2020 English Subject Assessment Advice

Overview

Subject assessment advice, based on the 2020 assessment cycle, gives an overview of how students performed in their school and external assessments in relation to the learning requirements, assessment design criteria, and performance standards set out in the relevant subject outline. They provide information and advice regarding the assessment types, the application of the performance standards in school and external assessments, and the quality of student performance.

Teachers should refer to the subject outline for specifications on content and learning requirements, and to the subject operational information for operational matters and key dates.

School Assessment

Assessment Type 1: Responding to Texts (30%)

Within this component of the subject, students produce three responses to texts. Two of the responses must be written, and one must be oral. Either the oral response or one of the written pieces may be replaced by a multimodal response. One of the responses could be a comparison of two or more texts. A maximum of 2000 words for written responses is allocated and the oral response is up to a maximum of 6 minutes. A multimodal response is of equivalent length.

The more successful responses commonly:

* embedded and integrated short pithy quotes for evidence
* demonstrated strong analysis by taking on the role of the creator, such as an interview with the director
* produced speeches for a specific, often unfamiliar audience (e.g. award acceptance speech) to demonstrate more sophisticated and versatile texts
* allowed the innovative use of IT skills
* chose texts that clearly focused on a cultural aspect to allow An1to be addressed specifically
* included images/footage and music to create tone in oral presentations by including multiple layers of textual knowledge
* were in response to challenging and engaging texts
* provided an element of independence for the student through options that included text and task choice
* enabled students to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of a ‘range of texts’
* included comparative responses that were useful preparation for the external assessment
* enabled students to express their own unique voice through their written and oral expression
* revealed a depth of analysis using metalanguage appropriate to the text type analysed
* demonstrated consistent and sophisticated use of accurate, clear, and fluent expression
* referred specifically to cinematic techniques when discussing film.

The less successful responses commonly:

* did not embed evidence but rather used large chunks of text as evidence
* were over-scaffolded with overt similarities across samples including the same evidence used in responses and similar structure or content
* did not explicitly address KU2 and An2 to analyse stylistic features and language techniques (e.g. a personal essay about the student’s values does not allow for in-depth analysis of the author’s craft)
* relied on outside sources or critics in the style of a hybrid Research Project in English
* tended to revert to plot description
* divorced technique from purpose
* focused on characterisation as a stylistic feature, but did/could not identify the techniques employed to create the characterisation
* did not consider mise en scène when recording orals (e.g. if filming at home consider the background of the shots and if filming at school make sure classmates are not distractors in the shot)
* did not use the conventions of the chosen form appropriately e.g. used sub-headings inappropriately in an essay
* did not include at least one oral presentation or multimodal text
* identified key ideas or themes without expanding on them or analysing how the idea is expressed.

Assessment Type 2: Creating Texts (40%)

Within this assessment type, students are expected to create three texts, at least one of which is written, to demonstrate variety in text type, purpose and audience. Students are required to create one writer’s statement. A maximum of 3000 words is allocated to the creation of texts and a maximum of 1000 words is allocated to the writer’s statement. An oral or multimodal text or writer’s statement is of equivalent length.

The more successful responses commonly:

* included innovative text creation such as a vlog paired with a feature article on a similar topic, but for a different audience allowing clear comparisons in the writer’s statement
* wrote for authentic contexts such as a feminist article response in Womankind, and double spread real estate advertisement for expensive properties
* included creative texts from fascinating and unusual perspectives such as an obituary for an inanimate, defunct object (e.g. a phone book)
* applied a wide range of language features and stylistic features such as the creation of a music video that had a clear audience, purpose and context appropriate to the choice of song
* included using a multimodal approach to informing about a topic, particularly with use of a video so students could show their use of film techniques to meet the purpose of the text (e.g. a documentary) and its audience
* carefully addressed the assessment criteria for the writer’s statement e.g. if An3 was being assessed it was covered in the statement
* presented writer’s statements that explained and justified language features, stylistic features and conventions as well as the creative decisions made in the process of writing
* presented writer’s statements that, when comparative, were well structured and analysed each created text equally. Moderators also commented favourably upon examples of comparative writer’s statements that analysed created texts that were connected by a common topic or theme
* demonstrated sound engagement on the part of the student due to choice associated with the task.

The less successful responses commonly:

* produced texts in a similar format (e.g. a recount and a narrative) limiting opportunities to display versatility in their writing (Ap1)
* created texts that limited opportunities such as a poster with only a couple of words
* were formatted responses across classes that did not allow for independent thinking or creativity
* demonstrated repetition of the recount form, regardless of the individual purpose of the creating texts task
* did not reveal adequate consideration of accurate, clear and fluent expression
* emphasised visual information at the expense of spoken or written language
* produced writer’s statements which tended to recount the process of creating texts rather than analyse the features to show how they suit the context, audience and purpose
* revealed little or no evidence of designated performance standards. For example, where An3 was identified for assessment and yet the writer’s statement either did not contain the analysis of two or more texts or the response revealed analysis of the texts individually.

Operational Advice

School assessment tasks are set and marked by teachers. Teachers’ assessment decisions are reviewed by moderators.

* The performance standard record sheet should be completed very carefully as this is the official record of results used in the online moderation process. Ensure that the shading matches the grade assigned.
* Ensure the variations from is submitted to account for missing tasks.
* As moderation is online uploading and viewing of video or oral recordings is encouraged rather than a transcript. Teacher feedback alone is not appropriate evidence.
* Teachers should ensure that the performance standards they mark on each individual assignment match the performance standards on their LAP, and the PSR filled in on SACE online.
* Student samples submitted for moderation should include all pieces of work for all tasks in an assessment type.

External Assessment

Assessment Type 3: Investigation

This task requires students to independently compose a 2000 word, written comparative analysis of two texts which evaluates how the language features, stylistic features, and conventions in these texts represent ideas, perspectives, and/or aspects of culture, and influence audiences. These texts can be extended texts, poetry, drama texts, film texts or media texts.

It is important to remember that students are assessed on all assessment design criteria within this section of the course.

The more successful responses commonly:

* showed evidence of excellent teaching and a clear understanding of the analytical features, as well as the independent nature, of the Comparative Analysis
* chose texts which provided opportunities for comprehensive depth of analysis and evaluation of complex ideas, perspectives, and aspects of culture. Often this involved analysing two texts of different text types, genre or with distinctly different purposes. e.g. written and visual, to provide greater scope for discussion of ideas and acknowledging how authors use different techniques to create imagery, impact audience, express emotion and show ideas. This catered for both KU3 and An3
* made comparisons between films, novels, poetry, short stories, poems, speeches, advertisements or articles with a clear narrative and a range of text features
* focused on a single episode of a television series, rather than an entire series
* included a question which was clearly stated at the beginning demonstrating greater focus on analysis and answered in the analysis. These approached a similar theme/idea which influenced the ability to meet KU1, An1 and An2
* addressed aspects of culture and context, showing understanding of the contextual elements of author and text placement in revealing how they position an audience, especially non-narrative text types
* clearly analysed audience and purpose, e.g. without generalisations such as ‘the ABC is aimed at adults’
* analysed texts from different eras or very specific eras and showed more thorough knowledge of context
* not only compared, but also contrasted texts in sophisticated ways to make a critical analysis of similarities and differences of both texts’ ideas, language features, purposes, and contexts
* included integrated analysis of the two texts that alternated with parity and complexity within the same paragraph, rather than basing separate paragraphs on each text
* showed critical understanding of ideas and how these were developed through a range of language and stylistic features
* demonstrated deep knowledge of the theme/ideas by stating relevant historic/social/political context and clearly understood their nuances as they affected the author’s intention and the way the target audience might be affected
* had balance in relation to the comparisons and contrasts made between texts (An3)
* used correct and sophisticated metalanguage to analyse and evaluate language features, stylistic features and conventions to meet Ap1 and Ap3
* supported their analysis with seamlessly incorporated and relevant short quotations within the body of the response, rather than longer ‘chunks’, illustrating higher order ability
* communicated students’ strengths as writers where the structure of text type they had chosen to produce was clear and each paragraph began with a strong topic sentence, linking holistically to the chosen texts. These pieces included clear topic sentences that were delineated in body paragraphs and often finished with a persuasive conclusion
* took the form of appropriately structured essays, reports, articles, and interviews that were predominantly analytical despite their creative format. In some cases, the use of headings or clear topic sentences based on specific performance standards reduced the repetition of ideas and evidence by focusing the analysis on specific aspects of the texts
* included essays which clearly outlined the target audience within the introduction and referred back to this throughout, specifically when evaluating the effect of language features, stylistic features and conventions on the authors intentional communication of ideas to meet the requirements of KU3 and An1
* met KU2 and An2 by integrating the connection between conventions and language features to show how they work together to support the development of the central theme/idea. (e.g. linking imagery and mise en scene to the development of setting which established a context for the development of theme)
* stated the historical/social/political context and showed clear understanding of the nuances of these aspects as they effected the author’s intention and the way the audience might be affected
* showed evidence of careful proofreading and editing to produce a polished final comparative analysis
* were free of track changes or other editing comments from teachers as well as task sheets and highlighted performance standards
* showed integrity for the parameters of the task, including the 2000 word limit and did not go over, or misrepresent their total.

The less successful responses commonly:

* chosen to focus on aspects of the texts that were too similar, for example: comparing overly similar and or repetitive ideas and or language features
* had no question or limiting questions, often meaning the focus was on plot or characters or ideas rather than features and effect on audience
* demonstrated a lack of organisation with no order or structure that related to the question in the body paragraphs
* were too thematic and or plot focused in their analysis, focusing predominantly on ideas and perspectives, but failing to analyse language features, stylistic features, and conventions
* did not mention specific film techniques in comparisons of films, e.g. mise en scène, cinematography, sound and lighting
* included implicit or superficial reference to purpose as broadly being ‘to entertain’ or to ‘captivate’ the reader. There was also some tendency to reference KU3 in the introduction and or conclusion, but not address it in the body of the response
* focused only on similarities and not differences also, as is required for An3
* wrote about film and novel versions of the same narrative as though they were the same text
* included plot inaccuracies that indicated they had viewed a film version of widely known classic texts instead of reading the novel which they stated they were analysing
* lacked cohesiveness due to a lack of conjunctions and or comparative phrases
* simply listed text features used without giving specific quoted examples of where they were used and what effect they had, resulting in generalised re-telling of plot
* made didactic explanations of basic terminology and common concepts to the marker such as explaining what ‘metaphors’ are
* recounted plot or focused on language analysis to the detriment of depth and detail in analysing ideas, perspectives and/or aspects of culture (KU1 and An1) which hindered complexity of analysis
* included images and pictures as evidence of scenes or techniques, often as an appendix without reference to them in the analysis and used in a text type in which images are not conventionally used
* quoted the director on the experience of making the film which wasn’t relevant to the analysis and is beyond the scope of the subject along with quotes from or reference to any texts beyond the two under analysis
* demonstrated a lack of awareness that audience, context, themes, ideas and conventions are not techniques
* discussed ideas in the texts separately from techniques. This did not demonstrate that they understood how ‘language features, stylistic features, and conventions make meaning’. More successful students were able to explain how the techniques made the ideas clearer, stronger
* showed uncertainty about or failure to identify titles, authors, text types as well as their spelling and capitalisation of proper nouns
* included frequent solecisms, notably errors in subject verb agreement, e.g. “How does the authors of …”, inaccurate punctuation, and no understanding of the use of punctuation as a persuasive tool; inaccurate tense usage; expression errors leading to convoluted and confusing argument
* were as low as half the available word count, at times in contradiction to the figure cited on the cover sheet, which severely limited opportunity for success.