# English Subject Assessment Advice

Overview

Subject assessment advice, based on the previous year’s 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 was allocated and the oral response was up to a maximum of 6 minutes. A multimodal response was of equivalent length.

The more successful responses commonly:

* 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’
* revealed the importance of task design and explicit teaching in addressing task criteria and the selected form for responses.
* addressed one of the three specific features of the analysis assessment design criterion in each response for this assessment type
* revealed an explicit and deep knowledge, understanding and analysis of ‘aspects of culture represented in 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
* included a variety of successful options, such as essays, interviews with the writer or director, blogs and multimodal responses
* revealed a depth of analysis using metalanguage appropriate to the text type analysed
* demonstrated consistent and sophisticated use of accurate, clear, and fluent expression.

The less successful responses commonly:

* provided evidence that was outside the scope of the subject outline such as, not including an oral response to text
* duplicated or omitted one of the specified categories of text types for response
* had not been designed with the full range of student ability in mind
* demonstrated task design that required students to address all three analysis specific features in each task and this resulted in a reduction in the quality of analysis
* showed that scaffolding proved problematic or restrictive when teachers controlled all elements of responses from text, task, structure and content of response including the design of the same topic sentences for all paragraphs for all students in a class.
* revealed limited comparison responses designed for the assessment of An3
* included characteristics of recount or description rather than analysis
* had limited use of direct evidence from the texts analysed
* included task design that omitted the opportunity for students to demonstrate analysis criteria. For example, a conversation between two characters from a novel. Moderators observed that only limited evidence of understanding of ideas of a text could be observed in these responses
* did not adhere to the specified word-count or time-limit for responses.

Assessment Type 2: Creating Texts (40%)

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

The more successful responses commonly:

* demonstrated task design that considered student ability for achievement at all levels
* demonstrated task design that explicitly addressed variety in text type, purpose and/or audience
* were constructed as a result of creative, considered, and original task design that encouraged student engagement
* adhered to the specified word-count and time-limit about the creation of texts
* demonstrated sound engagement on the part of the student due to choice associated with the task. Moderators commented favourably upon multimodal texts that were created for an authentic purpose relevant to the author. For example, an instructional YouTube video designed to assist Year 12 students in preparing for examinations was noted as successful by moderators.
* demonstrated a repertoire of written skills, particularly point of view, through the opportunity to link two texts through a common idea or theme through differing forms. For example, moderators commented favourably upon examples of newspaper articles and narratives that were written about refugees from two different perspectives.
* 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.

The less successful responses commonly:

* repeated purpose, form, and, in some cases, similar audience across the assessment type – this prohibited the recognition of achievement of a ‘range’ of evidence against the performance standards
* demonstrated repetition of the recount form, regardless of the individual purpose of the Creating Texts task
* revealed a lack of consideration with regard to the accurate, versatile and precise use of language and stylistic features
* did not reveal adequate consideration of accurate, clear and fluent expression
* presented evidence that would have been better suited to the Responding to Texts. For example, moderators commented that reviews and blogs evident in this component of the course revealed evidence of Analysis Performance Standards at the expense of Knowledge and Understanding or Application
* emphasised visual information at the expense of spoken or written language
* presented writer’s statements that were brief and focused exclusively upon the creative decisions made in the process of writing
* 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.
* revealed inconsistent evidence of An3 when it was seleected for assessment. For example, writer’s statements contained evidence of differences without analysis of similarities or vice versa.
* appeared to be tasks designed to meet the criteria of the Application task in the 2016 English Communications course. This was particularly problematic when teachers had not taken into account the changes in course and Performance Standard design for 2017.
* did not adhere to the specified word-count or time-limit for responses.

## Assessment Type 3: Comparative Analysis

Students independently compose a 2000 word, written comparative analysis of two texts and evaluate how the language features, stylistic features, and conventions in these texts are used to represent ideas, perspectives, and/or aspects of culture, and to influence audiences. These texts can be extended texts, poetry, drama texts, film texts or media texts. It is important to remember that all assessment design criteria are assessed in the comparative analysis.

*The more successful responses commonly:*

* chose texts which provided opportunities for comprehensive depth of analysis and evaluation of complex ideas, perspectives, and aspects of culture. Often this involved analyzing two texts of different text types. e.g. written and visual, to provide greater scope for discussion of ideas and acknowledging how authors all use different ways to create imagery, impact audience, express emotion and show ideas.
* made comparisons of films, novels, poetry, songs, You Tube clips or articles etc with a clear narrative and a range of text features
* included a question which was clearly stated at the beginning demonstrating greater focus on analysis
* 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
* focused on two or three key features
* not only compared, but also contrasted texts in sophisticated ways so as 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.
* had balance in relation to the comparisons and contrasts made between texts
* used connectives throughout the response in addition to explicit acknowledgement of differences allowing students to demonstrate analysis of An3
* used correct and sophisticated terminology to analyse and evaluate language features, stylistic features and conventions
* supported their analysis with clear and relevant evidence from the text and tended to be more specific than broad in the evidence provided
* seamlessly entwined quotations within the body of the response, illustrating higher order ability. Students tended to communicate their strengths as writers where the structure of text type they had chosen to prouce was clear and each paragraph began with a strong topic sentence, linking holistically to the chosen texts.
* took the form of a well-structured essay, reports, articles and blogs. In some cases the use of headings or clear topic sentences reduced the repetition of ideas and evidence by focusing the analysis on specific aspects of the texts.
* included diverse vocabulary
* showed evidence of careful proofreading and editing to produce a polished final comparative analysis.

The less successful responses commonly:

* obligated the whole class either to analyse the same texts or to base their text choice on the same theme or to discuss the same text features
* were overly scaffolded.
* compromised the authorial integrity/genesis of student work by enabling multiple students to undertake the exact same text pairings
* chose to focus on aspects of the texts that were too similar, for example: comparing overly similar and or repetitive ideas and or language features
* attempted to cover too many aspects, reflecting a need for well-crafted questions and thoroughly planned responses
* discussed an entire television series rather than a single episode
* had no question or limiting questions, often meaning the focus was on plot 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
* made no reference to audience or context
* included implicit or superficial reference to purpose as broadly being ‘to entertain’. 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 as well
* wrote about film and novel version of the same narrative as though they were the same text
* said nothing of significance in the last few hundred words when struggling to meet the word count. In such cases, students would be better served by submitting a shorter piece.
* incorporated no evidence to support points or quoted lengthy chunks of text, instead of integrating short key words and phrases
* lacked cohesiveness due to a lack of conjunctions and or comparative phrases
* simply listed text features used without giving specific 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 using many sentences to explain what ‘symbolism’ or ‘similar’ means
* demonstrated a lack of awareness that audience, context, themes, ideas, 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
* failed to identify the creators of media texts, writing ‘the author’ without naming the writers of the newspaper or on-line articles.
* devoted too many words to describe the context of the media texts, much of which was not relevant to the texts being compared.
* spent too much time explaining what the lyrics meant when comparing two songs, rather than analyzing them (e.g. rhythm, rhyme, internal rhyme, use of colloquial language, etc.)
* showed little evidence of proofreading and editing by including errors such as misspelling names of authors, directors and titles. In addition, incorrect conventions were also used such as not using italics for the text titles or not referring to the author/director by surname.
* 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.