping of the features of the medium. These Major Works did not use the full range of attributes of the form, which led to works that were relatively static or the concepts of the works were not thoroughly investigated. The Reflection Statements critically treated the form, intention and development of the work. More specificity of the impact of investigation and more attention to the process of composition are required.

'C' range

Major Works were generally substantial and coherent. They presented a number of viewpoints on a topic or concept but the voices were not always distinctive. Expression in the print sections of the multimedia works was clear but not critical, descriptive rather than analytical. Stronger use of examples and support material would have strengthened the works. Reflection Statements explained the intent, development and realisation of the Major Work but lacked critical evaluation or self-reflexivity of the process. Links to Stage 6 were clearly explained.

'D' range

Major Works in the 'D' range lacked any real conceptual bases or were based on simplistic or unoriginal ideas. Works demonstrated little evidence of investigation into the material presented, often relying on a small number of websites to access data. Candidates are reminded that the course requires rigorous and extensive investigation. Multimedia works in this range did not make adequate use of the form, were not interactive, were difficult to open and used small font and/or overly long slabs of print text. Reflection Statements were descriptive and simplistic, did not address the process of composition and were not able to explain the impact of investigation on the Major Work itself. Links to Stage 6 courses were based simply on textual links or to the theme of journey without any substance or analysis of the texts or ideas.

'E' range

Few works were found in this range and they were incomplete and superficial. They provided limited exploration of concepts and form. Reflection Statements were short and explained some aspects of the Major Work but were inconsistent with the multimedia composition.