



BOARD OF STUDIES
NEW SOUTH WALES

English

Stage 6

Annotations of texts
prescribed for the first time

Higher School Certificate
2009–2012

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COMMON CONTENT

TYPE OF TEXT	Prose Fiction
TITLE	<i>The Namesake</i>
AUTHOR	Jhumpa Lahiri
COURSE:	Standard and Advanced
AREA OF STUDY:	Belonging

DESCRIPTION

This Area of Study requires students to explore the ways in which the concept of belonging is represented in and through texts.

Perceptions and ideas of belonging, or of not belonging, vary. These perceptions are shaped within personal, cultural, historical and social contexts. A sense of belonging can emerge from the connections made with people, places, groups, communities and the larger world. Within this Area of Study, students may consider aspects of belonging in terms of experiences and notions of identity, relationships, acceptance and understanding.

Texts explore many aspects of belonging, including the potential of the individual to enrich or challenge a community or group. They may reflect the way attitudes to belonging are modified over time. Texts may also represent choices not to belong, or barriers which prevent belonging.

Perceptions and ideas of belonging in texts can be constructed through a variety of language modes, forms, features and structures. In engaging with the text, a responder may experience and understand the possibilities presented by a sense of belonging to, or exclusion from, the text and the world it represents. This engagement may be influenced by the different ways perspectives are given voice in or are absent from a text.

The following annotations are based on the criteria for selection of texts appropriate for study for the Higher School Certificate.

MERIT AND CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

- Jhumpa Lahiri was awarded the 2000 Pulitzer Prize for Fiction.
- *The Namesake* traces the life history of a young man born in America of Bengali parents. Competing loyalties of family, education, career and personal relationships figure as prominent themes in this finely detailed *Bildungsroman*.
- The novel provides a sensitive and compelling depiction of the phenomenon of multicultural identity within contemporary society: the protagonist must come to terms with both his Bengali and American identities, along with the emerging cultural traditions of the American Bengali community.

NEEDS AND INTERESTS OF STUDENTS

- The lifestyles and customs of a well-to-do Calcutta family are contrasted with those of suburban America, as a young Bengali couple struggle to find a sense of belonging in a new and unfamiliar world. At first the couple's children vehemently resist the pressures of obligation that derive from their parents' cultural heritage. Ultimately, however, the bonds of blood and birthright reassert themselves with equal persistence.
- Rich in description and comprehensive in its recount of characters' experiences, feelings and motivations, the novel is both accessible and engaging for a broad range of students.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR CHALLENGING TEACHING AND LEARNING

- In exploring the characteristic post-colonial experiences of cultural removal, cultural dividedness and 'culture-switching' depicted in the novel in the light of the Module and Elective descriptions, students will have opportunities to consider and discuss the notion of belonging.
- References to other literary texts, most notably Nikolai Gogol's *The Overcoat*, invite analysis of the author's use of this style of intertextuality, and evaluation of its significance and value.

TYPE OF TEXT:	Prose Fiction
TITLE:	<i>Swallow the Air</i>
AUTHOR:	Tara June Winch
COURSE:	Standard and Advanced
AREA OF STUDY:	Belonging

DESCRIPTION

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MERIT AND CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

- The novel won the David Unaipon Award for Indigenous Writers and was shortlisted for *The Age* Book of the Year: Fiction (2006).
- *Swallow the Air* presents the story of May, an Aboriginal teenager. When her mother dies, a rudderless May embarks on a mission to find her place in a world that does not seem to want her. This struggle to attain a sense of belonging is as much a spiritual quest as it is a search for home, family and identity.
- Literary features of the novel include the strong and authentic voice of the teenage narrator, imaginative use of language to vividly depict May's experiences, sustained use of metaphor to effectively convey the novel's complex ideas and use of other characters to provide counterpoints to the story of May.

NEEDS AND INTERESTS OF STUDENTS

- The use of a teenage narrator will encourage students to become involved and to see relevance in this story of a search for belonging.
- While the story chronicles the particular experiences of an Aboriginal girl, the ideas will resonate with readers of different background and gender.
- Although the novel is characterised by a style of gritty realism, an overall tone of optimism is maintained by occasional humorous episodes and a positive resolution made possible by May's undeniable spirit and determination.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR CHALLENGING TEACHING AND LEARNING

- Relevant concepts of alienation, dispossession, displacement, identity, relationships, acceptance and reconciliation can all be mined through the study of this novel.
- A consideration of narrative structure, voice and perspective, positioning of the reader, use of imaginative language, characterisation and the paralleling of characters and their experiences will encourage readers to understand how Winch constructs ideas and perceptions of belonging in her novel.

TYPE OF TEXT:	Drama
TITLE:	<i>Rainbow's End</i>
AUTHOR:	Jane Harrison
COURSE:	Standard and Advanced
AREA OF STUDY:	Belonging

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MERIT AND CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

- This drama depicts the story of Gladys, a young Aboriginal woman who meets Errol, an encyclopedia salesman. The story centres on their developing relationship and its ramifications within the context of often rigid social views and pervasive economic struggle.
- The story encompasses family relationships, romantic relationships and aspects of belonging, such as social and cultural dislocation.

NEEDS AND INTERESTS OF STUDENTS

- Set in a distinctly Australian landscape, the story engages through its focus on young love, poverty, varying character views on family and society, tragedy and ultimately, a positive resolution.
- Gentle humour, combined with the fledgling adulthood of Gladys provides the basis for dealing with relevant issues.
- The human flaws of the characters in general, plus Gladys's gradual acquisition of maturity, make the story relevant.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR CHALLENGING TEACHING AND LEARNING

- The experiences and issues covered lend themselves to exploration of specific aspects of Australian history, society, culture, values and what it means to belong.
- The concerns of the text provide scope for an investigation into issues such as growing up, family relationships and in particular, relationships beyond the cultural background of the immediate family.
- Harrison's dramatic techniques provide scope for an investigation into how the ideas of the play may be realised on stage.

TYPE OF TEXT:	Film
TITLE:	<i>Ten Canoes</i>
DIRECTOR:	Rolf De Heer
RATING:	M
COURSE:	Standard and Advanced
AREA OF STUDY:	Belonging

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MERIT AND CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

- *Ten Canoes* received a number of awards at the 2006 Australian Film Industry awards, including Best film, Best Director and Best Cinematography. It was the Australian entry for the Best Foreign Language Film at the Academy Awards, and was awarded a Special Jury Prize at Cannes.
- It is a landmark film, as the first feature-length film in an Aboriginal language. It is the result of a collaboration between the innovative Australian director Rolf de Heer, renowned Aboriginal performer David Gulpilil, who narrates the film, and the people of Ramingining in Arnhem Land.

NEEDS AND INTERESTS OF STUDENTS

- The film is framed as a story within a story, moving from a time a thousand years ago to the mythical past, to tell a cautionary tale about the dangers of breaking tribal laws.
- The English narration is playful and exemplifies the unreliable nature of oral history, with backtracking, deviations and sly jokes. Its deviation from linear storytelling is reflected by the character who notes that ‘a story is like a large tree with branches everywhere’.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR CHALLENGING TEACHING AND LEARNING

- Students can explore the representation of belonging in a society where behaviour is guided by a complex system of traditional laws and kinship webs.
- The film presents opportunities for students to examine the role of the landscape as a character in the film, and to consider how ‘belonging’ can also be defined by relationship to place.

TYPE OF TEXT:	Nonfiction
TITLE:	<i>Romulus, My Father</i>
AUTHOR:	Raimond Gaita
COURSE:	Standard and Advanced
AREA OF STUDY:	Belonging

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MERIT AND CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

- This nonfiction text depicts the flight of Romulus Gaita and his family from Yugoslavia to Australia at the end of World War II, and their experiences in a new place.
- The text covers a range of issues as the young Raimond learns lessons about life from his father and from various experiences. The text is written in a simple but candid style with both compassion and insight, and considers a range of aspects of belonging.

NEEDS AND INTERESTS OF STUDENTS

- The experiences related in this text focus on the relationships forged in growing up, as well as the fears and aspirations of a young person.
- The struggle to establish a young family in a new country and the associated issues of employment, communication and cultural heritage are covered.
- Moments of humour, tension and pathos make for engaging reading.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR CHALLENGING TEACHING AND LEARNING

- The experiences and issues covered lend themselves to exploration of specific aspects of Australian history, society, culture and values.
- The concerns of the text provide scope for an investigation into issues such as growing up, family relationships and in particular, father-and-son relationships.
- Gaita's style provides opportunities to focus on the use of language to shape meaning.

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ENGLISH (STANDARD) COURSE

TYPE OF TEXT:	Poetry
TITLE:	<i>The Penguin Banjo Paterson Collected Verse</i>
AUTHOR:	A B Paterson
COURSE:	Standard
MODULE:	Module A: Experience Through Language Elective: Distinctive Voices

DESCRIPTION

In their responding and composing students consider various types and functions of voices in texts. They explore the ways language is used to create voices in texts, and how this use of language affects interpretation and shapes meaning. Students examine one prescribed text in addition to other examples of distinctive voices in their everyday lives.

The following annotations are based on the criteria for selection of texts appropriate for study for the Higher School Certificate.

MERIT AND CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

- For his lifelong contribution to the development of a truly Australian style of literature, Paterson was awarded a CBE in 1939.
- A B (Banjo) Paterson is generally regarded as one of Australia's best known folk poets.
- Paterson created caricatures of the Australian bush characters he encountered. He created iconic figures such as those depicted in *Waltzing Matilda* and *Clancy of the Overflow* which have become a mythical part of our national folklore.
- These caricatures were created during a time when Australians were looking for images to define themselves as separate to the 'motherland' of Britain. They were looking for a voice that set them apart as a nation.

NEEDS AND INTERESTS OF STUDENTS

- The poetry of Paterson provides an opportunity for students to study a snapshot of the period in Australian history that shaped our Australian character, and the distinctive voices that reflect this character.
- Paterson effectively used the architecture of poetry, structure of words, and the rhyme and rhythm of the Australian bush ballad to shape meaning and to invoke a romantic view of the bush. This is reflected in the set choices.
- There is also the opportunity to follow the growth of this idea to modern popular culture in contemporary work, especially music and film.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR CHALLENGING TEACHING AND LEARNING

- Paterson's poetry, although mostly light-hearted on the surface, disguises a depth of understanding of the human personalities and the developing culture of Australia and its distinctive voices.
- Further study will uncover links to the English romanticism of Wordsworth while contrasting it favourably with the more familiar Australian landscape and our own romantic heritage of the bush. His work also gives hints at other national literary treasures providing opportunity for further study. The caricatures have clear voices, such as the bushman Clancy and the city clerk, while in *Mulga Bill*, Paterson uses techniques such as satire and irony.
- Students will have the opportunity to study Paterson's place in our literary history and compare his works with those of his contemporaries such Lawson.

TYPE OF TEXT:	Film
TITLE:	<i>Run Lola Run</i>
DIRECTOR:	Tom Tykwer
RATING:	M
COURSE:	Standard
MODULE:	Module A: Experience Through Language Elective: Distinctively Visual

DESCRIPTION

In their responding and composing students explore the ways the images we see and/or visualise in texts are created. Students consider how the forms and language of different texts create these images, affect interpretation and shape meaning. Students examine one prescribed text, in addition to other examples of representations of the visual in their everyday lives.

The following annotations are based on the criteria for selection of texts appropriate for study for the Higher School Certificate.

MERIT AND CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

- *Run Lola Run* has won numerous awards including the German Film Award Gold for Best Film, an American Cinema Editors Eddie for Best Edited Feature Film and a BAFTA for Best Foreign Film.
- This German film is highly acclaimed internationally for its screenplay, three-part narrative structure, direction, soundtrack and cinematography.
- As a foreign film, *Run Lola Run* presents a view of life from a particular cultural perspective while simultaneously having universal appeal.

NEEDS AND INTERESTS OF STUDENTS

- Students will be intrigued by the director's effective use of animation and other visual representations and techniques that he combines with his use of music and silence to intensify the drama and maintain the suspense for the audience.
- This film's challenging three-part narrative structure will appeal to students as they try to predict each different denouement and reflect on their personal responses to Lola's moral dilemma and the different experiences presented.
- The structure of the film invites several viewings in order to identify different cinematic and visual techniques used to foreshadow and narrate events while also allowing viewers to see how one experience builds to the next.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR CHALLENGING TEACHING AND LEARNING

- Students will be able to examine how different filmmaking techniques shape meaning as this film uses mixed media with its combination of real and animated shots and images.
- This film affords students the opportunity to research European cinema as well as explore circular narrative structures and forms.
- The moral and social issues raised in this film are confronting and offer opportunities for stimulating debate and reflection.

TYPE OF TEXT:	Prose Fiction
TITLE:	<i>The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time</i>
AUTHOR:	Mark Haddon
COURSE:	Standard
MODULE:	Module B: Close Study of Text

DESCRIPTION

This module requires students to engage in detailed analysis of a text. It develops students' understanding of how the ideas, forms and language of a text interact and may affect those responding to it.

The following annotations are based on the criteria for selection of texts appropriate for study for the Higher School Certificate.

MERIT AND CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

- The novel, which provides a powerful glimpse into the foibles and moral confusion of the adult world, was winner of the Whitbread Book of the Year prize, and was listed for the Booker Prize.
- *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* introduces a unique voice in the narrator, Christopher, who is a 15-year-old boy with Asperger's Syndrome. Christopher is gifted in mathematics, especially solving mathematical puzzles, but human emotions are beyond his grasp. When a neighbour's dog is murdered, he decides to solve the mystery by treating it as a mathematical puzzle, with far-reaching effects on his own carefully constructed world.

NEEDS AND INTERESTS OF STUDENTS

- Written in the first person from Christopher's perspective, the story has an immediacy and impact that will engage the students as it relates events in an empathic but quirky manner.
- The novel brings into sharp relief the difficulties children face in understanding the behaviours and demands of adults, and the challenges of attempting to cope with a world beyond one's understanding. Because the narrator views the lies and deceptions of the adult world in an objective and non-judgemental, he doesn't read the situation accurately, which ultimately has powerful consequences.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR CHALLENGING TEACHING AND LEARNING

- Students may explore the way in which the author has used the voice of the innocent narrator to tell the story, and its parallels with other novels where children as narrators explore the darker aspects of adult behaviour.
- Students may also examine how Haddon has used the device of detective fiction to allow Christopher to move outside his static world: detective fiction, with its accumulation of facts, is the only fiction which Christopher can grasp, and it allows the story to move forward.
- The author's inclusion of maths problems, times tables, maps and other diagrams invite exploration of how the author has moved beyond the usual novelistic form to provide a window into the rich idiosyncrasies of Christopher's condition.

TYPE OF TEXT:	Drama
TITLE:	<i>A Man With Five Children</i>
AUTHOR:	Nick Enright
COURSE:	Standard
MODULE:	Module C: Texts and Society Elective: The Global Village

DESCRIPTION

In this elective students explore a variety of texts that deal with the ways in which individuals and communities experience and live in a global context. Students consider the positive and negative aspects of the global village and the consequences of these on attitudes, values and beliefs. Students also consider the role and uses of media and technology within the global village and different attitudes people may have towards them. Students respond to and compose a range of texts to investigate how and in what ways living in a global village has changed and influenced the ways we communicate, engage and interact with each other.

The following annotations are based on the criteria for selection of texts appropriate for study for the Higher School Certificate.

MERIT AND CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

- The play is written by award-winning Australian playwright, Nick Enright, famous for his stage works such as *Blackrock*, *Cloudstreet* and *The Boy from Oz* and the Academy Award-nominated screenplay, *Lorenzo's Oil*.
- The examination of the role of the media in our lives and its exploration of documentaries and documentary filmmaking is insightful, challenging and thought provoking.
- While the play uses as its reference point the famous English documentary film series, *7 Up*, the setting and the different characters depicted reflect a contemporary Australian culture.

NEEDS AND INTERESTS OF STUDENTS

- The ambiguity in the play about whether the documentary filmmaker is the 'creator' or 'objective chronicler' of people and their lives is pertinent to contemporary audiences given the global popularity and dominance of reality TV shows.
- The play questions the rationale for making these types of programs and the role technology currently plays in the development and distribution of them, and the presentation of one version of the truth.
- The play's exploration of a diverse range of characters, their different responses to their experience and their motivation for participating in the documentary will appeal to students.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR CHALLENGING TEACHING AND LEARNING

- As the play engages its audience through a wide range of dramatic devices, including the use of dramatic tension, pathos and humour, students will gain a more complex understanding of dramatic structure and form.
- The mixture of traditional staging conventions with the use of multimedia and video to narrate the story offers students the opportunity to examine the ways technology and other elements of staging can be used to shape meaning.
- Students can consider the notions of reality and truth in contemporary society and media as they engage in discussion about the how reality shows and documentaries invite their audience into a world of fractured celebrity and distorted vision.

TYPE OF TEXT:	Multimedia
TITLE:	<i>Wikipedia – The Free Encyclopedia</i>
WEB ADDRESS:	www.wikipedia.org
COURSE:	Standard
MODULE:	Module C: Texts and Society Elective: The Global Village

DESCRIPTION

In this elective students explore a variety of texts that deal with the ways in which individuals and communities experience and live in a global context. Students consider the positive and negative aspects of the global village and the consequences of these on attitudes, values and beliefs. Students also consider the role and uses of media and technology within the global village and different attitudes people may have towards them. Students respond to and compose a range of texts to investigate how and in what ways living in a global village has changed and influenced the ways we communicate, engage and interact with each other.

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MERIT AND CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

- *Wikipedia* is an encyclopedia made with a ‘wiki’, which means that anyone can change the encyclopedia or create new articles. *Wikipedia* comprises open content, allowing anyone to write in the wikipedias and change the words there. It is a culturally significant text as it signals the fluid shift away from the notion of one author, one expert and authoritative voice, and encourages peer editing practices.
- Since its creation in 2001, *Wikipedia* has rapidly grown into one of the largest reference websites on the internet.

NEEDS AND INTERESTS OF STUDENTS

- The site is an excellent example of what new technology can offer students in relation to a text study.
- It allows students to explore questions about authorship, information, control and interactivity, and how technology impacts on global knowledge and communication.
- Much of the information on the site holds intrinsic interest for students who will be able to participate in the process of responding to the text and composing in a real-life context.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR CHALLENGING TEACHING AND LEARNING

- *Wikipedia* offers wide possibilities for language exploration and allows for investigation of different ways and purposes of reading and writing electronically.
- The capacity for students to interact directly with the text allows them to compose texts in experimental and challenging ways.
- The study of multiple texts within one site provides the opportunity for comparison, contrast and evaluation of material.
- Students can engage in discussions around questions about ethics and information and the place of electronic media in the context of The Global Village.

TYPE OF TEXT:	Prose Fiction
TITLE:	<i>The Story of Tom Brennan</i>
AUTHOR:	J C Burke
COURSE:	Standard
MODULE:	Module C: Texts and Society Elective: Into the World

DESCRIPTION

In this elective students explore a variety of texts that deal with aspects of growing up or transition into new phases of life and a broader world. People encounter different experiences and respond to them individually. These personal experiences may result in growth, change or other consequences. Students respond to and compose a range of texts that illustrate different pathways into new experiences. They examine the features of texts that shape our knowledge, attitudes and beliefs about individuals venturing into new experiences.

The following annotations are based on the criteria for selection of texts appropriate for study for the Higher School Certificate.

MERIT AND CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

- The novel was the winner of the 2006 Children’s Book Council of Australia Book of the Year Awards: Older Readers and the Australian Family Therapists’ Award for Children’s Literature (Novel).
- This highly acclaimed novel by the Australian author J C Burke focuses on a teenage boy’s experiences after a tragic car accident in a small NSW country town, and the consequences which threaten to destroy his family when his brother is sent to gaol for manslaughter, his cousin is paralysed and family members are forced to flee their home and reconsider their lives, relationships and values.
- *The Story of Tom Brennan* depicts with both pathos and humour how families deal with grief and tragedy as it explores a number of current news issues, such as drink-driving, acceptable blood alcohol levels, and the age at which teenagers can get their driving licences.

NEEDS AND INTERESTS OF STUDENTS

- Written in the first person from Tom’s perspective, the story has an immediacy and rawness that will engage the students as it has an Australian context and addresses the topical issues of drink-driving, speeding, P-plate drivers and adolescent behaviour and responsibilities.
- Students will be challenged and confronted by Tom’s introspection and emotional state as they simultaneously gain insight into how individuals and families are affected by their own, as well as other’s, actions.
- The narrative style and natural dialogue capture the essence and individuality of each of the characters as well as their emotional complexity and will engage students and help to develop their empathy and understanding of the central characters and issues.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR CHALLENGING TEACHING AND LEARNING

- Students will explore the non-linear first-person narrative form, the use of flashback and other narrative techniques in order to consider how the author creates and sustains suspense through a series of dramatic and reflective moments.
- The strength of this novel is that it evokes in the reader strong reflections on family, institutional living (both prison and hospital), the dangers of drink-driving and the resilience of individuals. The novel should raise interesting and lively debate about adult, adolescent and social behaviour, drink-driving and relationships.
- The study of this novel will promote students’ personal reflection and evaluation of their own experiences, values and behaviour as they consider to what extent they identify or empathise with the adolescent characters and their situation.

TYPE OF TEXT:	Nonfiction
TITLE:	<i>Unpolished Gem</i>
AUTHOR:	Alice Pung
COURSE:	Standard
MODULE:	Module C: Texts and Society Elective: Into the World

DESCRIPTION

In this elective students explore a variety of texts that deal with aspects of growing up or transition into new phases of life and a broader world. People encounter different experiences and respond to them individually. These personal experiences may result in growth, change or other consequences. Students respond to and compose a range of texts that illustrate different pathways into new experiences. They examine the features of texts that shape our knowledge, attitudes and beliefs about individuals venturing into new experiences.

The following annotations are based on the criteria for selection of texts appropriate for study for the Higher School Certificate.

MERIT AND CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

- This nonfiction text depicts the story of a Cambodian family resettling in Australia and the story of the daughter, Alice.
- The recollections of Alice focus on aspects of friendship, family relationships, cultural heritage and growing up.
- The text is written in an engaging style with both humour and insight.

NEEDS AND INTERESTS OF STUDENTS

- Alice's experiences will resonate with many students, particularly those from South-East Asian backgrounds.
- Many common experiences based on family life and dealing with the restrictions imposed by family units will also resonate with students.
- Moments of humour and pathos, depicted within the struggle to survive in a new country, make for engaging reading.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR CHALLENGING TEACHING AND LEARNING

- The experiences of the central character will encourage students to explore specific aspects of Australian history, society, culture and values.
- The strong voice provides opportunities to explore different narrative techniques.
- The issues and experiences covered provide scope for the investigation of different ways of recording experience such as diary, memoir, autobiography and biography.

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ENGLISH (ADVANCED) COURSE

TYPE OF TEXT:	Prose Fiction
TITLE:	<i>The Aunt's Story</i>
AUTHOR:	Patrick White
COURSE:	Advanced
MODULE:	Module A: Comparative Study of Texts and Context Elective: Exploring Connections <i>Paired with selected poems of Rosemary Dobson</i>

DESCRIPTION

In this elective students will explore how meanings of a pair of texts can be shaped and reshaped by considering the nature of the connections between them. Exploration of the connections between the texts will enhance understanding of the values and context of each text. Relationships between these texts may be implicit or explicit. Connections may be established through direct or indirect references, contexts, values, ideas, and the use of language forms and features.

The following annotations are based on the criteria for selection of texts appropriate for study for the Higher School Certificate.

MERIT AND CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

- Patrick White was awarded the 1973 Nobel Prize for Literature.
- *The Aunt's Story* details the life journey of a plain spinster, Theodora Goodman. Liberated at last by her mother's death, she travels from her home in Australia to Europe and then to America.
- The novel offers a deep insight into the creative process: the protagonist's 'fugues', her rhapsodic capacity to project characters and events, mirror, in a self-conscious manner, the way an author creates fiction.

NEEDS AND INTERESTS OF STUDENTS

- Particulars of time and place are vividly evoked in the novel. White depicts an Australia which is by turns gauche and immature, European cosmopolitanism crumbling under the weight of centuries of decadence and romanticism, and the starkness and utilitarianism of the American New World.
- Consideration of Theodora's ultimate 'lucidity', and the actuality and significance of 'Holstius', her supposed saviour, will challenge traditional demarcations between sanity and madness, secular wisdom and spiritual illumination, and between nature and the numinous.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR CHALLENGING TEACHING AND LEARNING

- Looking back to Modernism and Nineteenth Century Realism while also looking ahead to postmodernist irony and reflexiveness, White's novel provides opportunities to consider and contrast the characteristic approaches and features of these disparate literary modes.
- The novel's trichotomous structure, use of musical imagery, and its literary and classical allusions, invite close examination of the author's style and techniques.
- Comparisons of critical and personal responses to *The Aunt's Story* will pave the way for discussion and re-evaluation of White's status and legacy.

TYPE OF TEXT:	Drama
TITLE:	<i>W;t</i>
AUTHOR:	Margaret Edson
COURSE:	Advanced
MODULE:	Module A: Comparative Study of Texts and Context Elective: Exploring Connections <i>Paired with selected poems of John Donne</i>

DESCRIPTION

In this elective students will explore how meanings of a pair of texts can be shaped and reshaped by considering the nature of the connections between them. Exploration of the connections between the texts will enhance understanding of the values and context of each text. Relationships between these texts may be implicit or explicit. Connections may be established through direct or indirect references, contexts, values, ideas, and the use of language forms and features.

The following annotations are based on the criteria for selection of texts appropriate for study for the Higher School Certificate.

MERIT AND CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

- The play has won numerous awards: winner of the Pulitzer Prize, a New York Drama Critics' Circle Award, a Drama Desk Award, an Outer Critics Circle Award, a Lucille Lortel Award and an Oppenheimer Award.
- It examines what makes life worth living through the central character's unifying exploration of our mortality, while also probing the vital importance of human relationships.

NEEDS AND INTERESTS OF STUDENTS

- The play explores challenging issues without providing definitive answers: the nature of death and what makes our life meaningful, how language shapes our sense of self, the capacity of modern medicine to prolong life, and many of the same questions that Donne explored in his poetry over 400 years ago.
- As the central character approaches death, her response to other aspects of her life alters, including her appreciation of her particular academic specialty, the poetry of John Donne.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR CHALLENGING TEACHING AND LEARNING

- The play engages both the emotions and the intellect. It challenges us to see that life may or may not be cherished – 'a discussion that may be both uplifting and redemptive'.
- The immediacy of the issues, and the clarity and sophistication of the writing fuse to make this multilayered play accessible to students.
- The study of this play will provide opportunities to approach John Donne's poetry through alternative and fresh eyes. The essence of Donne's poetry will remain challenging, however, students will appreciate the intellectual and emotional challenges and conflicts that the play presents.

TYPE OF TEXT:	Film
TITLE:	<i>Looking for Richard</i>
DIRECTOR:	Al Pacino
RATING:	PG
COURSE:	Advanced
MODULE:	Module A: Comparative Study of Texts and Context Elective: Exploring Connections <i>Paired with Shakespeare's Richard III</i>

DESCRIPTION

In this elective students will explore how meanings of a pair of texts can be shaped and reshaped by considering the nature of the connections between them. Exploration of the connections between the texts will enhance understanding of the values and context of each text. Relationships between these texts may be implicit or explicit. Connections may be established through direct or indirect references, contexts, values, ideas, and the use of language forms and features.

The following annotations are based on the criteria for selection of texts appropriate for study for the Higher School Certificate.

MERIT AND CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

- The film has won a number of awards for its innovative direction and editing, including an Eddie for Best Edited Documentary Film from American Cinema Editors and a DGA Award for Outstanding Directorial Achievement in Documentary from the Directors Guild of America.
- *Looking for Richard* is an acclaimed film, known for its compelling behind-the-scenes exploration of a production of Shakespeare's *Richard III*. Al Pacino makes his directorial debut, celebrating hybridity of form and the processes of artistic collaboration.
- The complex processes involved in the negotiation between Shakespearean text and performance are explored in engaging ways, providing rare insights into the Shakespearean actor's world.

NEEDS AND INTERESTS OF STUDENTS

- The film is accessible and engaging, and shifts, often through the use of hand held camera and quick cuts, from page to stage, to backstage, to real life.
- Actors, scholars and potential spectators on the streets of Manhattan are interviewed as Pacino, director and actor, seeks to develop a deeper understanding of Richard III in historical and contemporary contexts.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR CHALLENGING TEACHING AND LEARNING

- Exploring connections between *Looking for Richard* and Shakespeare's *Richard III* will reshape and deepen students' understanding of questions of value and context.
- The film offers rich opportunities for students to explore the balance between its three narrative strands: Shakespeare's *Richard III*, a documentary about the play's historical context and a docudrama about the making of *Looking for Richard*.
- As part of the teaching and learning program students may explore direct cinema and cinéma-vérité forms of documentary filmmaking, elements of mise en scène, notions of authorship and Shakespearean adaptation, as well as the connections between art, creativity and the written and performed text.

TYPE OF TEXT:	Poetry
TITLE:	<i>Sonnets from the Portuguese in Aurora Leigh and Other Poems</i>
AUTHOR:	Elizabeth Barrett Browning
COURSE:	Advanced
MODULE:	Module A: Comparative Study of Texts and Context Elective: Texts in Time <i>Paired with The Great Gatsby</i>

DESCRIPTION

In this elective students compare how the treatment of similar content in a pair of texts composed in different times and contexts may reflect changing values and perspectives. By considering the texts in their contexts and comparing values, ideas and language forms and features, students come to a heightened understanding of the meaning and significance of each text.

The following annotations are based on the criteria for selection of texts appropriate for study for the Higher School Certificate.

MERIT AND CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

- Browning is a highly respected female poet of the Victorian era.
- *Sonnets from the Portuguese* have been valued as significant in the development of the sonnet in English studies.
- Browning's manipulation of the sonnet form, based on the Petrarchan model, is highly skilled and acclaimed.

NEEDS AND INTERESTS OF STUDENTS

- Romantic love is celebrated as a source of strength in a world with some underlying sadness.
- The sonnets affirm the integrity and spirituality of love.
- The poems are intensely personal.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR CHALLENGING TEACHING AND LEARNING

- The contexts of Victorian England and post-World War I America (in reference to *The Great Gatsby*) can be researched readily.
- In the context of the nineteenth century, these sonnets were at first highly regarded for their intensity of expression and their representation of a woman's perspective. After Elizabeth Barrett Browning's death, the sonnets were increasingly read for the light they shed on her own life. These tensions within the nineteenth-century context can enrich the study of text and context in this Elective.
- Idealised love, hope and mortality are concerns common to the paired texts.
- The function of personal voice in the sonnets and first-person narration in *The Great Gatsby* can be explored and evaluated.

TYPE OF TEXT:	Prose Fiction
TITLE:	<i>Sixty Lights</i>
AUTHOR:	Gail Jones
COURSE:	Advanced
MODULE:	Module B: Critical Study of Text

DESCRIPTION

This module requires students to engage with, and develop an informed personal understanding of, their prescribed text. Through critical analysis and evaluation of its language, content and construction, students will develop an appreciation of the textual integrity of their prescribed text. They refine their own understanding and interpretations of the prescribed text and critically consider these in the light of the perspectives of others. Students explore how context influences their own and others' responses to the text and how the text has been received and valued.

The following annotations are based on the criteria for selection of texts appropriate for study for the Higher School Certificate.

MERIT AND CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

- This highly acclaimed novel by the Australian author Gail Jones has won many prestigious awards including the 2004 Western Australian Premier's Book Award and the 2006 South Australian Premier's Award for Literature and Award for Fiction. It was shortlisted for the 2005 Miles Franklin Award and made the longlist for the Man Booker Prize in 2004.
- *Sixty Lights* is both an extended meditation on photography and a powerful insight into life for a young woman in Victorian times. It tells, in sixty image-laden parts, the story of Lucy Strange: her departure from her birthplace, Australia and her journey through the chaotic, unbridled and colourful diversity of India to the constrained and restricted drab world of Victorian England.
- The novel abounds with metaphors and images of light, vision, journey, photography, colour and shade as it weaves a strongly lyrical story about love, forgiveness and mortality. The complexity of the world and humanity is shown through a series of cumulative refracting images of birth, life and death as Lucy's thoughts, visions and experiences are revealed and uncovered throughout the narrative.

NEEDS AND INTERESTS OF STUDENTS

- Students will be challenged and intrigued by the way the novel plays effectively with Victorian tropes and texts and how it utilises the technological revolution that was inspired by photography.
- The nature of early photography, and Lucy's musings on the future of the art, are central to both the novel's structure and its themes of insight and vision. Students will engage with Lucy's fascination with the 'new' photographic technology and how she views the world differently as a consequence of what her camera reveals to her.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR CHALLENGING TEACHING AND LEARNING

- The lyrical quality of the novel, its metaphorical and symbolic use of colour and light and the ambiguity of its title, will engage students in an exploration of the novel's structure and significance of symbolism used: all 60 chapters, in one way or another, refer to light or the way it is used and each chapter illuminates fragments of Lucy's life and experiences.
- Close examination of the narrative structure of the text, which appears to mimic the conventional Victorian novel or *Bildungsroman*, with a plot progressing from childhood to death, will reveal that the story is deeply layered and anachronistic, fluctuating between past, present and future. This will challenge and refine students' understanding of the traditional notions of how a novel is shaped and constructed.

TYPE OF TEXT:	Film
TITLE:	<i>Wag the Dog</i>
DIRECTOR:	Barry Levinson
RATING:	M
COURSE:	Advanced
MODULE:	Module C: Representation and Text Elective: Conflicting Perspectives

DESCRIPTION

In their responding and composing, students consider the ways in which conflicting perspectives on events, personalities or situations are represented in their prescribed text and other related texts of their own choosing. Students analyse and evaluate how acts of representation, such as the choice of textual forms, features and language, shape meaning and influence responses.

The following annotations are based on the criteria for selection of texts appropriate for study for the Higher School Certificate.

MERIT AND CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

- *Wag the Dog* was nominated for two Academy Awards in 1997: Best Actor in a Leading Role and Best Writing, Screenplay Based on Material from Another Medium.
- The film explores manipulation of public opinion and the media for political gain using satire and comedy.
- The film involves distracting the attention of the media and public by creating a fake war, with a Hollywood producer employed to create this illusion, and a non-existent 'war hero' who is 'rescued' and returned home, but not without dire mishaps.

NEEDS AND INTERESTS OF STUDENTS

- Fast-moving, satirical and humorous, the film captures the manipulation of public and media perception by political 'spin-doctors'.
- Students will be challenged by the intrigue and fast-paced decision-making, the self-interest of the characters and the exploitation of public sentiment.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR CHALLENGING TEACHING AND LEARNING

- Students will explore the way language and image can be used to persuade and change or create perceptions.
- The film can be closely linked to a range of other texts, both print and visual, which explore the manipulation of perceptions.
- The study of this film will promote students' personal reflection and evaluation of media publications and practices, in addition to their knowledge and skills with regard to how films are constructed.

TYPE OF TEXT: Film
TITLE: *The Queen*
DIRECTOR: Stephen Frears
RATING: M
COURSE: **Advanced**
MODULE: **Module C: Representation and Text**
Elective: History and Memory

DESCRIPTION

In their responding and composing, students consider their prescribed text and other texts which explore the relationships between individual memory and documented events. Students analyse and evaluate the interplay of personal experience, memory and documented evidence to broaden their understanding of how history and personal history are shaped and represented.

The following annotations are based on the criteria for selection of texts appropriate for study for the Higher School Certificate.

MERIT AND CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

- The film received numerous awards including winner of the Performance by an Actress in a Leading Role (Helen Mirren) and Best Original Screenplay (Peter Morgan) at the 2006 Academy Awards, and Best Film and winner of the Actress in a Leading Role at the British Academy Film Awards 2006.
- *The Queen*, directed by Stephen Frears, presents a behind-the-scenes glimpse of the reactions of the royal family to the death of The Princess of Wales in 1997 and their interaction with the newly elected Prime Minister, Tony Blair.
- The film depicts public and private reactions to an event which still reverberate today.

NEEDS AND INTERESTS OF STUDENTS

- This is a compelling and important film for students which provides insights into a recent, dramatic event and consider personal and public reactions to that event.
- Students investigate how the representation of an event is constructed through individual and collective perception and how medium of production, textual form and choice of language influence meaning.
- The film highlights issues such as the role and place of individual and public memory, private and public displays of grief and how events and individuals are depicted in a text.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR CHALLENGING TEACHING AND LEARNING

- The film allows for the exploration of the integration of archival footage and the meshing of the actual and the interpretive.
- Opportunities for students to discuss reactions to Diana's death at a local and wider level exist through an analysis of not only the film but the many articles, television programs and books written on the topic.

TYPE OF TEXT:	Multimedia
TITLE:	<i>September 11: Bearing Witness to History</i>
WEB ADDRESS	http://americanhistory.si.edu/september11/
ORGANISATION:	Smithsonian National Museum of American History
COURSE:	Advanced
MODULE:	Module C: Representation and Text Elective: History and Memory

DESCRIPTION

In the elective, *History and Memory*, students will consider their prescribed text and other texts which explore the relationships between individual memory and documented events. Students analyse and evaluate the interplay of personal experience, memory and documented evidence to broaden their understanding of how history and personal history are shaped and represented.

The following annotations are based on the criteria for selection of texts appropriate for study for the Higher School Certificate.

MERIT AND CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

- The site, which is contained within the Smithsonian Institution's website, is an online exhibition that presents a collection of objects documenting the attacks on September 11 and their aftermath.
- The site presents a selection of objects, images, and personal stories from the National Museum of American History's commemorative exhibition, *September 11: Bearing Witness to History*. The site is divided into three sections: Collection, Exhibition and Tell Your Story.
- The site presents an opportunity for students to study an online exhibition which examines a significant historical event in world history. It presents numerous accounts of the event allowing students to explore individual memories and the documentation of the event.

NEEDS AND INTERESTS OF STUDENTS

- The website will appeal to a wide range of English (Advanced) students, as September 11 is date that they recognise.
- The historical context offers scope for discussion relating to values and attitudes about survival, humanity, courage, power and security.
- The site allows the relationships between individual memory and documented events to be explored.
- Students will explore the numerous individual snapshots. They will consider how skilfully the Smithsonian National Museum of American History has been able to capture the individual voices through photographs and videos of objects and people. It also provides an opportunity for individuals to document their memories of the event.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR CHALLENGING TEACHING AND LEARNING

- Students can explore the construction of the website and the layers of reading and responding pathways available.
- The text offers opportunities for students to reflect on individual perspectives and to consider the role of personal and cultural memory.
- Students may reflect on the role of an online exhibition in representing an important event.
- The text provides opportunities to critically examine the techniques used to evoke the poignancy of the event, and to consider questions about audience, purpose and context.

Annotations of texts
prescribed for the first time
for the
Higher School Certificate
2009–2012

ENGLISH (ESL) COURSE

TYPE OF TEXT:	Prose Fiction
TITLE:	<i>Swallow the Air</i>
AUTHOR:	Tara June Winch
COURSE:	ESL
AREA OF STUDY:	Belonging

DESCRIPTION

This Area of Study requires students to explore the ways in which the concept of belonging is considered and expressed in and through texts. Through close language study, and by experimenting with different language choices, students will examine how perceptions of belonging, or not belonging, vary.

Perceptions of belonging are shaped within personal, cultural, historical and social contexts. A sense of belonging can emerge from the connections made with people, places, groups, communities and the larger world. Within this Area of Study, students may consider aspects of belonging in terms of experiences and notions of identity, relationships, acceptance and understanding.

Texts explore many aspects of belonging, including the potential of the individual to enrich or challenge a community or group. They may reflect the way attitudes to belonging are modified over time. Texts may also reflect choices not to belong, or barriers which prevent belonging.

Perceptions and ideas of belonging in texts can be constructed through a variety of language modes, forms, features and structures. In engaging with the text, a responder may experience and understand the possibilities presented by a sense of belonging to, or exclusion from, the text and the world it represents. This engagement may be influenced by the different ways perspectives are given voice in or are absent from a text.

The following annotations are based on the criteria for selection of texts appropriate for study for the Higher School Certificate.

MERIT AND CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

- The novel won the David Unaipon Award for Indigenous Writers and was shortlisted for *The Age* Book of the Year: Fiction (2006).
- *Swallow the Air* presents the story of May, an Aboriginal teenager. When her mother dies, a rudderless May embarks on a mission to find her place in a world that does not seem to want her. This struggle to attain a sense of belonging is as much a spiritual quest as it is a search for home, family and identity.
- Literary features of the novel include the strong and authentic voice of the teenage narrator, imaginative use of language to vividly depict May's experiences, sustained use of metaphor to effectively convey the novel's complex ideas and use of other characters to provide counterpoints to the story of May.

NEEDS AND INTERESTS OF STUDENTS

- The use of a teenage narrator will encourage students to become involved and to see relevance in this story of a search for belonging.
- While the story chronicles the particular experiences of an Aboriginal girl, the ideas will resonate with readers of different background and gender.
- Although the novel is characterised by a style of gritty realism, an overall tone of optimism is maintained by occasional humorous episodes and a positive resolution made possible by May's undeniable spirit and determination.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR CHALLENGING TEACHING AND LEARNING

- Relevant concepts of alienation, dispossession, displacement, identity, relationships, acceptance and reconciliation can all be mined through the study of this novel.
- A consideration of narrative structure, voice and perspective, positioning of the reader, use of imaginative language, characterisation and the paralleling of characters

and their experiences will encourage readers to understand how Winch constructs ideas and perceptions of belonging in her novel.

TYPE OF TEXT:	Drama
TITLE:	<i>Rainbow's End</i>
AUTHOR:	Jane Harrison
COURSE:	ESL
AREA OF STUDY:	Belonging

DESCRIPTION

This Area of Study requires students to explore the ways in which the concept of belonging is considered and expressed in and through texts. Through close language study, and by experimenting with different language choices, students will examine how perceptions of belonging, or not belonging, vary.

Perceptions of belonging are shaped within personal, cultural, historical and social contexts. A sense of belonging can emerge from the connections made with people, places, groups, communities and the larger world. Within this Area of Study, students may consider aspects of belonging in terms of experiences and notions of identity, relationships, acceptance and understanding.

Texts explore many aspects of belonging, including the potential of the individual to enrich or challenge a community or group. They may reflect the way attitudes to belonging are modified over time. Texts may also reflect choices not to belong, or barriers which prevent belonging.

Perceptions and ideas of belonging in texts can be constructed through a variety of language modes, forms, features and structures. In engaging with the text, a responder may experience and understand the possibilities presented by a sense of belonging to, or exclusion from, the text and the world it represents. This engagement may be influenced by the different ways perspectives are given voice in or are absent from a text.

The following annotations are based on the criteria for selection of texts appropriate for study for the Higher School Certificate.

MERIT AND CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

- This drama depicts the story of Gladys, a young Aboriginal woman who meets Errol, an encyclopedia salesman. The story centres on their developing relationship and its ramifications, within the context of often rigid social views and pervasive economic struggle.
- The story encompasses family relationships, romantic relationships and aspects of belonging such as social and cultural dislocation.

NEEDS AND INTERESTS OF STUDENTS

- Set in a distinctly Australian landscape, the story engages through its focus on young love, poverty, varying character views on family and society, tragedy and ultimately, a positive resolution.
- Gentle humour, combined with the fledgling adulthood of Gladys provides the basis for dealing with relevant issues.
- The human flaws of the characters in general, plus Gladys's gradual acquisition of maturity, make the story relevant.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR CHALLENGING TEACHING AND LEARNING

- The experiences and issues covered lend themselves to exploration of specific aspects of Australian history, society, culture, values and what it means to belong.
- The concerns of the text provide scope for an investigation into issues such as growing up, family relationships and in particular, relationships beyond the cultural background of the immediate family.
- Harrison's dramatic techniques provide scope for an investigation into how the ideas of the play may be realised on stage.

TYPE OF TEXT:	Nonfiction
TITLE:	<i>Unpolished Gem</i>
AUTHOR:	Alice Pung
COURSE:	ESL
AREA OF STUDY:	Belonging

DESCRIPTION

This Area of Study requires students to explore the ways in which the concept of belonging is considered and expressed in and through texts. Through close language study, and by experimenting with different language choices, students will examine how perceptions of belonging, or not belonging, vary.

Perceptions of belonging are shaped within personal, cultural, historical and social contexts. A sense of belonging can emerge from the connections made with people, places, groups, communities and the larger world. Within this Area of Study, students may consider aspects of belonging in terms of experiences and notions of identity, relationships, acceptance and understanding.

Texts explore many aspects of belonging, including the potential of the individual to enrich or challenge a community or group. They may reflect the way attitudes to belonging are modified over time. Texts may also reflect choices not to belong, or barriers which prevent belonging.

Perceptions and ideas of belonging in texts can be constructed through a variety of language modes, forms, features and structures. In engaging with the text, a responder may experience and understand the possibilities presented by a sense of belonging to, or exclusion from, the text and the world it represents. This engagement may be influenced by the different ways perspectives are given voice in or are absent from a text.

The following annotations are based on the criteria for selection of texts appropriate for study for the Higher School Certificate.

MERIT AND CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

- This nonfiction text depicts the story of a Cambodian family resettling in Australia and the story of the daughter, Alice.
- The recollections of Alice focus on aspects of friendship, family relationships, cultural heritage and growing up.
- The text is written in an engaging style with both humour and insight.

NEEDS AND INTERESTS OF STUDENTS

- Alice's experiences will resonate with many students, particularly those from South-East Asian backgrounds.
- Many common experiences based on family life and dealing with the restrictions imposed by family units will also resonate with students.
- Moments of humour and pathos, depicted within the struggle to survive in a new country, make for engaging reading.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR CHALLENGING TEACHING AND LEARNING

- The experiences of the central character will encourage students to explore specific aspects of Australian history, society, culture and values.
- The strong voice provides opportunities to explore different narrative techniques.
- The issues and experiences covered provide scope for the investigation of different ways of recording experience such as diary, memoir, autobiography and biography.

TYPE OF TEXT:	Multimedia
TITLE:	<i>Making Multicultural Australia</i>
WEB ADDRESS:	www.multiculturalaustralia.edu.au
AUTHOR:	Multicultural Programs Unit, NSW DET
COURSE:	ESL
AREA OF STUDY:	Belonging

DESCRIPTION

This Area of Study requires students to explore the ways in which the concept of belonging is considered and expressed in and through texts. Through close language study, and by experimenting with different language choices, students will examine how perceptions of belonging, or not belonging, vary.

Perceptions of belonging are shaped within personal, cultural, historical and social contexts. A sense of belonging can emerge from the connections made with people, places, groups, communities and the larger world. Within this Area of Study, students may consider aspects of belonging in terms of experiences and notions of identity, relationships, acceptance and understanding.

Texts explore many aspects of belonging, including the potential of the individual to enrich or challenge a community or group. They may reflect the way attitudes to belonging are modified over time. Texts may also reflect choices not to belong, or barriers which prevent belonging.

Perceptions and ideas of belonging in texts can be constructed through a variety of language modes, forms, features and structures. In engaging with the text, a responder may experience and understand the possibilities presented by a sense of belonging to, or exclusion from, the text and the world it represents. This engagement may be influenced by the different ways perspectives are given voice in, or are absent from, a text.

The following annotations are based on the criteria for selection of texts appropriate for study for the Higher School Certificate.

MERIT AND CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

- *Making Multicultural Australia* won the Educational Website (Secondary) category at The Australian Awards for Excellence in Educational Publishing for 2005.
- The website comprises resources designed to increase cultural understanding, promote tolerance and enhance cooperation between different communities within Australian society.

NEEDS AND INTERESTS OF STUDENTS

- The website includes more than 3000 pages of articles, research, teaching materials, audio interviews, video clips and Australian multicultural artworks.
- Both the medium and the content are relevant and accessible to young people. The resources collected present a panoramic view of Australian history and society which is simultaneously instructive and engaging.
- The website provides opportunities for students to explore Australia's rich multicultural heritage and to consider issues which are relevant to cultural diversity and harmony in the twenty-first century.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR CHALLENGING TEACHING AND LEARNING

- As well as evaluating site content, students consider the utility and effectiveness of the inter-disciplinary approach, interactive features, and the electronic medium itself, in actively informing and promoting community harmony amongst young people.

TYPE OF TEXT:	Prose Fiction
TITLE:	<i>The Story of Tom Brennan</i>
AUTHOR:	J C Burke
COURSE:	ESL
MODULE:	Module A: Experience Through Language Elective: Australian Voices

DESCRIPTION

In their responding and composing students explore the ways in which language is used to represent voices in texts. They consider the different types of voices evident in texts and how the creation of a distinctly Australian voice, or voices, affects interpretation and shapes meaning. Students will examine one prescribed text, in addition to other texts and examples drawn from their own experience.

The following annotations are based on the criteria for selection of texts appropriate for study for the Higher School Certificate.

MERIT AND CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

- The novel was the winner of the 2006 Children’s Book Council of Australia Book of the Year Awards: Older Readers and the Australian Family Therapists’ Award for Children’s Literature (Novel).
- This highly acclaimed novel by the Australian author J C Burke focuses on a teenage boy’s experiences after a tragic car accident in a small NSW country town, and the consequences which threaten to destroy his family when his brother is sent to gaol for manslaughter, his cousin is paralysed and family members are forced to flee their home and reconsider their lives, relationships and values.
- *The Story of Tom Brennan* depicts with both pathos and humour how families deal with grief and tragedy as it explores a number of current news issues, such as drink-driving, acceptable blood alcohol levels, and the age at which teenagers can get their driving licences.

NEEDS AND INTERESTS OF STUDENTS

- Written in the first person from Tom’s perspective the story has an immediacy and rawness that will engage the students as it has an Australian context and addresses the topical issues of drink-driving, speeding, P-plate drivers and adolescent behaviour and responsibilities.
- Students will be challenged and confronted by Tom’s introspection and emotional state as they simultaneously gain insight into how individuals and families are affected by their own, as well as other’s, actions.
- The narrative style and natural dialogue capture the essence and individuality of each of the characters as well as their emotional complexity and will engage students and help to develop their empathy and understanding of the central characters and issues.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR CHALLENGING TEACHING AND LEARNING

- Students will explore the non-linear first-person narrative form, the use of flashback and other narrative techniques in order to consider how the author creates and sustains suspense through a series of dramatic and reflective moments.
- The strength of this novel is that it evokes in the reader strong reflections on family, institutional living (both prison and hospital), the dangers of drink-driving and the resilience of individuals. The novel should raise interesting and lively debate about adult, adolescent and social behaviour, drink-driving and relationships.
- The study of this novel will promote students’ personal reflection and evaluation of their own experiences, values and behaviour as they consider to what extent they identify or empathise with the adolescent characters and their situation.

Annotations of texts
prescribed for the first time
for the
Higher School Certificate
2009–2012

ENGLISH (EXTENSION) COURSE

TYPE OF TEXT:	Nonfiction
TITLE:	<i>The Orchard</i>
AUTHOR:	Drusilla Modjeska
COURSE:	Extension
MODULE:	Module A: Genre Elective: Life Writing

DESCRIPTION

In this elective students explore nonfictional texts composed in a range of media that represent lives or aspects of lives. Texts such as biographies, autobiographies, memoirs and documentaries explore a life and may at the same time examine the recording of that life. Many examples of life writing interrogate whether there can ever be a comprehensive account of the facts of a life. They explore instead the various ways in which the facts of a life can be represented, interpreted and valued. Although these texts sometimes include fictional elements, they are characteristically nonfictional accounts.

The following annotations are based on the criteria for selection of texts appropriate for study for the Higher School Certificate.

MERIT AND CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

- *The Orchard* won the Douglas Stewart Prize for Nonfiction in NSW Premier's Awards in 1995. It also won the Australian Bookseller's Book of the Year Award, 1995, and the Nita B. Kibble Award for women writers of a published book of fiction or nonfiction classifiable as 'life writing'.
- The text exemplifies the burgeoning genre of life writing, and is by one of Australia's most awarded and respected writers of nonfictional prose.

NEEDS AND INTERESTS OF STUDENTS

- This book provides students of this elective with a contemporary Australian example of the genre.
- It examines the textures and concerns of the lives of a connected group of women, raising a diverse array of questions about love, birth, motherhood, illness, domesticity and migration.
- *The Orchard* exemplifies the intimate, domestic sphere of much life writing.
- There is a central concern with the theme of love, and the ways in which different types of love – between friends, parents and children, and lovers – may underpin the rhythms of an individual's life.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR CHALLENGING TEACHING AND LEARNING

- *The Orchard* involves a structural metaphor of the veranda, and opens with a section with that title. The architectural and gardening images used throughout the work provide illuminating spatial metaphors through which to consider questions of genre, with the veranda representing the idea of the text that moves between genres, and finds its place at the periphery of traditional categorisations.
- Modjeska's is an innovative text in many ways, including its structural division into interconnecting prose pieces, and its overarching metaphors and concerns.
- The text involves the exploration of the intimate and the familial, including the telling and withholding of secrets, and the nature and limits of privacy.
- The 'I' of the text is often concealed or self-effacing, with the result that the text raises important questions about narration, perspective and the different versions of stories.

TYPE OF TEXT:	Nonfiction
TITLE:	<i>The Invention of Solitude</i>
AUTHOR:	Paul Auster
COURSE:	Extension
MODULE:	Module A: Genre Elective: Life Writing

DESCRIPTION

In this elective students explore nonfictional texts composed in a range of media that represent lives or aspects of lives. Texts such as biographies, autobiographies, memoirs and documentaries explore a life and may at the same time examine the recording of that life. Many examples of life writing interrogate whether there can ever be a comprehensive account of the facts of a life. They explore instead the various ways in which the facts of a life can be represented, interpreted and valued. Although these texts sometimes include fictional elements they are characteristically nonfictional accounts.

The following annotations are based on the criteria for selection of texts appropriate for study for the Higher School Certificate.

MERIT AND CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

- Auster is a celebrated New York poet, novelist and filmmaker. *The Invention of Solitude* is a powerful autobiographical text in two parts.
- The first part, *Portrait of an Invisible Man*, written in response to his father's death, deals with Auster's relationship with his father.
- The second part, *The Book of Memory*, focuses on Auster's relationship with his son, and reflects on the creative process. It is a moving and personal meditation on fatherhood.

NEEDS AND INTERESTS OF STUDENTS

- Auster reflects on the relationships between father and child and the importance of these relationships in our lives. This subject has great resonance for students.
- The text explores what we can know about other people and the different nature of individuals' lives.
- The highly personal voice of the first part is very accessible for students.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR CHALLENGING TEACHING AND LEARNING

- The two parts of the text provide interesting opportunities for comparison and contrast, for example the intimate first-person voice of the first part is interestingly contrasted to the third-person narrative and protagonist A in the second part.
- The second part, *The Book of Memory* provides interesting insights into the creative process. The text, while autobiographical in nature, is reflective and extends the genre of 'life writing' beyond conventional autobiography.

TYPE OF TEXT:	Film
TITLE:	<i>Rear Window</i>
DIRECTOR:	Alfred Hitchcock
RATING:	PG
COURSE:	Extension
MODULE:	Module A: Genre Elective: Crime Writing

DESCRIPTION

In this elective students examine texts composed in a range of media that encompass and scrutinise a crime and its investigation. Students consider how crime writing has evolved by extending, reimagining and challenging the conventions of the traditional detective story. Crime writing presents unlimited combinations, subversions and transformations of the classic ‘whodunit’ murder mystery. It is often self-consciously and/or playfully reworking the elements of the ‘whodunit’. Some of the elements explored in the study of crime writing include how changing contexts and values have brought about changes in the traditional crime stories and resulted in new conventions, new understandings of what constitutes a crime and who plays the role of detective and even what ‘justice’ means. Students will also account for the increasing popularity of different forms of crime writing while the traditional detective stories continue to retain their appeal.

MERIT AND CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

- In 1955 it was nominated for four Academy Awards for Best Director, Best Screenplay, Best Cinematography (Color) and Best Sound Recording.
- It was selected for inclusion in the National Film Registry (US).
- *Rear Window* was dubbed ‘culturally significant’ by the United States Library of Congress.
- Widely considered to be among Hitchcock’s best films, with Hitchcock himself regarded a major auteur.

NEEDS AND INTERESTS OF STUDENTS

- A compelling film, and one which has generated some engaging critical interest and debate.
- Centres on the solving of a crime, but takes a slightly unusual approach to this, which helps sustain the film’s considerable suspense.
- Intersperses its crucial crime-and-detection focus with counterpointing elements, such as an exploration of voyeurism and a version of romantic comedy.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR CHALLENGING TEACHING AND LEARNING

- Hitchcock experiments in a number of ways within *Rear Window*, including layered and complex soundscapes, and POV (or point of view) shots, which bring into focus questions of who sees what from where, and how accurately, that are crucial to the genre.
- The protagonist represents the viewer, metaphorically, and this enables the consideration of questions of voyeurism, collusion, and the nature of the involvement of witnesses. Thus, the film has some ethical concerns at its heart.
- The interweaving of the key stories of the protagonist’s romantic involvement and his involvement in solving the crime that takes place in the apartment opposite him bring to the fore questions of marriage, love, the darker aspects of domestic violence and ultimately murder.
- The film’s intimate, domestic spaces, and its quotidian *mise en scène*, bring to the crime genre a quality of the everyday, which raises further questions about the place of crime in the lives of ordinary people.

TYPE OF TEXT:	Prose Fiction
TITLE:	<i>Neuromancer</i>
AUTHOR:	William Gibson
COURSE:	Extension
MODULE:	Module A: Genre Elective: Science Fiction

DESCRIPTION

In this elective students explore texts that represent a spectrum of imagined worlds. Developments in science and technology, and their acceptance as progress, are at the core of science fiction. Science fiction texts may challenge the degree of acceptance of science and technology, and provoke controversy and debate about possibilities and the ramifications for humanity. These texts present a dynamic range of concerns, styles and textual forms. Science fiction texts reflect changing contexts and values. They may experiment with aspects of time and challenge and disrupt traditional perspectives on human form, morality, behaviour and power.

The following annotations are based on the criteria for selection of texts appropriate for study for the Higher School Certificate.

MERIT AND CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

- The novel was awarded the Philip K Dick Award, the Nebula Award and Hugo Award.
- Set amidst the cities of a future world that many readers see as dystopian and find chillingly plausible, *Neuromancer* tells the story of Case, an out-of-work computer hacker hired by an unknown patron to participate in a seemingly impossible crime.
- The novel examines a range of concepts such as artificial intelligence and virtual reality, long before they became commonplace in what is commonly regarded as the first cyberpunk novel.
- It explores the dehumanising effects of a world dominated by technology and a future where violence and the free market reign are central to the text.

NEEDS AND INTERESTS OF STUDENTS

- The novel examines the concepts of artificial intelligence, virtual reality, genetic engineering, multinational corporations overpowering the traditional nation–state and cyberspace (a computer network called the matrix).
- The focus on technology, dystopia and associated issues relating to morality and ethics will maintain interest for students.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR CHALLENGING TEACHING AND LEARNING

- The exploration of a range of issues and concepts which were once viewed as futuristic will provide opportunities for reflection and further exploration.
- Exploration into Gibson’s narrative techniques in comparison to other writers will provide insights into aspects such as narrative structure.

TYPE OF TEXT:	Film
TITLE:	<i>2001: A Space Odyssey</i>
DIRECTOR:	Stanley Kubrick
RATING:	G
COURSE:	Extension
MODULE:	Module A: Genre Elective: Science Fiction

DESCRIPTION

In this elective students explore texts that represent a spectrum of imagined worlds. Developments in science and technology, and their acceptance as progress, are at the core of science fiction. Science fiction texts may challenge the degree of acceptance of science and technology, and provoke controversy and debate about possibilities and the ramifications for humanity. These texts present a dynamic range of concerns, styles and textual forms. Science fiction texts reflect changing contexts and values. They may experiment with aspects of time and challenge and disrupt traditional perspectives on human form, morality, behaviour and power.

MERIT AND CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

- The film is based on the short story *The Sentinel* written by Arthur C Clarke.
- Made in 1968, the film portrays the evolutionary development of mankind as controlled by an alien experiment. A monolith is sent to earth by the aliens and transforms apes into beings of higher intelligence. The action then moves forward to 2001, when astronauts discover a monolith buried under the surface of the moon which is sending messages to Jupiter. Consequently, two astronauts undertake a discovery mission to Jupiter.
- *2001: A Space Odyssey* was nominated for four Academy Awards including Best Director, Best Art Direction, and Best Original Story and Screenplay and Best Visual Effects. It won the Oscar for Best Visual Effects.
- The film was released at the height of the space race between the US and USSR.
- The film prophetically predicted the effects computers would have on humankind.

NEEDS AND INTERESTS OF STUDENTS

- In an age of technology, students consider the implications of computers and space on our daily lives.
- As the possibility of space missions to other planets becomes more real, students consider the possibility of life on other planets and its impact on humankind
- Students consider the view of technology at the time of the film's construction and consider current developments in technology.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR CHALLENGING TEACHING AND LEARNING

- Messages in the film are predominantly conveyed through visual, sound and special effects as much as dialogue.
- Projections regarding technology in the future and its application can form the basis of discussion and further exploration of the genre.

TYPE OF TEXT:	Film
TITLE:	<i>Lost in Translation</i>
DIRECTOR:	Sofia Coppola
COURSE:	Extension
MODULE:	Module B: Texts and Ways of Thinking Elective: Navigating the Global

DESCRIPTION

In the late twentieth century and early twenty-first century, the development towards a global culture has blurred traditional concepts and boundaries of time and space. Knowledge, values and culture have become at once global and local through the globalisation of communications. Choice and circumstance have created a range of individual and community responses to this changing reality: some have embraced or warily accepted it, while others have challenged or retreated from it. The ideas, language forms and features, and structures of texts may reflect or challenge ways of thinking during this period.

The following annotations are based on the criteria for selection of texts appropriate for study for the Higher School Certificate.

MERIT AND CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

- *Lost in Translation* was nominated for four Academy Awards including Best Picture, Best Actor for Bill Murray and Best Director for Sofia Coppola. Coppola won Best Original Screenplay.
- The film focuses on the place of the individual within a high-tech modern world, in which consumerism and materialism dominate.
- Central to the place of the individual in this setting is the role of relationships, loneliness and companionship all of which are focal points throughout the film's narrative.
- Cultural differences involving language and social conventions provide much of the basis for the film's humour and dynamism.

NEEDS AND INTERESTS OF STUDENTS

- *Lost in Translation* provides an opportunity for students to explore how two individuals develop a friendship within a high-tech foreign city and the associated cultural differences of that setting.
- Coppola has said that the film is about 'being disconnected and looking for moments of connection', which will resonate with students.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR CHALLENGING TEACHING AND LEARNING

- The film stimulates discussion about how the director's aim of creating a sense of 'romantic melancholy' is achieved, in contrast with classic romantic comedy.
- *Lost in Translation* invites examination of how the characters' cultural dislocation and loneliness is exemplified: for example by the use of jet-lag and insomnia to render them literally out of step in time and space with their environment; or by Charlotte's isolation in a hotel room which simultaneously produces visual access to the culture, and alienation from it.

TYPE OF TEXT:	Prose Fiction
TITLE:	<i>Orlando</i>
AUTHOR:	Virginia Woolf
COURSE:	Extension
MODULE:	Module C: Language and Values Elective: Language and Gender

DESCRIPTION

In this elective students explore through texts drawn from a range of media the idea that part of the role of language is to express and create the social identity of the speaker, of which gender is an important element. Students investigate, challenge and evaluate the ways in which language can be used to construct, perform or conceal masculine or feminine aspects of identity and their associated values through characters, voices and contexts. Language may express gender, but it also may provide a means of escaping strict limitations of conventional roles and values. There is a dynamic spectrum of possibilities and great flexibility in texts, as composers create voices and characters, and as characters themselves explore and challenge language and gender codes. Texts provide a playful and experimental space in which composers explore questions of identity through their language.

MERIT AND CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

- Virginia Woolf is widely regarded as a key figure in Western literature, playing a significant role in Modernist literature, the development of feminist literature and experimental prose, as well as in her roles as commentator, publisher and reviewer.
- The study of Woolf provides an enriching array of opportunities and ways for students to engage with this important figure in Western literature, and her rich bequest to contemporary writing.
- *Orlando*, for all its levity and play, also explores key notions of androgyny, gender and language.

NEEDS AND INTERESTS OF STUDENTS

- The focus of Woolf's text is gender, and the text explores ideas of language, writing, femininity, masculinity and androgyny.
- Woolf's is a unique fantasy 'biography', a witty tribute to Vita Sackville West, a playful and parodic adventure in style and with content.
- Woolf's ideas are crucial in the development of much subsequent thinking about gender and writing, and there is an abundance of helpful additional material available to students and teachers, while the text also opens up many of the complexities of this area.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR CHALLENGING TEACHING AND LEARNING

- As a stylist, Woolf is a dazzlingly innovative writer, with this dash through some of the centuries of the protagonist's long life providing a witty exploration of the history of gender, and the development of thinking about power, writing and gender.
- The fact that the protagonist is not limited by the biological constraints of sex and ageing allows Woolf to extricate sex from gender, and to explore a complex spectrum of the relationships between the cultural and the biological. This should provide a sophisticated basis from which students may explore the question of gender and language.
- Virginia Woolf instigated numerous questions about identity, gender and writing, so it is appropriate and fruitful that her work be examined in this context, given the provocative and enduring nature of her vision of such questions. This text will work very well in dialogue with others set for this elective.
- The study of *Orlando* is supported by numerous excellent and readily available resources, and discussion of Woolf's work remains robust and exciting.