

**2004 HSC Notes from
the Marking Centre
English Extension 2**

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2004 HSC NOTES FROM THE MARKING CENTRE ENGLISH EXTENSION 2

INTRODUCTION

These notes have been developed to provide teachers and students of the English Extension 2 Stage 6 course with comments regarding the Major Works for the 2004 Higher School Certificate. These comments will indicate the number of candidates and the quality of the candidates' Major Works as well as highlighting the strengths and weaknesses of the candidature.

These notes will need to be read in conjunction with the *English Stage 6 Syllabus* and the 2004 HSC English Extension 2 marking guidelines. Reference should also be made to the 2002 English Extension 2 Standards package and the English Extension 2 *Young Writers Showcase* books and CD-ROMs for the years 2001, 2002 and 2003.

The marking guidelines follow the report from the Marking Centre.

General Comments

The total number of candidates in the English Extension 2 course for 2004 was 2,479. The following breakdown across options demonstrates candidate preference for the type of Major Work.

| Option | Candidate Numbers |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Critical Response | 345 |
| Film | 0 |
| Multimedia | 39 |
| Poems | 172 |
| Performance Poetry | 21 |
| Radio Drama | 15 |
| Speeches | 82 |
| Scripts – Radio, Film, TV, Drama | 170 |
| Short Story/ies | 1,452 |
| Video | 171 |

Markers found that the 2004 English Extension 2 Major Works were engaging, with the majority of candidates submitting Major Works that were thoughtful, refined and sophisticated. Candidates used a range of styles across the types of Major Works. In most cases, candidates demonstrated clear evidence of research and investigation of the concept(s) and the Major Work form selected.

Identification of the parts of the project

In 2004, most candidates clearly labelled the discrete parts of their Major Work as the Major Work, the Reflection Statement and the journal. There were a few instances where candidates did not clearly identify their Reflection Statements and pasted the statement amongst other material in their journal. Candidates are reminded that it is in their interest to clearly identify the parts of their Major Work.

Word limits and time restrictions

Each Major Work form has either a specified word limit or a time restriction outlined in the syllabus and the marking guidelines document. An inability to work within these limits demonstrated that candidates experienced challenges in achieving textual integrity and effective manipulation of the conventions and the medium. The word limits and time restrictions are articulated in the syllabus and should not be dismissed by candidates.

The role of the Major Work journal

The journal is submitted with the Major Work. Journals are not marked. The investigative process and the process of composition are documented within the journal. Candidates who carefully recorded the development of their work, maintaining drafts of work with their reflections were able to compose a sophisticated Reflection Statement. The journal provides candidates with documentation of their reflections across all stages of the development of the Major Work.

Students and schools are reminded that the journal also verifies the authenticity of the Major Work. If doubts concerning authenticity are raised, the candidate's journal is examined. Research, draft compositions and reflections should be maintained in the journal.

Candidates should take care not to record their name, the name of their school or their teacher's name in journal entries.

The role of the Reflection Statement

The *English Stage 6 Syllabus* p 129 indicates that students are to submit a Reflection Statement that explains and evaluates both the process and the completed product.

The *English Stage 6 Syllabus* p 131 specifies the requirements for the Reflection Statement. The Reflection Statement:

- summarises the intent of the work and its relationship with the extensive investigation
- must include an outline of the intended audience for the Major Work and the purpose for which it was composed
- supports the Major Work explaining the relationships of concept, structure, technical and language features and conventions
- should explain the development of concepts during the process of composition making the links clear between independent investigation and the development of the finished product
- should indicate how the student realised the concepts in the final product.

Better candidates produced sophisticated Reflection Statements adhering to the word limit. These Reflection Statements were fluent, well edited, logically organised, coherent, engaging and sustained an appropriate register throughout. They addressed all aspects of the Reflection Statement.

Weaker candidates addressed some aspects of the requirements that were outlined in the syllabus and the sample marking guidelines. These Reflection Statements were characterised by a lack of consistency or did not reflect their Major Work.

Links with the English (Advanced) and English Extension I Courses

The Major Work is an extension of the knowledge, understanding and skills developed in the English (Advanced) and Extension I courses (*English Stage 6 Syllabus* p 92). Most candidates were able to demonstrate that their Major Work and Reflection Statement were an extension of their other English courses. Candidates who presented works similar to their English Advanced and English Extension 1 courses experienced difficulties in demonstrating how their work was an extension of those courses.

Markers noted the following strengths of the Major Works presented by candidates:

- The Major Work was an extension of the knowledge, understanding and skills developed in the English (Advanced) and Extension I courses.
- The Major Work was substantial and met requirements in a sophisticated manner.
- The shaping of meaning to engage the audience was effective and deliberate.
- The audience and purpose were discernible in both the Major Work and the Reflection Statement.
- Concept/s were investigated in a purposeful and sophisticated manner.
- Insights concerning the concept(s) were developed through the Major Work.
- Techniques were effective, evocative and purposeful.
- Candidates were experimental in their approach while maintaining the discipline of the chosen form.
- Choices about language, forms, features and structure were deliberate and were informed through research and understanding. These choices were appropriate to the intended audience and the medium.
- Clarity was maintained while experimenting with complexity.
- The Major Works were imaginative, investigative, interpretive, analytical or any combination of these.
- Reflection Statements outlined the intention of the Major Work and its relationship to the independent investigation and the intended audience; explained the relationships of concept, structure, technical skills, language features and conventions; explained the development of the concept/s and indicated how the candidate realised the concept/s in the final product.

Markers noted the following weaknesses of some of the candidates' Major Works:

- Work did not extend beyond the English Advanced and English Extension 1 courses.
- Interesting concept/s or style/s were identified but not explored.
- Purpose and/or audience were confused.
- The works were superficial, erratic or unfinished.
- There was little evidence of editing of the Major Work.
- The works struggled to demonstrate an understanding and appreciation of the medium and the techniques used.
- The Reflection Statement did not explain and critically reflect upon the nature of the work, the relationship between the form and the concept, and the processes of investigation.

THE MAJOR WORK – PRINT MEDIUM

Short Story(ies)

General comments

The better short stories were characterised by concepts and ideas which were well developed and coherently expressed. These stories often employed experimental features, both in structure and language. There was evidence of careful planning to achieve appropriate pace, dialogue and description, all necessary components of a successful short story. These stories were polished, often provocative, with a sense of direction and purpose. Narrative voice was carefully constructed. While there were strong links to the Advanced and Extension courses, candidates demonstrated a performance beyond those courses.

A number of successful stories came from the exploration of a variety of diverse backgrounds. Several effective stories explored issues relating to art, literature, music and technology. Some very engaging stories observed the minute details of everyday life with wit and ironic detachment. All clearly developed a fluent, engaging voice and were able to demonstrate the ability to combine extensive investigation, highly original thinking and inventive structures. These Major Works also demonstrated a clear extension of the knowledge, understanding and skills developed in the English Advanced and Extension 1 courses.

Across the range of stories there was a sense that the writers were enjoying themselves.

It is interesting to note that the quality of the Reflection Statements was better this year. Many students, however, misunderstood dot point 5: how the concepts are realised in the final product. Instead they detailed what they had learnt about writing stories, often concluding with a self-congratulatory paragraph. Students need to be aware that their independent investigation and its impact on their Major Work needs to be addressed explicitly in the Reflection Statement.

Inadequate planning and poor proofreading characterised the weaker short stories. Ideas tended to be underdeveloped and choice of subject matter was often predictable. There was a difficulty in sustaining coherence over 8000 words.

Students 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 which many students simply take to mean research into a topic.

Some of the strengths of these Major Works were:

Ideas/Concepts

- Candidates chose a variety of textual structures ranging from multi-layered polysemic voices to traditional single voice linear narrative.
- Concepts were developed in a thorough, personal and inventive way. These were well researched and integrated, and this was evident throughout the story/ies.
- Topics were approached in an original and inventive way avoiding cliché.

- Often ideas were deceptively simple but they provided a secure framework for a highly skilled display of writing to ‘surprise and delight’.
- Although rare, humour was treated with sensitivity and originality.

Form

- Many candidates experimented with form. The manipulation of structure and voice was highly successful.
- Most attempts were thoughtful and well realised. Candidates were innovative and took risks without sacrificing the integrity of the work.
- Evidence of extensive investigation was apparent in the careful crafting and construction of the stories.
- Candidates used dialogue convincingly and punctuation was generally flawless.
- Character development was convincing and sustained throughout the word limit.
- Many candidates wrote from personal experience and established a style which was appropriate to the purpose and audience.
- Careful and thoughtful re-writing and editing were evident.

Reflection Statement

- Statements were logically organised with a clear explanation of intention, development and realisation of the Major Work.
- Research was extensive and students 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.

Some of the weaknesses of these Major Works were:

Ideas/Concepts

- In weaker responses characters were poorly developed and the voices used were often unconvincing.
- Some stories were largely derivative, rather than based on actual investigation.
- Where candidates used personal experience as background for their stories they needed to realise this does not preclude them from researching form, genre and concepts.
- Where candidates explored teenage issues, they needed to show evidence of mature insight and research rather than relying upon emotive connotations to carry the story.

Form

- Weaker works were characterised by poor expression, poor construction and verbosity which limited communication with an audience. These candidates were unable to find a written voice which was elegant, clear and simple.
- Candidates needed to use punctuation effectively. There was also a consistent misuse of dialogue and the apostrophe.
- Weaker responses showed an over-reliance on qualifiers, particularly adjectives.
- Spelling errors should be edited using standard English rather than an American spell-check.
- Weaker examples found it harder to successfully maintain an engaging narrative with unity of time and place.

- Some candidates attempted to hide a lack of coherence in a fragmented storyline which they saw as structural and linguistic experimentation. Candidates who attempted to write in this style needed to display a control of the narrative and the voices in order to engage their audience.
- A number of candidates who were technically competent found it difficult to vary their language according to the register they intended to use. Many displayed a wide vocabulary but used words awkwardly and inappropriately.

Reflection Statement

- Weaker works did not address research into the short story form as well as different exponents of the genre.
- Candidates were unable show how their insights were reflected in their own Major Work.
- Reflection Statements were often summaries or extensions of the Major Work itself. Acknowledgement of the process of composition was lacking.

A Range

A Range short stories were clearly an extension of the knowledge, understanding and skills of the Advanced and Extension courses. They were highly original, sustained and inventive in their composition and based on thorough investigation. There was a highly effective control of form, which was often experimental. The manipulation of structure and voice showed control of register, syntax and vocabulary.

A Range Short Stories addressed all the requirements for the Reflection Statement (*English Stage 6 Syllabus* p131). They identified the independent research undertaken, explaining in a thorough, sophisticated way how their research helped shape the Major Work. They also explained the way in which intent and purpose led to important decisions regarding the process of development of the Major Work. These candidates supported their reflection on the development of the Major Work through the articulation of clear links with their other English courses. A skilful integration of these links was an outstanding feature of *A Range* short stories.

B Range

B Range short stories were also clearly an extension of the knowledge, understanding and skills of the Advanced and Extension courses. They were generally focused and sustained, however, they lacked the flair and sophistication of the *A Range* short stories. Investigation, although skilfully integrated, did not have the imaginative synthesis of subject matter, perspective and form of the *A Range*. Effective control of form was demonstrated in skilful crafting and construction of the stories. There were some lapses in fluency in the Major Work and in the Reflection Statement. It is necessary to show strong links between the investigation and the Major Work which is not always evident in the *B Range*.

C Range

C Range short stories were an extension of the knowledge, understanding and skills of the Advanced and Extension courses. They were substantial and coherent but the investigation was not fully integrated. In the *C Range*, stories were prosaic and were inconsistent in their development and focus. There were some lapses in tone, register and voice that affected the

synthesis of meaning, value and form. Editing in *C Range* short stories sometimes required more care. A strong sense of audience and purpose was also lacking. The Reflection Statement tended to explain the intention and development of the Major Work rather than analyse and evaluate in depth.

D Range

D Range Short Stories were an extension of some of the knowledge, understanding and skills of the Advanced and Extension 1 courses. They were too literal and were characterised by a failure to sustain integration of the concept and form. Weak construction, predictability and superficial treatment of their chosen topic characterised the *D Range*. Editing in the *D Range* sometimes required more care or was not evident. The Reflection Statement explained the intention in a superficial manner and did not address all the requirements.

E Range

E Range short stories attempted to compose a Major Work. They were superficial, lacking in substance or incomplete. The concepts behind the Major Work were simplistic or lacking a research base. There was, therefore, a lack of focus and connections between aspects of the work. *E Range* responses were characterised by weakness in the control of textual features and language. The Reflection Statement showed inconsistencies between intention and realisation of the final product.

Poems

General comments

As in past years, the concepts explored by candidates through poetry were wide-ranging, challenging and interesting. These included historical and religious themes expressed as epic poetry as well as imitations of different schools of poetry and/or the work of particular poets. The influence of past works as published in *Young Writers Showcase* was evident in some of the projects. Candidates opted for more traditional themes and approaches. Some concepts were managed more successfully than others; ‘teenage angst’ continued to be popular but tended to be clichéd and self-indulgent. Having acknowledged this, some attempts to explore childhood or adolescent experience were refreshing in both the perspective they offered and the approach they took.

Strengths

The better poetry Major Works experimented with language and form, transforming simple themes, such as growing up, into powerful, original Works. There was often a clever integration of insights through motifs and symbols. Language use was subtle and inventive. Where students were appropriating the style of other poets, the best efforts successfully employed imitation to achieve a contemporary poetical pastiche. Reflection Statements were analytical rather than descriptive, offering a sophisticated insight into the development of the work. The extent to which poetry, as studied in the various English courses, had impacted on the work was usually clear from the Reflection Statement and the Work itself. *A Range* students had an impressive depth of knowledge and understanding of poets and poetry.

Weaknesses

Weaker projects were too short to develop a concept successfully or overlong for a weak or non-existent concept. There may have been a similarity about the poems in the anthology that made them monotonous. The treatment of concepts was often either heavy-handed or simplistic and offered no new insights. Verbosity, awkward syntax, forced rhyme, repetition and a tendency towards very abstract language were often cited by markers as factors interfering with audience engagement with the Major Work. Some Major Works suffered because of a preoccupation with being clever at the expense of communicating effectively with an audience. Deliberate obscurity is not a substitute for complexity of ideas or meaning. Weaker projects had a tendency to ‘throw words at the page’. Reflection Statements of weaker candidates generally revealed a lack of investigation into the poetic form and an inability to reflect on the creative process.

There is no lower word limit on poetry Major Works. While good projects do not ‘strain’ towards the word limit, it is also worth noting that the Major Work does need to reflect twelve months of investigation and process.

A Range

These candidates were able to compose highly original and sophisticated poetry anthologies which examined complex ideas with flair. Concepts were fully investigated. They experimented with the form as part of their investigation in an engaging manner. The language used was often subtle, evocative, witty, poignant and dramatic. These Works were appropriate to purpose. Where Works in this range appropriated an idea and/or form this was achieved with flair and offered a fresh perspective on the original. A range of poetic devices was employed successfully to shape meaning. Works in this range demonstrated a careful selection of the poems in their anthologies. The poems were of comparable quality and were selected to achieve the intended purpose. Reflection Statements were sophisticated in their discussion of the concept, theoretical underpinnings and investigation, and critical in their discussion of process. They were able to show how a particular concept from the investigation was realised in the Major Work itself. These candidates carefully investigated the poetry itself and had used their studies and skills in the English Advanced and/or English Extension I courses as a catalyst for their Major Work.

B Range

These candidates composed original anthologies communicating complex ideas which were not as skilfully realised as the *A Range* Major Works. The idea may have been worthy and the approach earnest but the Major Work lacked the necessary sophistication and flair. This may have been the result of a less inventive use of poetic devices such as imagery. Candidates demonstrated a willingness to experiment with the form although not as successfully achieved as the *A Range* Works. Inconsistencies in the quality of the poems in the suite may have weakened the overall effect of the Work. Candidates should pay particular attention to the selection of poems for the suite to avoid this. Reflection Statements were critical and linked the investigation to the form and to the ideas being explored. They were able to demonstrate that their Work was an extension of the Advanced and Extension 1 courses.

C Range

These Major Works were substantial and original, although the quality was not sustained throughout the Major Work. Experimentation with form and poetical features was attempted. This experimentation was not always effective, especially when sustained over long periods. There was an unfocused use of techniques such as enjambment. Candidates did not make deliberate decisions concerning the techniques employed to effectively create meaning. Too often candidates in this range cited ‘free verse’ form as a liberation from restraint without exploring or showing what that liberation can achieve. Some candidates who used banal or forced rhyme or rhythm undermined the ideas explored in poems. There was evidence of investigation into a range of topics and concepts, although this was sometimes limited or lacking in intellectual depth. Reflection Statements were descriptive rather than critical, lacking an awareness of the relationship between investigation and the Work. There were tenuous links to the HSC English courses with a vague ‘study of poetry’ often cited. Candidates need to explore a wide range of poetry as part of their investigation.

D Range

Candidates in this range submitted poetry Major Works that demonstrated some understanding of the poetic form they wished to explore. These Works generally demonstrated inappropriate use of poetic techniques (eg rhyme and rhythm) which trivialised rather than strengthened the concepts being explored. Major Works in this range were immediate, literal and predictable. Ideas were not explored in any real depth. Works in this range demonstrated poetry that dealt with angst-ridden moments in a pedestrian way. Teenage angst was very popular in this range and was often poorly investigated. Research was limited to simple reading or exploration of the work of other poets. The Reflection Statements explained some aspects of the Major Works’ intentions, development and realisation; however, comments were often generalised, and specific reference to students’ work was rarely evident.

E Range

There were very few Major Works in the *E Range*. *E Range* Poetry Major Works were insubstantial. They used ineffective images, or techniques which were forced or simplistic. Poems demonstrated a lack of substance and integrity. *E Range* Major Works demonstrated little or no research and their work was based on superficial ideas. The audience and intention was often unclear. The Reflection Statements in this range were brief and rarely identified influences and research.

Critical Responses

General Comments

The 2004 Critical Responses covered a range of investigations including canonical texts, contemporary issues or paradigms, popular culture and the influence of technology on texts. It is important that candidates ‘select an area of personal interest from their specialised study of English.’ (*English Stage 6 Syllabus* p 92). Some investigations were not English Critical Responses but overviews, historical investigations or were descriptive rather than analytical.

Strengths

Strong Critical Responses were an extension of the Advanced and Extension I English courses. Candidates chose appropriate topics and demonstrated an understanding of focus and scale in their investigations. They had a clear sense of intended audience, and manipulated textual features skilfully. These responses were substantial, original and coherent. Candidates had engaged in extensive research of content, critical methodology and the Critical Response itself. This research was evident in both the Major Work and the Reflection Statement. There was a readiness to apply appropriate critical theory in the investigations. This often resulted in a well-integrated, effective critique. Where primary and secondary sources were used they were integral to the investigation and acknowledged appropriately. Discrimination was shown in the selection and use of websites. Print resources, where available, were accessed, providing the depth and sophistication which many websites lack.

Weaknesses

Many weaker Critical Responses were not an extension of the knowledge, skills and understanding developed in the English Advanced course and the English Extension 1 course, or they were an extension of only some aspects of these courses. The relationship between texts, paradigms, issues and critical method was not well established and often led to poorly executed responses. Some candidates chose too few or too many texts for the scope of their investigation. The requirement that the Major Work should proceed from candidates' 'specialised study of English' (*English Stage 6 Syllabus* p 92) was not always evident. Some were not text-or language-based investigations but were merely descriptive or encyclopaedic, or were historical overviews. Candidates must ensure that they do more than duplicate the work done in other English courses. Research in the weaker Critical Responses was often limited to poorly chosen, superficial websites, and in many cases there was an over-abundance of acknowledgements, without any indication in the Major Work or the Reflection Statement of what these contributed. Lack of discrimination was also evident in some candidates' use of footnotes; often they were obvious, prosaic or irrelevant. This lack of control over the medium was apparent in inappropriate or inconsistent register and problems with syntax, structure and editing.

A Range

A Range Critical Responses were clearly an extension of the knowledge, understanding and skills of the Advanced and Extension courses. This was evident in the understanding of concepts such as context, representation and appropriation, and skill in textual analysis. *A Range* responses were highly original, sustained and inventive in their composition, based on thorough investigation and often achieved through applying critical theory with clarity, subtlety and refinement. There was highly effective control of form supported by investigation of the chosen medium of expression, eg. 'academic discourse' or 'the speech'. *A Range* responses were characterised by highly skilled control of register, syntax, vocabulary and textual features such as footnoting. In these Critical Responses all the elements of planning, research and composition were synthesised imaginatively. *A Range* Critical Responses were skilfully edited.

A Range Critical Responses addressed all the requirements for the Reflection Statement (*English Stage 6 Syllabus* p131) and they identified how the independent research helped shape the Major Work. This was achieved by explaining and providing evidence and

examples in a thorough, highly skilled manner. These responses also explained how intent and critical awareness of a well-defined audience led to important decisions in the development of the project, showing insight in the understanding of how textual features could be manipulated to shape meaning. These candidates supported their reflection on the development of the Major Work through well-chosen examples from their Critical Response, making telling connections between research, concept and textual features.

B Range

B Range Critical Responses were also clearly an extension of the knowledge, understanding and skills of the Advanced and Extension 1 courses. They were original, sustained and coherent investigations which were skilfully integrated, but without the highly imaginative synthesis of subject matter, critical perspective and form of the *A Range* responses. Candidates were able to apply critical theory clearly and appropriately. There was evidence of thorough investigation of the chosen medium of expression and this was demonstrated in the skilled control of register, syntax and vocabulary. Effective control of form was demonstrated in the skilful use of textual features such as footnoting. In *B Range* Critical Responses all the elements of planning, research and composition were integrated. *B Range* Critical Responses were well edited.

B Range Critical Responses addressed all the requirements for the Reflection Statement (*English Stage 6 Syllabus* p131). A feature of *B Range* Reflection Statements was that they identified the independent research, explaining how it helped shape the Major Work. This was done through well-chosen examples from the Major Work. They also explained how intent and critical awareness of a well-defined audience led to important decisions in the development of the Work. They supported their reflection on the development of the Major Work through well chosen examples from their Critical Response, identifying the connections between research, concept and textual features.

C Range

C Range Critical Responses were an extension of the knowledge, understanding and skills of the Advanced and Extension courses. They were substantial and coherent investigations, but they were not fully integrated. This was because of such features as an imbalance in the treatment of texts, an unsustained critical perspective or differing degrees of thoroughness in parts of the investigation. There may have been a partial investigation of the chosen medium of expression but generally there was an effective control of register, syntax and vocabulary. Some control of form was demonstrated in the use of textual features such as footnoting, but there were often inconsistencies. In the *C Range* Critical Responses, the effectiveness of planning, research and composition was uneven. Editing in *C Range* Critical Responses sometimes required more care.

C Range Critical Responses addressed most of the requirements for the Reflection Statement (*English Stage 6 Syllabus* p131). A feature of *C Range* Reflection Statements was that they could be well organised but not well developed. They were most likely to identify independent research, without explaining convincingly how it helped shape the Major Work. Candidates in this range chose appropriate examples from the Major Work but were unable to sustain their explanation of how these features shaped meaning. They could state how their intent and their critical awareness of a well-defined audience led to important decisions in the development of the Work, without supporting their claim with a full explanation of examples from the Major Work. These candidates could support their reflection on the development of

the Major Work through well-chosen examples from their Critical Response, but made ineffective connections between research, concept and textual features.

D Range

D Range Critical Responses were an extension of some of the knowledge, understanding and skills of the English Advanced and English Extension 1 course. They were extended responses but were characterised by an inability to sustain the integration of concept (often poorly construed), argument and form. They were either lacking in substance or predictable and literal in their treatment of their chosen investigation. Some *D Range* Major Works were not investigations at all but historical overviews or purely descriptive in nature. Some control of form was demonstrated in the use of textual features of the chosen medium, but there were lapses. Editing in *D Range* Critical Responses sometimes required more care.

D Range Critical Responses addressed some of the requirements for the Reflection Statement (*English Stage 6 Syllabus* p131.) A feature of the *D Range* Reflection Statements was that they were uneven in their treatment of audience, research and composition and not well developed. They might have identified independent research, but did not explain its impact on the Major Work. They might have stated the intent of their investigation but did not show how it led to important decisions in the development of the Work. *D Range* responses were unable to select examples from the Major Work to support points they were making. There was often a lack of effective connections between research, concept and textual features.

E Range

E Range Critical Responses attempted to compose a Major Work. They were superficial, lacking in substance or incomplete. The concepts behind the Major Work were simplistic and lacked investigation. Although attempts at making connections between different aspects of the Work were made, these were unsuccessful. *E Range* responses were characterised by limited control of textual features and language.

E Range Critical Responses addressed some of the requirements for the Reflection Statement (*English Stage 6 Syllabus* p131). A feature of *E Range* Reflection Statements was that there were inconsistencies between the Reflection Statement and the Major Work.

Scripts – Radio, Film, Television and Drama

General Comments

Candidates were required to develop a script of a complete Work for a performance time of 20–30 minutes. Students must demonstrate extensive investigation into the required conventions for their particular format, especially as more candidates are submitting scripts for film or television production. Most candidates complied with the script conventions appropriate to the particular form chosen. However, many candidates who created film or television scripts relied on commercially published versions rather than industry regulation scripts, thereby demonstrating limited research into the formatting conventions of their script type. Candidates need to ensure they investigate the conventions for formatting. Some scripts were over length 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). While extensive investigation

into the longer and more readily available forms is important and useful, similar extensive research into the short forms of script is an essential part of the investigation and script development process. In particular, students should not rely solely on their experiences and investigations in the HSC Drama course.

It was pleasing to see students engaging with a diverse variety of styles. While experimentation is to be encouraged, students should be aware that postmodern or absurd scripts must be carefully constructed to ensure the intention is clear. Again this year, 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.

Dialogue, an inherently important feature of this format, must be shaped and manipulated in an effective and sophisticated manner. There is a tendency for dialogue to be too long: the more engaging scripts were able to integrate visual images or stage directions with well-edited dialogue.

While many candidates wrote insightful and perceptive Reflection Statements which fulfilled the marking criteria, others were not specific enough in their identification of audience or in explaining the links between independent investigation and the finished product. The Reflection Statement needs to examine the effects of research on the meaning, specifically identifying how this research and investigation has changed the student's insights into their production and the language used.

Some candidates provided additional material (such as audio material, staging plans, bibliographies, extensive prefaces) as part of the script. The correct place for any such material is the journal. Some candidates used foreign language/s without purpose and impeded the reader's engagement with the script.

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, particularly when constructing the *mise en scène* in film scripts, was outstanding. 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 types, where appropriate. These elements were highly appropriate in relation to purpose, audience and medium.

Reflection Statements presented a sophisticated 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 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. *B Range* candidates were able to use their understanding of purpose, audience and medium to shape their scripts. Structure, characterisation, development of conflict, staging, setting and editing, as appropriate to form, were used effectively with some minor lapses. These minor lapses may be such things as sustaining the authenticity of the chosen idiom eg an identifiably Australian character using ‘American TV’ dialogue. Script conventions were appropriate to the style. For example, candidates who composed a Drama script demonstrated an understanding of theatrical conventions appropriate to their chosen style, such as naturalism and realism.

Reflection Statements showed an 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

Script Major Works 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, students 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. 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.

D Range

These Major Works 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 scripts. 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 were superficial and/or incomplete, or if complete, fell well short of the parameters for the Work (*English Stage 6 Syllabus* p133). The Major Works lacked focus, contained simplistic ideas that were usually undeveloped, and limited investigation. Language, technical skills, conventions and medium were often inappropriate for the purpose and intended audience. 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.

THE MAJOR WORK – SOUND MEDIUM

Speeches

General Comments

There were 82 speeches submitted in 2004. Overall, the speeches presented in 2004 demonstrated sophisticated control over the medium and a clear understanding of the characteristics and conventions associated with speeches.

One of the characteristics of the more sophisticated Major Works was the candidates' ability to manipulate voice through technology, tonal variation and/or the adaptation of the persona/s. Candidates were able to create plausible, credible personas and contexts where the exploration of their concept was seamless and fluent.

The investigation of the conventions of script writing needed to be strengthened by candidates. Candidates need to carefully consider how they present their scripts. For some candidates, the reproduction quality of their Major Work was weak and inaudible. Significantly, more candidates chose to present their speeches on CD-ROM this year.

Some candidates did not follow the dictates of the syllabus in relation to the student being the *principal* performer of the speech. In addition, they did not follow the instruction: 'The audience for the speech must be specified'. Candidates cannot assume that their audience is self-evident. Some candidates in this area presented a single speech of up to 20 minutes in length, while others presented 2–4 shorter speeches that may have been related by concept or context.

Better Reflection Statements placed emphasis on the investigation and manipulation of structure. Decisions regarding structure, for example whether there were one speech or multiple speeches, were articulated in the Reflection Statement. If there are multiple speeches the sequence of these speeches was justified as were internal structural elements.

Better Works demonstrated a thorough editing of scripts prior to recording.

Concepts explored in the speeches included an exploration of religion (Christian values, Islam, prejudice); gender issues; politics and terrorism; mental illness; science and ethics (stem cell research and genetically modified foods); issues associated with adolescence; the power of language, the media and pop culture; and representations of truth.

Some of the strengths of these Major Works were:

- Candidates were able to effectively use their voices to create credible personas. They were able to convey passion and a deep understanding of their concept and their chosen medium.
- Students were able to use a wide range of rhetorical devices in a sophisticated and inventive manner.
- There was a strong sense of context evident throughout.
- Students were able to effectively and purposefully integrate music and other sound effects to complement and enhance the shaping of meaning, and to purposefully engage and manipulate audience response.
- Clear evidence of broad and deep investigation into both form and concept, and strong evaluation of this investigation. Students were able to articulate how this investigation shaped the Work itself.
- A clear relationship was demonstrated between the student's study of English Advanced and or English Extension 1 and the development of the concept and the Major Work.
- Candidates were able to control structure purposefully and effectively.

Some of the weaknesses of these Major Works were:

- Limited control over voice, pace and tone to effectively shape meaning. In several instances, this was evident through pedestrian and monotonous reading of texts.
- The interpretation as to what constitutes a speech was too broad – any oral utterance is not necessarily a speech.
- A limited consideration of audience and context.
- The overuse of sound effects such as canned laughter, clapping and song. This had a negative impact on engagement and the representation of meaning. These often had limited relevance and did not provide evidence of 'highly effective manipulation of language, technical skills, conventions and medium for the intended audience and purpose.'
- Investigation into both form and concept was limited. Some students were only able to cite one or two speeches by Martin Luther King as the extent of their investigation into form.
- In some instances, students had chosen the form without due consideration of the development of concept. On occasion, these Major Works would have been more suited to other media such as Critical Response and Short Story.
- Major Works tended to be too didactic, resulting in a failure to sound authentic.
- Students tended to repeat ideas and themes as opposed to developing and exploring a concept. There seemed to be a misunderstanding of how a hook or unifying metaphor can be utilised within a speech to sustain meaning and ensure audience engagement.

A Range

Speeches in this range were both sustained and highly original. Students were able to demonstrate highly effective manipulation of form to achieve the artful communication of their concept and to skilfully manipulate audience response. Speeches in this range were driven purposefully and deliberately by the exploration of the concept. Extensive independent investigation into both form and concept was clearly evident where new insights were gained through the informed synthesis and evaluation of this investigation.

Deliveries of speeches in this range were enthusiastic and passionate. Candidates manipulated voice and sound effects successfully to subtly enhance and shape meaning. These speeches avoided being overly didactic in tone and nature. The focus of the Works was clearly sustained throughout, irrespective of whether the student chose to present a single speech or a collection of speeches. Candidates were able to create a clear, plausible and sustained persona together with a credible context and audience.

Major Works in this range demonstrated the candidate's acute awareness and control over language in all its nuances. These candidates were able to clearly articulate the relationship between their concept and their study of English Advanced and or English Extension 1 in their Reflection Statements. In addition, they were able to demonstrate how their investigation impacted on the development of their work. Reflection Statements in this range were highly self-referential and evaluative in nature. They clearly addressed all the required elements of the Reflection Statement in a critical and intellectual manner.

B Range

Speeches in this range were original and sustained. However, there were some issues in relation to the fluent integration of form, values and meaning. This resulted in speeches that demonstrated skill rather than sophisticated execution and expertise.

Major Works in this range were well investigated; however, this investigation tended to be analysed rather than evaluated and synthesised. As a consequence, students had difficulty offering new insights.

Candidates were able to effectively manipulate the various elements of speech to shape meaning and engage audiences; however, there was a more limited range of rhetorical devices successfully and purposefully employed. In addition, the relative success of various structural devices tended to be generally evident throughout the Work.

Speeches in this range showed evidence of conscious shaping of meaning; however, there was a less consistent focus on audience and/or context. The candidates' Reflection Statements clearly represented the scope of the independent investigation and the relationship the Work had to the candidates' study of English Advanced and or English Extension 1. 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 were at times problematic in relation to form. 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.

Speeches in this range showed uneven control over rhetorical devices, structural elements and voice. At times, the development of the concept and/or thesis was unclear. Speeches often became too didactic and hectoring without demonstrating a clear purpose for being so. These speeches were in effect, essays on tape.

Candidates employed simple repetition instead of an extended metaphor or other device to make simple connections between sections of the Work. This had a negative impact on audiences and tended to limit the effectiveness of the original impact of the phrase or image.

Reflection Statements in this range did cover most of the elements of development, realisation and intention of the Major Work. They did communicate relatively effectively the impact 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 English Advanced and or English Extension 1.

D Range

Speeches in this range were not substantial and made only some connections between meaning, value and form. These speeches demonstrated limited investigation into form resulting in Works that indicated students had misunderstood the limitations, characteristics and conventions of speech.

Candidates' speeches tended to be predictable in nature and failed to offer any new insights or any genuine or coherent development of ideas. The exploration into the concept tended to be subverted into an exposition on an idea or topic. There was limited deliberate engagement of audience through the manipulation of structural elements or other techniques such as variation of voice, use of motif and sound effects. Major Works in this range were at times oblivious of the need to recognise and purposefully engage the audience in order to realise their purpose and manipulate response.

Speeches in this range were at times problematic in relation to length. Reflection Statements 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 the form and concept, and consideration of how this shaped the Work as a whole, was lacking.

E Range

Speeches in this range were either superficial or incomplete or both. They presented disjointed arguments that were not consistently focused on the ‘concept’ explored through the investigation. Control over language, technical skills and conventions was limited. Speeches in this range were often inadequately rehearsed, and demonstrated poor editing and awkward expression. These speeches tended to be short and it would appear the student had chosen an inappropriate form for their Work. For example, narratives, letters and /or critical responses without credible audiences and contexts were evident in projects in this range.

Reflection Statements in this range were inadequate in terms of articulating the scope of the independent investigation and how this shaped the Work itself. In addition, the relationship between the Major Work and the study of Advanced and/or Extension 1 English were at best spurious or altogether non-existent. There were few speeches in this range.

Radio Drama

General Comments

Students compose a 10-15 minute complete radio drama presented on tape or CD-ROM. In 2004, 14 students presented a radio drama for their Major Work. These candidates presented works in a variety of ways and most of the Works were competently completed. Significantly, more students completed their Work on CD-ROM and many included a taped and CD-ROM version. The quality of production has improved and most projects were crisp and easy to listen to. 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 FX and/or music in their Reflection Statements.

Concepts explored included: fantasy genre, ways of reading texts, crime fiction, social commentary, and journey. Forms appropriated included the radio quiz genre, narratives, monologues, allegory, autobiography and traditional dialogue-based radio drama.

Some of the strengths of these Major Works were:

- There was effective use of humour to engage the listener.
- Concepts were intellectually stimulating and thoughtfully developed.
- Research was broad based, wide ranging and across media, including research into radio drama.
- A variety of forms/structures or concepts were used within a piece.
- There was effective and stimulating use of parody, satire and allegory.

Some of the weaknesses of these Major Works were:

- Recording quality was poor.
- Dialogue was flat and demonstrated little delineation between voices.
- There were discrepancies between the print and aural versions of the text.
- Depth of research into the concept was not evident in weaker responses.

A Range

Major Works in the *A Range* were sustained and original. They were artistically integrated (sound, music, voice/s) and demonstrated an inventive use of the form incorporating factual, poetic, literary and other styles. These works demonstrated thoughtful underpinning of conceptual material with extensive and rigorous independent investigation. There was a sophisticated understanding of the medium.

These Works demonstrated a seamless integration of FX and music often overlaying each other. Candidates were able to expertly delineate voices in dialogue. Works in this range were intellectually engaging, emotionally evocative, well-sustained and developed.

There was a clear relationship between the Major Work and the Advanced and/or Extension 1 courses. The Reflection Statement recorded the justification of the choices that were made, validated and extrapolated upon in the Reflection Statement.

B Range

Major Works in the *B Range* were well-developed pieces with a sincere and explicit research base. They were sustained and engaged their audiences. The independent investigation was thorough. Conventions were used effectively, especially humour. Point of view was focused and sustained. Candidates used techniques and features such as aural puns, metaphor, satire and allegory effectively to promote a point of view. Major Works in this range had carefully crafted their characters and used voice appropriately. Reflection Statements explained the intention, development and the evaluation of the Major Work.

C Range

C Range Radio Drama Major Works were sustained and mostly coherent. The most common weakness in the *C Range* was the lack of investigation into the concept and the form. This limited the candidates' understanding of the concept and their ability to convey this effectively.

Features of the Works in this range included concepts that were less developed, radio drama form which was not fully explored as part of the independent investigation, and characters' voices which were not clearly discernible. Characters were defined but their voices at times were not well delineated. This was exacerbated by the use of only one speaker.

Other weaknesses included the use of stereotypes and clichés. The contexts of radio dramas were not always authentic, Reflection Statements did not indicate how the Work was an extension of the English Advanced and English Extension 1 courses and the audience was poorly defined.

C Range Radio Drama typically demonstrated a conscious shaping of meaning, tended to use conventions in a satisfactory manner, and attempted to use emotion, dialogue and music in an engaging manner. The Reflection Statements explained most aspects of the intention, development and realisation of the Major Work.

D Range

There were few *D Range* Radio Dramas. In this range the Major Works demonstrated limited investigation and understanding of the concept and the radio drama form. The Works did not demonstrate originality effectively. They were literal and concrete in matter, form and concept. These Radio Dramas tended to explore the self and therefore limited the candidate's response.

Candidates in this range needed to give more thought to the structure of their compositions. The Works tended to be very didactic and therefore less engaging. Monologues were overused which again limited the ability to show expertise in the use of the medium; the nature of the work may have been more suited to performance poetry. There was a very limited use of music; it was often repetitive and/or not well integrated. These candidates demonstrated that they had not allowed enough time for the recording and editing of their work. Their print scripts were quite bare (lacking character lists, instructions to actors etc) and sometimes were discrepant with the aural text. Some Works were under- or overtime.

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. The choices of stylistic devices, music and form were not justified in the Reflection Statements.

E Range

There were no Major Works in this range in 2004.

Performance Poetry

General Comments

Candidates are required to present a complete poetry performance of 8–10 minutes. The performance may include music/and or sound effects, which are not included in the running time. The student presenting the Major Work should be the sole writer, principal performer and sole director.

Concepts explored by candidates through performance poetry were wide-ranging, challenging and interesting, despite the small candidature. Politically-oriented issues such as the war in Iraq stood alongside more immediate 'teen relationship' concerns, with some quite quirky topics also present.

Strengths

The best Works experimented well with the performance form as well as with the language of the poetry itself, often transforming simple, everyday themes into powerful, original Works. The language of performance and presentation was subtle and inventive. Some students were acutely aware of the idea that poetry for performance might be a different sort of poetry even on the page, before being subject to the actual performance – ie that it should be poetry readily translatable to a spoken medium. This is not to suggest that it is less dense or subtle

than those poetry projects intended for reading alone, but rather that the form in which the ideas are contained has a layer which allows for the spoken voice to be used effectively. Reflection Statements were analytical rather than descriptive, offering a sophisticated insight into the development of the Work, including the performance form. *A Range* candidates had an impressive depth of knowledge and understanding of poetry, of performance and of performance poetry as a genre. Better Works often used sound effects which enhanced and accompanied the performance, rather than overwhelmed it or stood in for performance. Nuances of voice using rhythm and musical tonality often characterised the better performances.

Weaknesses

Some candidates neglected both the upper and lower time limits. Overly long- and undertime Works were both in evidence. Weaker Works were often unable to develop a concept successfully or were very repetitive over a weak or non-existent concept. There may have been a sameness about the poems in the suite which became monotonous. There was little use of the form, which tended to manifest itself in the weakest Works as poor poetry simply read aloud – and also read poorly. The use of sound – especially music – may have been employed as the only attempt at any sort of performance. Reflection Statements of weaker candidates generally revealed a lack of investigation into the form and an inability to reflect on the creative process.

A Range

Major Works in this range were complex, clever and witty. They were expressed with flair and demonstrated a sophisticated control of performance. They were highly original, sophisticated and sustained. These candidates demonstrated a willingness to experiment with different forms and were successful and engaging. The language used was appropriate for purpose and was subtle, evocative, witty, poignant, and dramatic. Candidates employed a range of poetic devices successfully to shape meaning. Candidates demonstrated a clear understanding of their role as the writer, performer and director, and exhibited sophisticated control of their material.

Reflection Statements 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.

B Range

B Range Major Works presented complex or clever ideas in a manner that was original and sustained; however, they were not as skilfully realised as the *A Range* projects. The idea may have been worthy and the approach earnest but the project lacked the necessary sophistication and flair. This may have been the result of a less inventive use of performance or somewhat weaker poetry. There was a willingness to experiment with form. Some inconsistencies in the quality of the poems in the suite may have weakened the overall effect of the Work. Candidates needed to pay particular attention to the selection of poems for the suite to avoid this situation. Reflection Statements discussed the connections between their investigation and the Work but were less critical in their reflection on the development of the Work.

C Range

Performance Poetry in this range was substantial and coherent with some attempts at originality but this was not sustained by the quality of the Work. There was some reasonable poetry but no risk taking. There was little effective manipulation of either language or performance. Most poems were just read aloud.

Reflection Statements were descriptive rather than critical. They lacked awareness of the relationship between investigation and the work and were unable to discuss this relationship. There were tenuous links to HSC English courses with a vague study of poetry often cited.

D Range

The Major Works in this range were superficial with no real understanding of the form or the notion of performance. They were poorly developed. There was a limited sense of poetry as a craft where one makes deliberate choices in terms of language and structure. Ideas were not explored in any real depth. Reflection Statements revealed little or no investigation and were mostly concerned with explaining the intention of the Work or making claims about the Work that could not be justified by the Work itself.

E Range

There were very few Works in this range. Major Works in this range were incomplete, poorly investigated and poorly executed.

THE MAJOR WORK – VISUAL MEDIUM

Video

General Comments

There was an increase in the number of video projects submitted for marking in 2004. Increased production values were evident in a significant number of these Major Works. This may have been a result of students' increased confidence with and competency in the medium.

Overall the composition, editing and post-production skills were impressive, although there seems to be a reluctance on behalf of the Video/DVD composers to explore in depth the values evident in the project and how these have been the result of a conscious investigation process.

The distinguishing features of the highly sustained projects were 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 the responders by the use of a range of cinematic devices, techniques and conventions. These could include music, framing, specific shots and the sparing use of dialogue.

However, sophisticated control over technology is still not sufficient compensation for weak ideas that are poorly developed and executed. The medium is the means for the delivery of the concept. There needs to be clear evidence, within both the Work itself and the Reflection Statement, of how the independent investigation has shaped the development of the

Video/DVD Major Work and how a student's own evaluative skills have also impacted on the shaping of the material.

There was a tendency within the Reflection Statements for candidates to focus on extolling the virtues of particular software or describing the difficulties encountered in the execution of the Major Work. There was not enough self-reflection and self-evaluation regarding the realisation of the concept and purpose and how the candidate has deliberately shaped the representation of values and meaning.

A predominant area of concern was the lack of investigation into the form itself. Whilst nearly all candidates acknowledged the decision to work with the video/film medium because of an innate love for it, they did not always investigate the form adequately or consider its suitability for the development of the Work/concept; specifically, how the short film¹, the form with which they are dealing, is only a subset of the full-length feature that inspired their interest. Candidates were able to articulate being influenced by philosophy and literary theory but were often unable to realise the specificity of film theory. Where students worked within a particular genre, there was insufficient evidence that they had adequately investigated the characteristics, conventions and elements of the genre.

Story-boarding was inadequate. It is crucial not only to provide clear guidance for production but also to highlight problem areas in the overall look of the Work.

Candidates were able to demonstrate and articulate how their Major Work was an extension of the knowledge, understanding and skills developed in the English Advanced and English Extension 1 courses. In most cases this was evident in the project itself and was fully and explicitly explored in the Reflection Statement.

Concepts that were explored in 2004 videos ranged from satire to mood pieces in the film noir and the speculative fiction genres, documentaries, schizophrenia, alienation, military conflict, and adolescent themes such as depression, suicide and sexuality. Students also focused on the exploration of alternate realities. A number of videos/DVDs were subversive, idiosyncratic and highly entertaining.

One important aspect of Videos/DVD/Films is the identification of a relevant audience and how the Major Work 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 the ones that are routinely classified into suitable age brackets: G, PG, M, MA, R. This is also the case with short films and students should consider this when trying to identify the targeted audience for their Work.

Some of the strengths of these Major Works were:

- Technical proficiency and 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 and video feature.
- An outstanding control over technical video elements, and a fluent integration of the three processes of production – pre, shooting and post. This tended to result in a consciously developed structure and careful manipulation of pace and tone.

¹ A 'short film' also refers to Videos and DVDs and it includes 'short features', 'short documentaries' and 'short animated works'.

- Short videos that concentrated on character tended to be highly effective when this character undertook only the one conscious new experience; thereby showing a sophisticated knowledge of the scope and conventions of the short feature.
- A willingness to experiment purposefully with concepts and technology resulting in Works of high originality – for example, a fully animated work and a musical.
- The exploration of the development of the 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 English Advanced and English Extension 1 courses, and the Extension 2 Major Work that demonstrated the scope and breadth of the planning and investigative process.

Some of the weaknesses of these Major Works were:

- Candidates not adhering to the instructions of the Board of Studies memorandum that instructs them to reference all images and sound (including music) that was not originated by them.
- Candidates not adhering to guidelines such as the provision of scripts.
- Independent investigation that is required of all Extension 2 candidates must consider the form of the short film/video feature. Candidates citing and exploring a range of full feature films that have impacted on their own compositions, but seeming unable to effectively evaluate the elements that distinguish a short feature film from a full feature film and how this distinction impacts on the development and shaping of their Work.
- Many highly developed technical skills, editing skills and camera work were evident. These were not always, however, used purposefully or deliberately to shape meaning. In some cases these were gratuitously used.
- A good number of the candidates have worked within the confines of a particular film milieu or genre; however, most of these tended to be rather derivative and not appropriate within the parameters of a six- to eight-minute short film.
- Some candidates were unable to integrate successfully all the elements of video, sound, image and shots to shape meaning effectively and pursue the development of the concept.
- Images and segments of the video were repeated without purpose. This tended to lessen the original impact.
- Some videos did not adhere to the time limits specified by the Stage 6 Syllabus.
- Some Reflection Statements made claims that were not realised in the Work itself.

A Range

Videos in this range were highly original and sustained. They purposefully achieved a fluent integration of meaning, values and form. The majority of these were narrative driven. There was a deliberate focus on 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.

These candidates demonstrated clear control and expertise over the medium. The employment of the medium was conscious in terms of the realisation of the candidate's concept and purpose; and 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 were able to clearly articulate the relationship between their independent investigation into both form and concept and the realisation of their Major Work. These candidates were able to demonstrate in a precise and sophisticated manner, the relationship between their study of Advanced and Extension 1 English and their Major Work.

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

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

B Range

Videos Major Works 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 Major Work.

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 students' work in English Advanced and Extension 1, were too vast to be investigated with a degree of complexity in a six- to eight-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. A number of students worked within specific genres and at times explored these successfully. However, in a number of cases candidates failed to acknowledge that they were dealing with instances of homage and appropriation 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.

Reflection Statements reflected on the intention, development and realisation of the Major Work. Links to the English Advanced and or Extension 1 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 weakness in these Major Works were:

- Careless editing.
- An overuse of voice-over in that the audience was told what to think and feel, rather than being able to discover through the employment of other, more subtle or refined cinematic techniques.
- Themes were pursued over concepts.
- Uneven or inappropriate use of sound, both diegetic and non-diegetic.
- The use of non-diegetic music was not adequately addressed or evaluated in the Reflection Statement.
- A lack of planning in the pre-production stage by the more ambitious Major Works in this range.

D Range

Video Major Works in this range were insubstantial, demonstrating 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. The Major Work itself then suffered a lapse in fluency.

Candidates are expected to have full directorial control of their video. In this range, candidates had difficulty managing this process. The focus here is on the management of a storyboard, actors, and decisions about camera work and editing. These aspects were left to chance by candidates in this range. The evaluation of the directorial control often revealed that the candidates were unaware of this role.

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.

E Range

E Range Video Major Works did not show an integration of form, value and meaning. They were, on the whole, incomplete, not developed coherently, or demonstrated an ability to carry out only 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 acknowledgement. The basic premise of the videos in this range was often simplistic, lacked subtlety and showed 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.

Film

No candidates presented a film as their Major Work in the 2004 English Extension 2 Higher School Certificate.

Multimedia

General Comments

Thirty-nine candidates submitted multimedia Major Works in 2004. The types of multimedia presented by candidates were internet sites (on CD-ROMs), games, narratives and PowerPoint presentations. The concepts explored by students were extremely varied; however, candidates generally ignored the investigation of the form (website, computer game, PowerPoint presentation etc). Some candidates did not present their logic/site map in hard copy form as required.

Some of the strengths in these Major Works were:

- The medium was controlled in a skilful way that was appropriate to purpose. Image, sound, movement and written text were carefully woven together in an effective manner.
- Candidates were experimental with their use of the technologies available to them.
- A sophisticated sense and manipulation of design elements was evident.
- Clear demonstration of the extension of the English Advanced and English Extension 1 courses was evident.

Some of the weaknesses in these Major Works were:

- Some candidates experienced difficulties linking their concept and approach to the skills and understanding of the Advanced and or English Extension 1 courses.
- Some candidates confused their English Extension 2 Major Work with the approaches to subject matter of other courses, eg Studies of Religion, Society and Culture. The approaches to concepts selected should be relevant to candidates' English studies.
- Limited investigation of the multimedia form led to poor decisions concerning the composition of the website.
- Limited understanding of multimedia design (layout, colour, movement) was evident.
- Some candidates experienced technical difficulties which made engagement difficult. Students need to ensure that their disk is fully operational.
- Some candidates did not consider the appropriateness of the multimedia form to their purpose. Some Major Works explored content at the expense of exploration of the possibilities the medium offered.
- Some candidates did not observe the parameters of this medium. Disks submitted must allow markers to view the entire work without having to go on-line to the internet. 'The multimedia composition must be able to function directly from the submitted disk or CD-ROM.'
- The appropriate use of the features of the medium for the content was not consistently evident.

A Range

Multimedia Major Works in this range were highly original and sophisticated. They developed their concept/s in an engaging manner. These works were focused and creative, and used multimedia techniques in a purposeful manner. There was extensive evidence of investigation of the concept and the multimedia form. Candidates in this range had clearly experimented with the form as part of their investigation. These Major Works provided multiple reading paths and demonstrated a sophisticated understanding of the role of the audience in responding to this form.

The control of the multimedia features demonstrated a deliberate approach to creative decisions that were appropriate to the audience. The Reflection Statements articulated a critical evaluation of the exploration of form, audience, concepts, intention, development and realisation of the Work.

B Range

Major Works in this range were substantial and focused; however, they lacked the sophistication of the *A Range*. The medium was skilfully controlled. There was a deliberate and conscious shaping of the features of the multimedia form. In some cases there may have been technical flaws in the presentation of the medium.

The Reflection Statements treated the form, intention, and development of the Work but, as was the case last year, they tended to lack the quality of critical self-reflection.

C Range

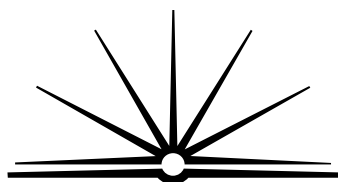
Major Works in this range were substantial and generally coherent. Typically, the independent investigation did not adequately consider the investigation of the multimedia form that was selected. Candidates were able to explore their ideas through the medium. The exploration, however, did not use the features of the medium to full advantage. Features were used without a clear sense of purpose. Material presented was descriptive rather than analytical or creative. Reflection Statements in this range explained the intent, development and realisation of the Major Work. The statements lacked critical reflection.

D Range

Major Works in this range demonstrated limited investigation of both the form and the concept. Candidates experienced difficulties manipulating the multimedia composition and their selected concepts. The Reflection Statements explained some aspects of the Major Work.

E Range

E Range Major Works were typically incomplete or superficial. They provided limited exploration of concepts and investigation of form. Reflection Statements explained some aspects of the Work but were inconsistent with the multimedia composition.



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

HSC English Extension 2 Marking Guidelines

HSC examination overview

The HSC examination in English Extension 2 is in the form of a submitted Major Work, consisting of a sustained composition including documentation and reflection on the process.

Task: Major Work

This task requires students to work independently to plan and complete a Major Work in the form of an extended composition. It allows students to select an area of personal interest from their specialised study of English and develop their work in this area to a level of distinction.

Students compose the Major Work as an extension of the knowledge, understanding and skills developed in the English (Advanced) and English (Extension 1) courses. The Major Work is to be substantial. It may be imaginative, investigative, interpretive, analytical or any combination of these. The chosen form and medium must be appropriate to the nature of the task, the student's interests and abilities and the resources available.

To provide the basis for the Major Work, students undertake ongoing, systematic and rigorous investigation into their chosen area. This investigation process is documented in a journal that demonstrates the processes of inquiry, interprets, analyses and reflects on the knowledge and understanding gained, and explains the stages of the composition of the Major Work.

The Major Work is assessed internally as a process and externally as a product.

Assessment criteria

- Textual integrity
- Quality of insights and concepts, developed through independent investigation, and the communication of developed ideas
- Manipulation of features that shape meaning and response, and quality of engagement
- The quality of the Reflection Statement

Outcomes assessed: H1, H2

MARKING GUIDELINES

| Criteria | Marks |
|--|-------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Composes a highly original and sustained Major Work that demonstrates coherence to achieve a fluent integration of meaning(s), value(s) and form • Formulates insights and concepts through investigation, and communicates developed ideas with flair. This communication may be elaborated, complex, subtle and refined and may offer a new perspective or synthesis of ideas and concepts in new, original or inventive ways. The focus of the work is clearly articulated and sustained • Demonstrates highly effective manipulation of language, technical skills, conventions and medium for the intended audience and purpose. This manipulation is sophisticated and may be inventive and experimental. There is a conscious and successful shaping of meaning to engage an audience. This is evident throughout the work • Composes a sophisticated and critical Reflection Statement that explains the intention, development and realisation of the Major Work | 41–50 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Composes an original and sustained Major Work that demonstrates coherence to achieve a skilled integration of meaning(s), value(s) and form • Formulates insights and concepts through investigation, and communicates developed ideas with clarity. This communication may be elaborated and show some complexity, subtlety and refinement. This may be more evident in some aspects of the Major Work than in others. The Work may offer a new perspective or synthesis of ideas and concepts and be thoroughly developed and consistent in focus • Demonstrates effective manipulation of language, technical skills, conventions and medium for the intended audience and purpose. This manipulation is skilful and may be inventive and experimental. There is a conscious shaping of meaning to engage an audience. This is generally evident throughout the work • Composes a critical Reflection Statement that explains the intention, development and realisation of the Major Work | 31–40 |

| Criteria | Marks |
|--|-------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Composes a substantial Major Work that demonstrates coherence. There may be lapses in tone, register, voice that affect the integration of meaning(s), value(s) and form • Formulates insights and concepts through investigation, and communicates ideas. This communication may be well-organised but not well-developed. May be more apt and coherent in some aspects of the work than in others. May attempt a new perspective or synthesis of ideas and concepts. There may be inconsistencies in the thoroughness of the development or the focus • Demonstrates some effective manipulation of language, technical skills, conventions and medium for the intended audience and purpose. This manipulation shows a control of language but there may be lapses in some parts. There is a shaping of meaning to engage an audience. This is more evident in some aspects of the work than others • Composes a Reflection Statement that explains most aspects of the intention, development and realisation of the Major Work | 21–30 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Composes a Major Work that makes some connections between meaning(s), value(s) and form • Formulates concepts through investigation, and communicates ideas. This communication may be predictable, literal and immediate. Makes simple connections between different aspects of the work. The focus of the work is unclear or unsustainable • Demonstrates some effective use of language, technical skills, conventions and medium for the intended audience and purpose. Lapses in fluency interfere with audience engagement and appreciation of the Major Work • Composes a Reflection Statement that explains some aspects of the intention, development and realisation of the Major Work. There may be some inconsistencies between elements of the Reflection Statement and the Major Work | 11–20 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attempts to compose a Major Work. It may be superficial or incomplete • Formulates simple concepts through limited investigation, and attempts to communicate ideas. This communication may attempt to make simple or incongruous connections between some aspects of the work. The work lacks focus • Attempts to control language, technical skills, conventions and medium. These, however, may not be appropriate for the intended audience and purpose • Composes a Reflection Statement that identifies some aspects of the intention, development and realisation of the Major Work. There are substantial inconsistencies between the Reflection Statement and the Major Work | 1–10 |